

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

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

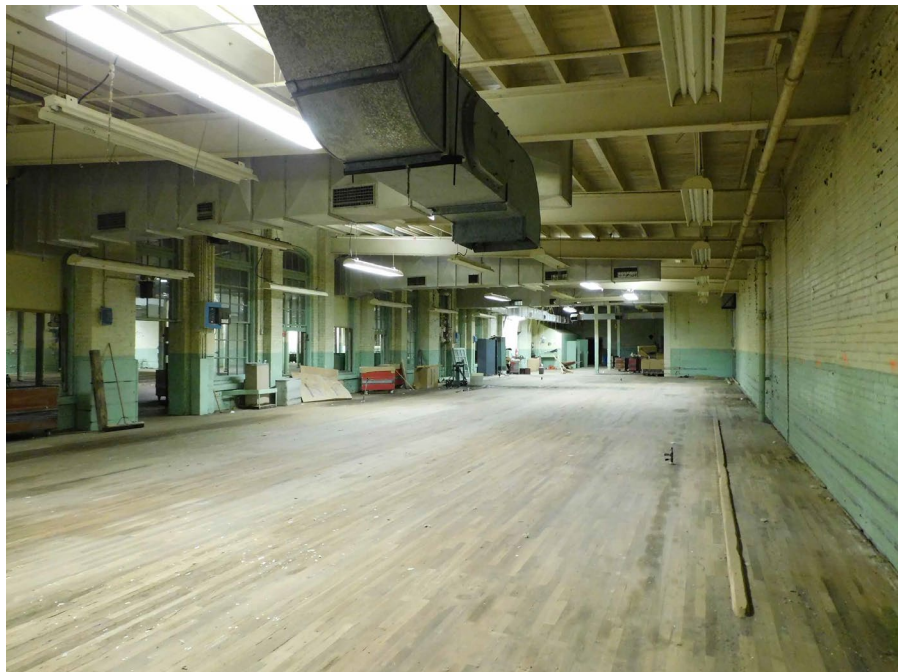
Elizabeth City Cotton Mills

Elizabeth City, Pasquotank County, PK0316, Listed 08/06/2024

Nomination by Marcus Pollard and Victoria Leonard, Commonwealth Preservation Group
Photographs by Victoria Leonard and Marcus Pollard, February 2023 and May 2023



Main Building (Factory), Façade/Southeast Elevation, two-story c.1908 and one-story c.1989 Office in foreground, Camera facing Northwest



Main building (Factory), Interior, c.1951 Addition, Camera facing Southwest

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Elizabeth City Cotton Mills

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 451 North Hughes Boulevard

City or town: Elizabeth City State: NC County: Pasquotank County

Not For Publication: N/A

Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

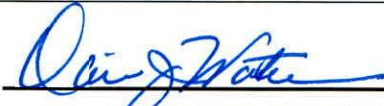
I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B ___ C ___ D

	<u>6/27/24</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title: State Historic Preservation Officer	
Date	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u>1</u>	objects
<u>6</u>	<u>9</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION – manufacturing facility

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION – industrial storage

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK, CONCRETE, WOOD

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Elizabeth City Cotton Mills is located in a suburban environment at the northwestern border of the outskirts of the Elizabeth City in Pasquotank County, North Carolina. The Mill is located on a rectangular parcel oriented toward North Hughes Boulevard to the southeast. The 8.58-acre site is bordered by Mill Street to the northwest, Parsonage Street to the northeast, the Norfolk Southern Railroad to the southeast, and a line of trees from North Hughes Boulevard to Mill Street on the southwest side. The original mill factory building and first Cotton Warehouse section were constructed in c.1896. Since then, there have been several additions to the main building and the Cotton Warehouse, as well as several additional resources added to the site. Today, the site contains a total of 15 resources. Of these, 6 are contributing, which includes 5

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

buildings and 1 structure, and 9 are non-contributing resources, which includes 4 buildings, 4 structures, and 1 object that were constructed outside of the period of significance. Although there have been several additions to the Main Factory Building and Cotton Warehouse, the exterior of the main factory building retains strong architectural integrity of design, materials, and workmanship as a mill factory building. Additionally, the subsequent additions to the Cotton Warehouse maintain a consistent design with the original section. Although the City landscape has developed significantly to the southeast, the mill site still remains on the outskirts of town and retains integrity of location and setting because the site itself is otherwise largely intact. Furthermore, it retains integrity of its historic feeling and association as a late nineteenth/early twentieth-century cotton mill.

Narrative Description

Setting

The Elizabeth City Cotton Mills is located in a suburban environment on the outskirts of Elizabeth City in Pasquotank County, North Carolina. The Mill is located on a rectangular parcel oriented toward North Hughes Boulevard to the southeast. The 8.58-acre site is bordered by Mill Street to the northwest, Parsonage Street to the northeast, the Norfolk Southern Railroad to the southeast, and a line of trees from North Hughes Boulevard to Mill Street on the southwest side. With the exception of the line of trees to the southwest, and a few spaced-out trees along the rear of the site near the water tower, the site is relatively open and flat with minimal vegetation beyond grass lawns. The Main Factory and Cotton Warehouse buildings are minimally set back from the railroad tracks along North Hughes Boulevard, which are slightly

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

elevated above the rest of the site to the southeast. A partially-overgrown gravel driveway, with two connections to North Hughes Boulevard, runs parallel to the tracks along the front of the building and connects to the rear of the site at the south corner. This overgrown driveway continues along the rear of the property to Parsonage Street, as well as branches off to the northwest providing access from Mill Street. Two concrete sidewalks connect the Cotton Warehouse loading platform to the Dry Valve House Foundation and Opener Room No. 8 Foundation at the rear northeast corner of the site.

The site contains a total of 15 resources. Of these, 6 are contributing, which includes 5 buildings and 1 structure, and 9 are non-contributing resources, which includes 4 buildings and 5 structures that were constructed outside of the period of significance. Contributing buildings include the Main Factory Building, the Cotton Warehouse, Pump House No. 7, the No. 12 Shook Storage Building, and the Well/Pump House. The Water Tower is the one contributing Structure. The 9 non-contributing resources include two power/transformers electrical substations, a power building, a modern Warehouse, two Valve Houses, a Ramp, an Above Ground Fuel Tank, and a Cooling Pump/Electric structure.

In addition to the mill factory building and warehouses, the site features remaining foundations associated with the historic mill operation, as well as a set of billboards located at the south corner of the site facing North Hughes Boulevard. One of the primary foundations is located between the c.1988 addition to the Main Factory Building and the Cotton Warehouse to the northeast and is all that remains of the first Cotton Warehouse section that was constructed in c.1896. The rectangular concrete foundation has a low English-bond brick wall remaining on the

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

south side, which was the location of the former façade. The section was demolished sometime between 2013 and 2018. Other foundations include the c.1914 Dry Valve House Foundation and the c.1917-1923 Opener Room No. 8 Foundation, both of which were demolished sometime post 1993. Both of these are located on the northeastern side of the property behind the Cotton Warehouse. The Dry Valve Foundation is a small rectangular foundation with a smaller, metal-framed rectangular feature located within the foundation. The Opener Room No. 8 Foundation is a concrete rectangular foundation. A concrete sidewalk connects what would have been the façade, on the southeast side, to the concrete platform along the rear of the Cotton Warehouse. Although there are remaining foundations associated with the historic mill, there is no visible remaining evidence of the mill worker's housing that was formerly located on the rear of the site.

1. Main Building, Factory (c.1896, c.1902, c.1908, c.1914, c.1940, c.1951, c.1951-1967, c.1989, c.1998) – Contributing Building

The Main Building is an evolved building with numerous different sections that were constructed between c.1896 and c.1998. To clearly delineate the building development and each segment of the building, each area will be referred to by a section number. Please see the attached Main Building Section Key map that numbers each section of the building.

The main rectangular section of the building was constructed in two sections. The first section was constructed in c.1896 and contained an open “spinning & carding room” (Section 1) with a “picker room”¹(Section 2) at the northeast end. Additionally, an L-shaped engine house

¹ *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, June 1896, sheet 6.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

and boiler house section was attached on the rear (Section 3). In c.1902, the main spinning room was expanded to the southwest, although the extension is seamless on the exterior (Section 4).

This early one-story, fifty-six-bay, masonry section has a brick foundation and six-course common-bond brick walls. It has an extremely low-pitched, side gable roof with wide, overhanging eaves, exposed rounded wood rafter tails, and metal coping. The exterior wall along the façade is lined with window bays. Each window bay is separated by eight-inch pilasters and contains a large window opening with a segmental brick arch and concrete sills. The former arched window openings were infilled with brick sometime between c.1940 and c.1987, although a few remaining triple-hung, four-over-twelve-over-twelve, wood-sash windows remain in place and exposed on the interior at the junction of a rear addition.

Additionally, metal wall vents are located in the brick wall beneath each window. Although this fenestration pattern once continued along the southwest elevation and rear/northwest elevation, it is now largely enclosed within subsequent additions and the majority of windows have been removed.

The engine house and boiler house (Section 3) have eight-course common-bond brick walls with brick pilasters between bays. The boiler house has a low-pitched, side-gable roof, while the engine house has a flat roof with a raised saltbox section along the northeast edge next to the boiler house. The saltbox roof of the engine house has a clerestory and wood siding on the portion above the main brick wall. A stepped brick parapet serves as a partial dividing wall between the sections. On the rear/northwest elevation, there are two entrance openings; these include a single-leaf, boarded-up door with an arched, four-light transom and a brick arch, and a slightly-recessed loading door entry with a concrete ramp. Windows are boarded up and are

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

varying sizes with brick, segmental arches and a combination of brick and concrete sills. The tall, square chimney, which has six-course common-bond brick walls and concrete coping, is located along the southeast elevation of the boiler house.

In c.1908, a two-story, three-bay, square masonry office tower was added onto the front, center of the building (Section 5). It has a brick foundation, stretcher-bond brick walls with a brick belt course, and a flat roof with a brick parapet that has crenelated corners. The façade features a central entrance, with a single-leaf, modern, six-panel wood door and a single-light transom, accessed by concrete steps. The entrance is flanked by modern vinyl-sash, one-over-one, replacement, double-hung windows with brick sills and fixed louvered shutters. The southwest elevation of the first floor features another modern, vinyl-sash window in addition to a historic wood-sash, six-light, hopper window with a brick sill. The second floor of the office is lined with historic nine-over-nine, wood-sash, double-hung windows with brick sills and segmental brick arches. A one-story, modern, rectangular office addition was appended onto the northeast elevation of the historic office addition in c.1989 (Section 13). This wide, asymmetrical, three-bay, frame addition has stretcher-bond brick veneer and a flat roof with metal coping. It has a shed-roof lean-to section where it connects to the historic addition to the southwest. It has two asymmetrically-placed, one-over-one, vinyl-sash, double-hung windows with brick sills and fixed, vinyl, paneled shutters. A new primary entrance, covered by with a gabled portico entry with square posts and a double-sided brick stoop, was created at the southwest end. The entrance features a modern, single-leaf, four-panel fiberglass door with four lights of upper glazing and sidelights with lower panels.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

In c.1914, a shipping room was added onto the west rear corner of the main section (Section 6). This one-story, four-bay addition has a brick foundation, six-course common-bond brick walls and a shed roof with metal coping. The rear elevation features three symmetrically-placed, brick-infilled windows with brick segmental arches and concrete sills. A metal, roll-up loading door opening is located at the far southwest end accessing a concrete block loading platform. The southwest and northeast elevations have been obscured by later additions. However, one wide, single-leaf, thick, metal pedestrian entry door accesses the loading platform on what remains visible of the southwest elevation.

Additionally, another one-story, one-bay masonry addition was appended to the southwest elevation of the engine house at this time (Section 7). It has a shed roof and six-course common-bond brick walls with brick pilasters on the southwest elevation. It has a wide, overhanging eave on the southwest side with exposed, rounded, wood rafter tails and metal coping. The northwest, or rear, elevation features a double-leaf, wood-paneled entry door with a brick segmental arch. The southwest elevation features a window bay between each pilaster. One wood-sash remains intact with a brick segmental arch and concrete sill, but it has been boarded up. The remaining two windows have been infilled with brick. A one-story, rectangular, six-course common-bond brick dust flue with corbelled brick at the top was also added onto the northeast end of the rear/northwest elevation at this time (Section 8).

In c.1940, a one-story, one-bay, brick addition (Section 9) was added to the west corner of the building at the intersection of the main section and the c.1914 shipping room (Section 6). This small addition has a brick foundation and stretcher-bond brick walls. It has a shed roof with an overhanging, wood eave, exposed rafter tails, and metal coping.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

In the 1950s and 1960s, two larger additions were added onto the rear elevation of the main section between the two c.1914 sections. The southwestern-most one-story, seven-bay, rectangular addition (Section 10) was constructed in 1951 and has a brick pier foundation, seven-course common-bond brick walls with brick pilasters separating double window bays, and a flat roof with metal coping. The rear, or northwest elevation, of the 1951 addition is lined with infilled brick windows with concrete sills. The addition abuts the c.1914 shipping room (Section 6) to the southwest and the Apparatus Building 1 addition (Section 11) to the northeast. The Apparatus Building 1 addition (Section 11) was constructed sometime between 1951 and 1967 and is situated between the 1951 addition (Section 10) and the Engine House section (Section 3) to the northeast. This one-story, rectangular addition has a concrete foundation, seven-course common-bond solid brick walls, and a flat roof with metal coping. At the far northeast end of the rear elevation, there is a double-leaf, metal, board-and-batten door situated under a metal, cantilevered awning. A large, louvered vent with divided sections takes up the majority of the remainder of the elevation. The roof features a projecting louvered structure with a corrugated metal roof.

During the same period as Apparatus Building 1 (Section 11), the Apparatus Building 2 addition (Section 12) was also constructed. This one-story, rectangular addition has six-course common-bond brick walls and a flat roof with metal coping. The northwest, or rear, elevation has one large, metal louvered vent but is otherwise devoid of openings. The northeast elevation, which abuts the dust flue, has a double-leaf, plywood entry door under a cantilevered metal awning at the north end.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

Two modern additions were added onto the Main Building in the 1990s. The first, which was added onto the southwest elevation, was constructed sometime between 1993 and 1998 (Section 14). This one-story, three-bay, concrete block addition has a brick foundation, stretcher-bond brick walls and a low-pitched front gable corrugated metal roof with metal coping. The façade, or southwest, elevation features a single-leaf metal-slab door and a metal, roll-up loading door. A large louvered vent is located on the center of the elevation. The southeast and northwest elevations each feature a single metal, louvered vent. The other modern metal-frame and brick addition was added onto the northeast end in c.1998 (Section 15). It has a concrete foundation, stretcher-bond brick walls, and a low-pitched corrugated metal roof with boxed eaves. The northeast wall is formed by the remaining wall of the original first section of the Cotton Warehouse, which has now been demolished. Since the addition is taller, the upper portion of the wall is corrugated metal siding. The northwest elevation features a metal, roll-up loading door and single-leaf, metal-slab pedestrian door that both access a concrete loading ramp on that side. The remainder of the elevations are devoid of openings.

The interior of the mill is currently accessed through the c.1989 office addition (Section 13). It opens to a small entrance lobby with a reception area to the right/northeast and private offices accessed off a hallway. Finishes throughout the modern office include dropped acoustical tile ceilings, modern drywall walls with faux wood wainscoting, and stained wood baseboards, chair rail, and window and door trim. The lobby features vinyl composition tile flooring while the remainder of the office features modern carpet. At the rear of the lobby, a small hallway leads to the main room of the mill. To the right, or southwest, of the c.1989 lobby, is an L-shaped, two-flight staircase leading to the second floor of the original c.1908 office

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

(Section 5). The first flight is modern, dating to the insertion of the new office and containing the same modern finishes. Although the second flight of the staircase has been enclosed, presumably for fire rating, a portion of the historic balustrade that lined the former stair opening is intact in front of the enclosure wall on the second floor. The second floor of this office is largely intact with its historic plaster walls and ceilings, vinyl asbestos tile floor, and wood baseboard and window trim. The first floor of the c.1908 section of the office is accessed from the main factory room through a double-leaf, wood-paneled door opening with a four-light, segmentally-arched transom window. It features a hallway, with intact historic wood floors and modern faux wood wall paneling, flanked by a private office and coat room. The office and coat room both feature historic wood floors, modern faux wood paneling and trim, and full-height ceilings. A small bathroom, which is accessed from the main factory room, is located in the west corner of the c.1908 office section.

Beyond the office is the main factory room, through which and the subsequent additions can be accessed. The main factory room is a long, open room with two rows of closely-spaced, thin, round columns supporting the exposed wooden ceiling structure and beams. It has wood floors and exposed brick walls with a tall wood baseboard. There are metal sections of flooring spaced throughout, as well as noticeable tracks for equipment. Areas of the floor where equipment may have been located appear to have been patched with wood flooring oriented perpendicular to the original. A large, modern HVAC system with exposed ductwork has been installed within the main room. The former window openings have been infilled along the southeast wall and the majority of the northwest wall. Although the sash and glazing has been removed, four of the original window openings remain open on the back/southwest wall, at a

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

reduced size, creating pass-through openings to the c.1940 (Section 9) and late twentieth-century addition (Section 10) along that side. The rest of the windows have been infilled. The bottom portion of these windows have been infilled with brick, but the concrete sills remain visible on the side of the former exterior wall. A single-leaf, cased pedestrian opening leads to the post-1993 concrete block addition (Section 14) on the southwest end, which features HVAC equipment and has concrete floors, exposed concrete block walls, and an exposed metal ceiling structure.

At the west corner of the main room, a large historic, industrial, metal, sliding door leads to the c.1914 shipping room (Section 6), which is similar to the main room with its historic wood floors, exposed brick walls, and exposed wooden ceiling structure supported by square, wood columns. A partial-height, historic storage enclosure, with vertical board siding and a shed roof, is located along the southeast wall. The northeast exterior wall has been removed, and thus this section leads directly into the 1951 addition (Section 10). A change in the floor and a partial wall where the 1951 addition (Section 10) expands beyond the plane of the c.1914 addition (Section 6) is all that marks the transition. The 1951 addition (Section 10) consists of an open room with wood floors, exposed brick walls, and an exposed wood ceiling supported by metal I-beams. The historic wood windows of the main section remain intact along the southeast wall of this addition. Furthermore, two pedestrian openings along this section lead back out to the main factory room (Sections 1 and 4).

At the central rear of the main factory room, along the northwest wall, a single-leaf, metal, sliding pedestrian door provides access to the engine house and boiler house (Section 3). Here, a small, enclosed hallway leads to a vestibule from which smaller rooms and the main

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

engine house room branch off. A combination of different door types, including four-paneled, six-paneled, and five-horizontal-paneled, board-and-batten doors, as well as one metal slab door, provide access to the various rooms and storage enclosures within this area. Finishes largely include wood and concrete floors, historic wood beadboard walls and wainscoting, exposed and parged brick walls, shiplap siding in the clerestory, and an exposed wood ceiling structure. The main room of the engine house features an open, central level with a raised storage/filing room, which is accessed by a wooden stoop and enclosed with a metal mesh, on the northeast side. The c.1914 one-bay, masonry addition (Section 7) is located below this room, and accessed by central, wooden steps to the southwest. The window openings along the former exterior wall of the engine house remain, but the sash and glazing have been removed.

At the northeast end of the building, a beadboard partition wall, lined with a continuous row of 15-light windows and three pedestrian openings, serves as the dividing wall between the main factory room and a smaller factory room. Nearly identical to the main factory room, but smaller, the room features an open plan with wood floors, exposed brick walls, and two rows of round, wood columns supporting the exposed wooden ceiling structure and beams. At the northeast end, a thick, parged brick wall with three, large door openings, each with a large metal sliding door, separates this room from the historic picker room. Like the factory rooms, the picker room (Section 2) has two rows of round, wood columns supporting the exposed wood ceiling and beams and is relatively open with the exception of a three-room, floor-to-ceiling wooden storage enclosure located at the south corner. It has wood floors and parged brick walls with wood baseboard trim, as well as a concrete ledge at the base of the northwest wall. All window openings have been infilled with brick. The rear/northeast wall of this room is a former

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

sixteen-inch-thick exterior wall. This wall features the same fenestration pattern as the exterior walls, with infilled brick windows between brick pilasters, which is exposed within the next room. A large, thick, metal door, as well a double-leaf, metal door with a pent roof, provide access to the modern c.1998 addition (Section 15) at the far northeast end. The modern c.1998 metal-frame addition includes an open room with a concrete floor, exposed concrete block walls, and exposed metal ceiling structure supported by I-beams.

2. Cotton Warehouse (c.1902, c.1908, c.1917, c.1931, c.1940) – Contributing Building

This one-story Cotton Warehouse consists of six rectangular warehouse sections that were constructed between c.1902 and c.1940. The original first section was constructed in c.1896 but has since been demolished. Each of the remaining sections features a concrete floor/foundation with a brick foundation wall, vinyl siding, and a combination of low-pitched gable, flat, and shed roofs. Each section is located between a brick gable or stepped parapet wall that extends beyond the plane of the main wall of the section. Each has at least one centrally-located, roll-up garage door on the northwest elevation. What remains of a flat concrete loading platform runs along the rear/northwest elevation of the building. Loading doors provide access to each space individually along this elevation.

The first section, to the far southwest, is a one-bay section that was constructed in c.1902. It has a low-pitched gable roof and a single garage door. The second section, located adjacent to the northeast, was constructed in c.1908. It is one bay with a shed roof. Unlike the others, it has an additional loading door opening on the front/southeast elevation. The third and fourth sections are larger, two-bay warehouses that were constructed in c.1917. Each has a flat roof with two loading doors on the northwest/rear elevation. Similarly, the fifth section was

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

constructed in c.1931 and is nearly identical to the third and fourth sections with a flat roof and two loading doors. The last section, to the far northeast, was constructed in c.1940 and is one bay with a shed roof. A small brick enclosure, with a shed roof and a single-leaf pedestrian door, abuts the brick parapet dividing wall on the northwest wall of this last section.

On the interior, each section features exposed concrete floors and exposed wood framing, square wood posts, and an exposed wood ceiling structure/joists. The side walls/dividing walls between each section consist of exposed common-bond brick walls, while the front (southeast) and back (northwest) walls feature exposed wood framing. Each section features an open plan, with the exception of the c.1940 section, which has a small, exposed, one-room wooden enclosure in the south corner.

3. Pump House No. 7 (c.1902) – Contributing Building

This one-story, two-bay, square building has a brick foundation, six-course common-bond brick walls, and a low-pitched, front-gable, asphalt-shingle roof with boxed eaves. The façade, or northwest elevation, has a single-leaf, boarded up door with a soldier course header, as well as a boarded-up window with a concrete sill and soldier-course header. The northeast elevation also has a boarded-up window with a concrete sill. The southeast and southwest elevations are not visible and are closed off from access by a chain-link fence that connects to the building on the northeast and southwest sides. The building is in fair condition with extensive poor repointing and metal covering missing over the fascia. The interior of the building is inaccessible.

4. No. 12 Shook Storage Building (c.1940) – Contributing Building

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

This one-story, one-bay, wood-frame building has a brick-pier foundation, wood weatherboard siding, and a shed roof with a small overhang projecting over the façade/southeast elevation. Oriented facing the concrete block loading platform and modern warehouse, the façade features a single plywood, sliding pedestrian door. The southwest elevation features a plywood, sliding loading door. The northwest and northeast elevations do not have any openings.

5. Well/Pump House (c.1904) – Contributing Building

This small one-story, one-bay, rectangular well/pump house is located at the base of the Water Tower. It has parged concrete-block walls and a front-gable, asphalt-shingle roof with boxed eaves. Aluminum siding is located in the gable ends. It is connected to the central pole of the water tower with a slanted asphalt component on the northwest end.

6. Water Tower (c.1940) – Contributing Structure

This water tower consists of an elevated, cylindrical, metal water tank with a conical roof that is supported by four steel posts that taper past the water tank footprint as they extend to the ground. A central metal pipe extends from the base of the water tank down to the Well/Pump House that is located directly beneath the structure. The water tower is accessed by a metal ladder connected to a support post on the southwest side. The water tower is in fair condition with noticeable rust and significant ivy growth.

7. Power Station/Transformers (c.1940, post c.1980s equipment) – Non-Contributing Structure

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

A set of transformers on a concrete pad are located on the northwest side of the main building near the Engine House and enclosed by a chain-link fence. A gate provides access to the enclosure at the north corner. Although located close to the building, the enclosure is not attached. A 1940s plan shows that it had four transformers with either 200 or 800 KVAs (the number is slightly unclear). Based on a 1993 plan, it was upgraded to 3,500 KVAs by 1993.

8. Warehouse (c.1993) – Non-Contributing Building

This modern warehouse is located at the southwest end of the property at the northwest corner of the Main Building (factory). This one-story, two-bay, rectangular, metal-framed building has a concrete-block foundation, ribbed metal wall panels, and a low-pitched, front-gable, metal roof with skylights. Accessed from a concrete-block platform, which remains from a previous resource, the façade/southwest elevation features a flat awning in addition to a roll-up, metal garage door and a single-leaf, metal slab pedestrian door. Another single-leaf, metal slab pedestrian door, which is accessed by a concrete stoop, is located on the rear/northeast elevation. The interior has exposed metal framing, metal-paneled walls, an exposed ceiling, and a concrete floor.

9. Valve House 1 (c.1993) – Non-Contributing Building

Located on the North Hughes Boulevard side of the property at the southwest end of the Cotton Warehouse, this small one-bay, one-story valve house has parged concrete block walls and an asphalt-shingle, pyramidal roof with boxed eaves. A single-leaf, metal-slab door is centrally located on the façade/southwest elevation. A circular metal tube extends from the northwest elevation to the Cotton Warehouse.

10. Valve House 2 (c.1993) – Non-Contributing Building

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

Located on the North Hughes Boulevard side of the property at the northeast end of the Cotton Warehouse, this small one-bay, one-story valve house has parged concrete block walls and an asphalt-shingle, pyramidal roof with boxed eaves. A single-leaf, metal-slab door is centrally located on the façade/southwest elevation. A circular metal tube extends from the northwest elevation to the Cotton Warehouse.

11. Cooling Pump/Tower (Post 1967, Pre-1989) – Non-Contributing Structure

This cooling pump/tower is a metal structure with a rectangular footprint and an inverted trapezoidal shape. The northeast and southwest sides have corrugated casing panels, and the northwest and southeast sides have metal louvers. On top, a metal pipe handrail lines the edge of the structure surrounding the central, circular fan stack. A ladder provides access to the top of the structure on the northeast side.

12. Ramp (Post 1993, Pre-1998) – Non-Contributing Structure

This stand-alone rectangular ramp, likely for truck loading, is located at the northeastern end of the site immediately behind the Cotton Warehouse on the northwest side. This masonry ramp has a concrete ramp bed with concrete block walls. The base of the ramp begins at the southwest end. The end of the ramp, at the northeast end, drops off as whatever it was connected to is no longer present. The side walls, on the northwest and southeast sides, extend one concrete-block height above the ramp bed.

13. Above Ground Fuel Tank (Post 1993, Pre-2005) – Non-Contributing Object

This short, above-ground fuel tank is located on the rear/northwest side of the site near the water tower. This metal box has metal paneled sides and an arched metal roof. A metal pipe

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

and a square metal flue are located at the southwest end. Painted red, it is in relatively poor condition with rust and paint deterioration.

14. Power Building (Pre-1989) – Non-Contributing Building

This one-story, one-bay, modern, metal-framed, rectangular building has a concrete foundation, horizontal vinyl siding, and a side-gable, asphalt-shingle roof with boxed eaves. The façade, or southeast elevation, has a central, roll-up loading door, as well as a single-leaf, metal-slab pedestrian door and a small, central, circular window over the loading door. The side and rear elevations do not have any openings. The building is enclosed within a chain-link fence with barbed wire at the top. This building belongs to the City of Elizabeth City and is not associated with the historic significance of the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills.

15. Power Structure (Pre-1989) – Non-Contributing Structure

This modern, metal 34400/600-volt power structure consists of transformers and other electrical components situated on nine individual concrete bases. The structure is enclosed with a chain-link fence with barbed wire at the top. This building belongs to the City of Elizabeth City and is not associated with the historic significance of the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills.

Integrity Analysis

Although there have been several additions to the Main Factory Building and Cotton Warehouse, the exterior of the Main Factory Building retains strong architectural integrity of design, materials, and workmanship as a mill factory building as it retains its original exterior walls, fenestration pattern (despite being infilled), and roof forms. Additions to the main building largely fall within the period of significance, and those that do not retain consistent

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

design elements such as brick exterior walls, masonry construction, and flat or low-pitched roofs. They also retain a similar size and scale proportionate to the various sections of the building. On the interior, the Main Building retains historic finishes including wood floors, exposed masonry walls, and an exposed ceiling structure. The 1990s additions, despite having modern materials, do not detract from integrity as they also retain the same type of design with an exposed industrial space with exposed masonry walls and an exposed ceiling structure.

Like the Main Building, the subsequent additions to the Cotton Warehouse maintain a consistent design with the original section and form a cohesive façade. Each addition retains the same size, scale, and form as the original additions. Each also features the same exterior materials, roof form, and maintains a consistent fenestration pattern limited to one or two loading door openings. On the interior, each section also features the same exposed floors, exposed masonry walls, and exposed wood ceiling structure. The other historic buildings on site are also of a similar size and scale to the various Main Building and Cotton Warehouse additions retaining the single story and rectangular or square form. They also features the same design characteristics utilizing brick for the exterior walls and maintaining flat or low-pitched roofing.

Although the City landscape has developed significantly to the southeast since the first building's construction in c.1896, the mill still remains on the outskirts of town and the site retains integrity of location and setting because the site itself is otherwise largely intact. Other than a few losses to the site, including at least two mill buildings, a section of the Cotton Warehouse, and the mill worker's housing along the rear, the site retains the majority of its historic resources. Additionally, it retains a couple of the foundations from the missing resources, which shows the development of the site, and access to the site and around the site

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

remains the same with little modern alterations. Although there have been three modern additions to the Main Building and one completely modern warehouse added to the site, these do not detract from the landscape as the additions blend with the rest of the Main Building. Likewise, the modern warehouse building is located on the rear of the site hidden by the Main Building on the front and partially obscured by a historic storage building (the No. 12 Shook Storage Building) to the rear which minimizes its visual impact on the site. Furthermore, the Elizabeth City Cotton Mill property retains integrity of its historic feeling and association as a late nineteenth/early twentieth-century cotton mill in regards to its historic role, appearance, and place in the community.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
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.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY

Period of Significance

1896 - 1967

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Elizabeth City Cotton Mills is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A (Industry) for its local, long term industrial significance, its prominent role in the local economy, and as the last remaining, large, nineteenth century industrial complex in Elizabeth City. The Elizabeth City Cotton Mills facility was largely complete by 1896. It was the only cotton mill in the county, and one of two textile mills in the county. Despite periodic closings depending upon the market for its yarn, the mill remained one of the more important businesses and significant employers in Elizabeth City for more than a century. The large, one-story complex itself is highly intact and tells a clear story of the physical development of the mill from its initial construction in 1896 through its last significant additions in 1967. Additionally, the mill retains its original site with a strong link to its historical setting, including the railroad line which served the mill for its entire existence and still runs parallel to the front of the mill today along North Hughes Boulevard. The period of significance for the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills complex begins with the completion of the initial phase of the mill construction in 1896, and continues until 1967, with the completion of the last notable additions and expansions.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills was organized in July 1895 at a meeting of the original eleven stockholders, all local businessmen, led by Charles Hall Robinson, the first president of the company. The creation of the mill was part of a larger industrial boom in Elizabeth City at the time, much of it driven by the opening of the Elizabeth City and Norfolk Railroad, later the

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

Norfolk and Southern Railroad, in 1881. The railroad gave the city direct access to northern markets and included a spur which ran along the northern end of the city. The area surrounding the northern spur became the epicenter of this new wave of industrial development including multiple saw and planing mills and a wide variety of other factories and manufacturing companies, including production of cotton oil, buggies, milling, hosiery and bricks.² Construction of the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills began after the site along North Hughes Boulevard was selected in August 1895, with the contract for bricks being awarded to F.G. Thompson almost immediately. The location of the mill was owned by the Improvement Company of Elizabeth City, which shared five owners in common with Elizabeth City Cotton Mills. Elisha Overton was awarded the contract for woodwork in November 1895.³ The 1896 Sanborn map shows the mill as “being built” with the largest section (approximately three hundred feet east to west) dedicated to “Spinning & Carding” while the eastern bay is assigned as the Picker Room. Attached on the central north side was the engine room, boiler house, and a ninety-foot brick chimney. Directly to the east was the first of what would be multiple cotton storage warehouses. Already in place by 1896, running along the south facing façade, was a branch of the previously established Norfolk & Southern Railroad line, which runs in front of the building even today.⁴ The general production process for this mill, and many others like it, remained largely the same for its entire existence. First, the mill received the cotton in bales from

² Thomas R. Butchko, *National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form – Historic and Architectural Resources of Elizabeth City, North Carolina, 1793-1943* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1992), p.32.

³ Thomas R. Butchko, *On the Shores of the Pasquotank: The Architectural Heritage of Elizabeth City and Pasquotank County, North Carolina* (Elizabeth, NC: The Museum of the Albemarle, 1989), p.244; Thomas R. Butchko, *Historic and Architectural Resources of Elizabeth City, North Carolina, 1793-1943*, p.26, 31;

⁴ *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, June 1896, sheet 6.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

the gins and then removed foreign materials, such as leaf or stem particles, or cotton seeds. The cotton was then processed through a series of machines: carding, drawing, roving, spinning, twisting and winding, resulting in yarn as the finished product.⁵The development of the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills was part of a statewide transformation of the textile industry in North Carolina in the late nineteenth century. Led by Daniel A. Tomkins, several industrialists launched what became known as the “Cotton Mill Campaign.” For most of the century the location and success of mills was limited by the proximity and power of local waterways. The arrival of railroads and power sources not tied to water finally allowed the mills to expand their locations and the size of their operations. The railroads provided easier access to markets as well as providing an unlimited supply of coal to fuel the mill boilers. Elizabeth City Cotton Mills was built as this movement was sweeping across North Carolina.⁶

By 1897, the mill was in operation and by 1898, it was already expanding beyond the original building, adding approximately one hundred fifty additional feet to its west end. Another cotton storage warehouse was constructed abutting the first one on its east side. To help mitigate the regular threat of fire, an elevated 10,000-gallon capacity water tower was added just north of the main mill building, supplied by a 35,000-gallon reservoir. The 1902 Sanborn map label states that the mill is for “Spinning & Carding (No Weaving),” and holds 10,000 spindles. The Picker House on the east side is listed as having five pickers and one waste machine.⁷ An article in *The North Carolinian* from July 1899 declared that business was booming and that, even with eighty

⁵ Elizabeth City Cotton Mills, *An Introduction to Elizabeth City Cotton Mills* (Elizabeth City, NC, 1998).

⁶ Brent D. Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina* (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Division of Archives and History: 1992), p.4, 11, 14, 27.

⁷ “Untitled,” *The North Carolinian*, (December 15, 1898), p.3; “Untitled,” *The North Carolinian* (July 27, 1899), p.3; *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, March 1902, sheet 1.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills

Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC

County and State

employees and running double time, the mill could not keep up with orders. By 1902, the mill was advertising for additional employees, the size of the work force had reached one hundred thirty and the mill was considering instituting a night shift. Often when one industry was successfully established, related industries were collocated to improve business and efficiency, and this is clearly seen with the opening of the Cotton Mill Supply Co., which opened on South Poindexter Street as a manufacturer of spools and spindles.⁸

From July 15th to August 27th, 1903, the mill faced a shut down as a result of high cotton prices and low prices for cotton yarns. This was the beginning of a yearslong pattern of feast or famine for workers at the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills, an experience shared by millworkers across the country during the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century. Mills would open or close depending upon the price of needed commodities, or the market for the goods produced.

Additionally, mills were regularly closed for days or weeks at a time for repairs or maintenance of machinery.⁹ Advertisements for additional workers changed in 1905 with the mill now looking to hire girls, boys, and two or three families for steady employment.¹⁰ As more families came to work for the mill, a mill village emerged directly south of the mill from lots which had been laid out beginning in late 1895 in anticipation of the mill. The houses were eventually built by both the mill and individual purchasers. These houses, which once numbered in the hundreds, are now mostly demolished, or significantly altered.¹¹

⁸ "Untitled," *The North Carolinian* (January 12, 1898), p.3; "Untitled," *The North Carolinian* (July 27, 1899), p.3; "Untitled," *The Weekly Economist* (May 16, 1902), p.4; "Untitled," *The Weekly Economist* (October 3, 1902), p.4; "Untitled," *The Weekly Economist* (January 2, 1903), p.4.

⁹ "Untitled," *The Weekly Economist* (September 4, 1903), p.4

¹⁰ "Help Wanted." *The Daily Economist* (July 28, 1905), p.4.

¹¹ Butchko, *On the Shores of the Pasquotank*, p.244.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

Like all other mills in the south, children and entire families played a vital role in the overall picture of employment. For the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and into the twentieth century, the number of women and children working in cotton mills was greater than the number of men. Several reasons were given to justify this reality, with the most obvious being the lower wages paid to women and children. It was also believed their small hands left them better able to complete the precise milling and threading tasks. Mill owners also sometimes claimed that women and children were easier to train, and to gain their employment entire families were encouraged to move to the mill towns. To ensure the participation of women and children in the mill work force, families living in mill housing were often required to supply a certain number of workers per room or dwelling.¹² One advertisement in 1913 is an example of this purposeful approach to the mill workforce: “Families desirous of obtaining profitable and congenial employment can find it at the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills. We pay while you learn and offer work to all children thirteen years of age and over.” (J.L. Gregson, Superintendent).¹³ The precarious state of families working for the mill is highlighted by a case involving a child worker being injured at the mill. I.P. Perry (a minor) was on a wheeled platform, lost his balance due to instability of the moveable platform, and fell to the floor, breaking his arm among other things. Mill operatives that testified said that they had not seen such a platform in any other mill; typically, in that situation a ladder would have been used. As a result, Perry sued the mill for damages related to his injuries, and was compensated \$1,000.¹⁴

¹² Melton Alonza McLaurin, *Paternalism and Protest: Southern Cotton Mill Workers and Organized Labor, 1875-1905* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Corporation, 1971), p.21-24.

¹³ “Permanent Employment, Elizabeth City Cotton Mills,”(advertisement) *The Advance* (April 25, 1913), p.3.

¹⁴ “Boy Wins Suit Against Mill,” *The Advance* (February 16, 1915), p.1.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

For the post-Civil War nineteenth century, and into the twentieth century, the typical mill work force was heavily segregated with African Americans forbidden from operating machinery to protect the jobs of white workers. Black workers were relegated to manual labor positions in a warehouse or picker room, largely separated from whites. In the primary mill work space, utilizing the new continuous-spinning ring frame technology, white women and children made up more than seventy-five percent of the workforce. White men worked as machinists or in management.¹⁵ An article from 1918 described a notable incident when a “colored coal passer” named Gus Rogers found a stick of dynamite in a carload of coal, likely left by accident during the mining process.¹⁶ This story is notable in confirming that African Americans and whites worked in the mill together, albeit in clearly delineated positions with “coal passer” corresponding to the typical manual labor job available for African American workers. The following ad in 1918, and multiple variations of it which ran in local newspapers for many years, represented a transition of the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills from only a production facility to a service-based business offering cotton storage to individuals, separate from the cotton stored for mill operations.

“We will store your cotton in our standard cotton warehouse at a cost of 25 cents per bale per month. This includes storage, handling, weighting, grading and insurance. We will issue negotiable receipts which you can use as collateral for borrowing if you desire. This is cheaper than you can insure it in your own barn and cheaper than leaving it out in the weather to be damaged. This is no obligation to sell the cotton to us, although we are always in the

¹⁵ Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina*, p.19.

¹⁶ “Finds Dynamite in Load of Coal,” *The Daily Advance* (March 6, 1918), p.1

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

market to buy cotton in bales, paying full market price for it here at all times.”¹⁷

This change in the business model of the mill corresponds with further expansion of the cotton warehouses on site. The 1908 Sanborn map shows a third warehouse added and by 1914, there was a shipping room attached to the rear of the primary mill building, as well as the office tower being added to the front.¹⁸ However, by 1923, two additional warehouses had been built, each twice the size of the original three warehouses, thus more than doubling the cotton storage capacity. By 1931, a third double-size warehouse had been built, necessitating the demolition of three dwellings at the east end of the mill complex.¹⁹ With this addition, the mill reached a point in time when the physical plant incorporated most of what is seen today. The mill of 1931 is largely recognizable as the mill which closed more than seventy years later.

When originally constructed in 1895, the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills followed the latest trends in North Carolina in regards to size and equipment. The mill exceeded the state average of 10,000 spindles by 1902 and the mill incorporated new technologies ring-spinning and automatic looms, which allowed the mill to produce its standard yarns with lower cost and operated by unskilled workers, following statewide trends exactly.²⁰ However, in November of 1919, the mill was forced to shut down as a result of a coal shortage, and increasingly regular shutdowns at the mill highlighted the fact that the facility was a quarter century old design. The U.S. Railroad Administration limited deliveries of coal for the winter of 1919-1920 to manufacturing industries. There was also a scarcity of wood, and none was available for the mill. In contrast,

¹⁷ “Cotton Storage” (advertisement), *The Daily Advance* (March 6, 1918), p.1.

¹⁸ *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, March 1908, sheet 1; *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, March 1914, sheet 11.

¹⁹ *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, March 1923, sheet 19; *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, January 1931, sheet 19.

²⁰ Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina*, p.34-35.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

the five hosiery mills in Elizabeth City, which employed approximately six hundred workers, were able to stay open as they operated utilizing electricity from the Electric Light Company.²¹ The primary power source for the mill was a production weakness, which would not be rectified until ca 1940, when the mill was linked to electrical service. Another example, in early 1921, the mill was forced to close for three weeks as a result of a broken main driving shaft.²² Key components of the mill were irreplaceable, and often unfixable, leaving mill workers with regular gaps in employment. This regular shutting and opening of the mill for repairs and updates was, unfortunately for the workers, a common feature of existence for many mills during this time. Given the fickle nature of the market for their products, mill owners were loath to invest in improvements until they were unavoidable. In an effort to help its workers, Elizabeth City Cotton Mills offered four acres of land for employees to use for free for gardens. By 1922, thirty families were using the 30'x100' parcels.²³ However, benefits such as these had a limited ability to mitigate low wages and erratic mill work hours.

When it was first established, the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills was built outside the city limits, a common tactic by early industrialists to avoid municipal taxes. Elizabeth City, looking to increase revenues in 1921, had State Representative Charles Albert Cooke sponsor a bill in the General Assembly which extended the city limits north by three hundred feet. Several manufacturing facilities were brought within the new city limits, including the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills, the Farmers Ginning & Produce Company, the Eastern Cotton Oil Company cotton gin, the Elizabeth City Hosiery Mill, the Standard Oil Company, and the Southern Gas

²¹ "Fuel Famine Here May Throw Many Out of Job," *The Independent* (November 21, 1919), p.1.

²² "Cotton Mill Shuts Down Three Weeks," *The Daily Advance* (February 25, 1921), p.1.

²³ "Employees Are Given Space for Gardens," *The Daily Advance* (April 25, 1922), p.2.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

Improvement Company. Overall, the city gained more than one million dollars of taxable industrial property. The two most valuable facilities previously located in the county, but now facing city taxation were the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills (\$411,000) and the Elizabeth City Hosiery Mill (\$480,000). Previously the value of all taxable land in the city was \$11,300,000; this small land acquisition represented a dramatic increase in revenue. The mill owners, supported by the Merchants Association and the Chamber of Commerce, attempted to reverse the maneuver, but failed.²⁴ While additional licensing taxes would have certainly helped the town's budget, it is unlikely to have reached a level to damage the prospects of the mill. However, what this episode certainly highlighted is the success of the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills and the importance of the mill to the city. The value of the mill and its contributions to city coffers, when combined with its role for decades as one of the leading local employers, demonstrated a multi-generational significance to the community.

The same year as the incorporation of the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills into Elizabeth City, mill superintendent J.G. Gregory gave a talk at the Chamber of Commerce luncheon summarizing the status of the mill at that time. The mill had a regular employment of one hundred twenty-five persons and annual expenses between \$400,000-450,000, of which \$262,821 was paid to regional farmers. The mill used 2,500 bales of cotton each year to produce cotton yarn, which was then sold to production mills in Pennsylvania, New York and Massachusetts which produced "cotton fabrics, clothing, lace curtains and hundreds of other articles..."²⁵ Other uses included insulation for electric wires, as well as rugs and carpets. In 1921, the mill was operating 11,400 spindles and producing up to 25,000 pounds of yarn each week. The workers at this time were

²⁴ "A Study in Municipal Government in America," *The Independent* (February 25, 1921), p.1.

²⁵ "Pays Out Nearly Half Million Annually," *The Independent* (May 13, 1921), p.5.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

not faring well; payroll was almost \$1200 per week for the entire workforce, but this was still the rate from two years earlier.²⁶

To bolster the mill against drops in pricing, its side business in cotton storage reached as high as two thousand bales in 1921. An added feature for customers was that the mill offered storage receipts, which could be used as collateral at banks.²⁷ As the local cotton storage business grew, the decision was made in Elizabeth City to establish a bonded cotton storage warehouse. This also gave farmers a local bonded storage option, with the City of Norfolk, Virginia being the only bonded option at that point. This was a threat to the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills' business, which reached as high as seventy percent of the annual cotton yield in Pasquotank County.²⁸

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills quickly responded to this challenge to its cotton storage business by obtaining a license under the Federal Warehouse Act from the Department of Agriculture to operate as a bonded warehouse, with space for up to 2,250-2,500 bales of cotton. Additionally, to lower insurance rates, and thus rates for cotton storage customers, the mill had a 50,000-gallon tank installed on a seventy-five-foot tower.²⁹ Having a substantial supply of water on site to immediately apply to any fire substantially mitigated the potential damage, and thus insurance losses. Soon after, the mill again advertised their cotton storage facilities, but now as a bonded warehouse with "two Classers and Weighers licensed..." under the United States Warehouse Act. The rate for storage was listed as twenty-five cents per bale, which included insurance and weighing and handling. An advertisement at the time declared that it was "cheaper than allowing your cotton to be damaged by exposure to the weather or even insuring it in your barn, to say

²⁶ "Pasquotank Cotton Made Into Cloth For Chinese," *The Daily Advance* (August 26, 1921), p.1.

²⁷ "Pasquotank Cotton Made Into Cloth For Chinese, (August 26, 1921), p.1.

²⁸ "A Bonded Warehouse Is Now A Certainty," *The Daily Advance* (December 12, 1921), p.1.

²⁹ "And Another Bonded Cotton Warehouse," *The Independent* (July 7, 1922), p.1.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

nothing of the advantage of being able to sell at any time or to borrow against it...³⁰ By 1923, the mill could warehouse 3,500 bales a year and, in addition, was spending \$350,000 per year purchasing cotton for the primary mill business.³¹ The Elizabeth City Cotton Mills continued this long-term strategy of adapting to the market, which would keep the mill in business for well over a century, far longer than most mills in North Carolina.

However, the Great Depression affected Elizabeth City and its businesses the same as it did most of the United States, with massive layoffs and irregular or nonexistent availability of jobs. The cotton mills, the sawmills, and the wood manufacturing plants faced the most severe declines. Of the several dozen lumber related industries which existed in 1910, only Foreman-Blades, Kramer and Chesson companies remained by 1942. However, the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills and the Elizabeth City Hosiery Mill faced shutdowns for months at a time, and for a full year in 1938.³² Beginning in 1930, a series of work stoppages and mill closings became the standard reality for the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills as demand for cotton yarn fluctuated wildly for much of the 1930s. In December of 1930, the mill closed on Christmas Eve day, forcing approximately one hundred “men, women, girls, and boys...out of work,” representing about twenty five percent of the city unemployment at that time.³³ After three weeks there was still no date for reopening, and no other jobs since cotton mills in the entire region faced the same situation. In response to substantial pressure from the mill employees, and their specific complaints that the founder, Charles H. Robinson, always kept the mill running, Charles Oakley Robinson, son of the mill’s

³⁰ “Elizabeth City Bonded Warehouse, Elizabeth City Cotton Mills, Proprietors,” *The Independent* (July 14, 1922), p.3.

³¹ “To Increase Capacity Of Cotton Warehouse,” *The Independent* (June 29, 1923), p.2.

³² Thomas R. Butchko, *Historic and Architectural Resources of Elizabeth City, North Carolina, 1793-1943*, p.32.

³³ “Citizens Are Not Reacting Favorably to 2% Proposal,” *The Independent* (January 2, 1931), p.2

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

founder, declared defensively that “if the merchants in Elizabeth City want to take over the cotton mill and operate it...they would be surprised how cheap we’ll sell it to them.”³⁴ So desperate were the mill owners to reopen that they would do so if they could keep losses at less than \$20,000 per year. To alleviate some of the duress, mill owners paid rent and utilities for some employees and helped maintain their dwellings. Additionally, to prepare for a successful reopening, the mill overhauled and reconditioned its equipment.³⁵ This same pattern of closings and reopenings, layoffs and rehiring, repeated itself year after year for all of the 1930s.

In May of 1933, the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills reopened after being closed for most of the previous two years. C.O. Robinson, president of the mill, made no promises, but claimed there were enough orders for yarn to last for a few months for approximately one hundred workers. Wages were to be the same as two years earlier, demonstrating the same wage stagnation seen from 1919-1921, but likely exacerbated by the Great Depression.³⁶

As the Great Depression continued, President Franklin Roosevelt implemented a vast array of new laws and work programs. To aid the mills of the South, Roosevelt signed a new textile code to begin on July 17, 1933. The code required a minimum wage of \$12 per forty-hour work week “for all Southern textile employees.”³⁷ This represented a dramatic increase from the previous wage scale which was as low as \$5.90 for a fifty-five-hour work week. It was declared that the “new code will abolish child labor since it forbids the employment of anyone under 16 years of age in the textile industry,”³⁸ which replaced the previous limit of fourteen years. Mill president

³⁴ “Cotton Mill May Be Shut down For Several Months,” *The Independent* (January 23, 1931), p.3.

³⁵ “Cotton Mills In Readiness For Reopening,” *The Independent* (October 16, 1931), p.1.

³⁶ “Hum of Cotton Mill Machinery Is Sweet Music,” *The Independent* (May 5, 1933), p.7.

³⁷ “Prosperity or Unemployment to Be Lot of Some 200 Textile Workers in E. City Cotton Mill,” *The Independent* (July 14, 1933), p.1.

³⁸ “Prosperity or Unemployment,” *The Independent* (July 14, 1933), p.1.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

C.O. Robinson declared that the mill would follow the law but could be forced to close because of the increased costs and cotton product prices would increase by as much as 50 percent.

However, the paper stated that, if the mill stays open, mill workers will “take a new lease on life and better their living conditions, which have been almost intolerable during the past two or three years, but they will have more purchasing power and will spend more money with the home town merchants, bringing about a substantial business revival in the town.”³⁹ These types of laws helped mitigate some of the effects of the Great Depression, but it would be the early 1940s and the onset of World War II before the industry truly rebounded.

The day after Labor Day in 1934, the textile workers in the United States held a general walkout involving hundreds of thousands of workers in the cotton industry, as well as workers from the silk, rayon and woolen mills. The driving factors cited for the strike were inhumane methods of operation, a decline in employment after the textile code was enacted, a decline in average weekly earnings, and the firing of workers for being union members. However, the workers at the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills did not participate. These mill workers were not unionized. Mill president C.O. Robinson stated that the mill followed the wage and hours rules required by the Industrial Recovery Act and declared that “this city and section has never been bothered by union organizers and labor agitators” because the conditions outlined as being the cause of the strike do not exist to any extent in the local mills. Robinson continued, “we are doing the best we can for our employees, and I don’t think any of them feel that we can do more under present conditions.”⁴⁰ Robinson also claimed to have polled his employees and found that most of them

³⁹ “Prosperity or Unemployment,” *The Independent* (July 14, 1933), p.1.

⁴⁰ “Local Cotton Mill Workers Not Expected to Take Part in Nation Wide Textile Strike,” *The Independent* (August 31, 1934), p.1.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

were satisfied and did not want to take on the risks of a strike.⁴¹ Whether or not conditions at the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills were actually better than the average textile factory worker in the South, it is true that the mill workers there did not generally follow the national trend of unionization or participation in strikes. However, this viewpoint of satisfied, well compensated, happy workers was part of a depiction by mill owners of their role being benevolent, paternalistic caretakers of their workers. In reality, these workers usually lived with poverty, as well as high rates of injury and mortality.⁴²

The story of the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills continued through the 1930s in much the same vein with a constant cycle of closings and openings and stagnant wages. World War II was the final factor in returning the mill to dependable, successful operations. An interview with the last owner of the mill, Harry J. Robinson, fills in the consistent and largely unchanging history of the mill after World War II.⁴³ The mill did run through the entirety of World War II, and much of it was run by women because the men were serving in the war. As for what the mill produced, before, during and after the war it was always cotton yarn for weaving. Products produced from the mill's yarn included cotton tapes, bandages, and later upholstery products. Some changes in the functionality of the mill did occur after World War II. Everything had previously arrived or left the mill by train car, including cotton, new machines and shipping the product out to customers. However, beginning in the 1960s, shipping switched entirely to tractor trailers. The power for the plant had been coal driven steam for half a century, before converting to electrical service ca 1940. Air conditioning was added to the mill in 1965 (which was when the windows

⁴¹ "Local Textile Workers Don't Want A Strike," *The Independent* (September 14, 1934), p.1, 6.

⁴² Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina*, p.25-26.

⁴³ Mr. Robinson consulted with his brother, Charles O. Robinson III, before the interview to provide information about the post-WWII mill history.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

were bricked up) and around that time the lighting changed from hanging bulbs to fluorescent.

Soon after air conditioning “air washers” were added to clean the mill air. Between World War II and the final closing all of the equipment was changed out for newer versions at least once, and multiple times in some cases.⁴⁴

The mid-to-late 1960s was the end of major physical changes to the plant. One small change was the addition of the front office in the 1980s to try and modernize to make it more inviting than the tower office to secretarial staff. The modern era saw three eight-hour shifts, six-and-a-half days per week, if they had business. Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years Day were the only holidays. The number of workers in the post-World War II period generally fluctuated between 130-140 per shift, with many of them long-term employees; sometimes several years would pass without hiring because employees stayed for so long. When they closed there were 112 employees. By the time the time it closed, Robinson viewed the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills as small versus larger competitors.⁴⁵

The experience of Floyd and Mary Rhodes tells the story of the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills after World War II until its final closing in October 2008, from the standpoint of the workers. Floyd Rhodes started working at the mill in 1944, when he was sixteen years old, and made forty cents per hour. Mary Rhodes joined the mill work force in 1947 at the age of seventeen and made sixty-two cents per hour. Both of them worked for the mill for over fifty years until it closed. They lived in a mill village house within sight of the mill. The mill remained one of the primary employers in the town for most of its history, sometimes employing as many as four hundred

⁴⁴ Harry J. Robinson (Last owner of the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills) Telephone interview with Marcus Pollard, February 13, 2024.

⁴⁵ Harry J. Robinson (Last owner of the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills) Telephone interview with Marcus Pollard, February 13, 2024.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills

Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC

County and State

workers in the second half of the twentieth century. There were “round-the-clock shifts either at the cotton mill or the two hosiery mills that were part of the same company.” As with its early history, there were shutdowns when the yarn market was soft, but the shutdowns were much shorter and less frequent.⁴⁶

A company promotional brochure published in 1998 stated that the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills “manufactures 100% carded ring spun cotton yarns. We manufacture approximately 50,000 pounds of yarn per week.” The company at that time had approximately 93 workers and ran three eight-hour shifts per day. By this time the mill had long ago eliminated the steam boilers (ca 1940) and was run completely on electricity. “With electric lights installed, the mill runs 24 hours per day in 100% air-conditioned areas.” The three major expenses for the manufacturing process were cotton, labor, and electricity. The process of making the yarn was similar in many ways to the process a century earlier. The mill received the cotton in bales from the gins and then removed foreign materials such as leaf or stem particles, or cotton seeds. The cotton was then processed through a series of machines processes: cards, drawing, roving, spinning, twisting and winding. At this time most of the yarn was used in upholstery fabric.⁴⁷ By the time of its closing, the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills had produced essentially the same cotton yarn in the same location for more than a century. Most textile mills closed in the late twentieth century, with very few surviving into the twenty-first century. The Elizabeth City Cotton Mills represent an extraordinary story of industrial history in this region of North Carolina. Additionally, the mill served as one of the largest employers in Elizabeth City for generations, as well as a major

⁴⁶ Thomas R. Butchko, *Historic and Architectural Resources of Elizabeth City, North Carolina, 1793-1943*, p.32; Marjorie Ann Berry, *Legendary Locals of Elizabeth City* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2014), p.54.

⁴⁷ Elizabeth City Cotton Mills, *An Introduction to Elizabeth City Cotton Mills* (Elizabeth City, NC, 1998).

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

source of tax revenue. The Elizabeth City Cotton Mills were a vital part of the local economy and the community for more than a century. And, as a rare surviving industrial resource from the early industrial period in the city, the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills embody a part of the city's history whose resources are largely lost.

Criterion A: Industry

The Elizabeth City Cotton Mills is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Industry for its local, long-term industrial significance, its prominent role in the local economy, and as the last remaining large nineteenth century industrial complex in Elizabeth City. Aside from the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills, very little remains from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century industrial boom in Elizabeth City. Only parts of the Elizabeth City Brick Works and Pasquotank Hosiery Mill remain, while all of the other myriad of mills, factories and lumber businesses have been demolished.⁴⁸ The Elizabeth City Cotton Mills is the only intact nineteenth or early twentieth century industrial resource remaining in a city which was an industrial hub for more than a century. Additionally, this mill complex retains its entire original nineteenth century core and features mill design and construction elements which were often demolished or significantly altered in mills as they grew and developed. With all of its component parts, from its initial construction in 1896 through its final notable additions in the 1960s and until its closure in 2008, this complex demonstrates the development and functionality of the cotton mill industry for more than a century and is a physical manifestation of North Carolina textile industrial

⁴⁸ Thomas R. Butchko, *Historic and Architectural Resources of Elizabeth City, North Carolina, 1793-1943*, p.22, 31-32; Heather Slane and Cheri Szcodronski, *Elizabeth City Industrial Historic District, National Register of Historic Places* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2021), p.24-25.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

significance in a city where every other intact resource has been lost. Finally, it must be acknowledged that the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills employed hundreds of workers a year, and thousands of workers across generations of its existence, sometimes serving as the leading employer of Elizabeth City. It is the sole remaining representative of the city's industrial development and was a vital employer and part of the city economy for over a century.

Local Industrial Context

Arguably the most significant driving factor in the expansion of the industrial base of Elizabeth City was the opening of the Elizabeth City and Norfolk Railroad, later the Norfolk and Southern Railroad, in 1881. The railroad gave the city direct access to northern markets, which led to a tremendous boom in industrial, commercial and residential construction. The railroad included a spur which ran along the northern end of the city, ending at the river. The northern spur was the focal point of the new wave of mills and general industrial expansion in Elizabeth City. Led by the Kramer and Blades families, multiple saw and planing mills were opened to the north side of town around Knobbs Creek to expand the existing lumber industry. All of these early lumber mills have been demolished.⁴⁹ While the lumber industry fueled much of the early industrial expansion of Elizabeth City in the late nineteenth century, the 1890s brought the arrival of several additional industries besides the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills itself, particularly along the rail lines north and west of the city: the Elizabeth City Cotton Oil Mills in 1895; the Elizabeth City Net and Twine Company in 1895; the Elizabeth City Buggy Factory in 1899; the Elizabeth

⁴⁹ Thomas R. Butchko, *Historic and Architectural Resources of Elizabeth City, North Carolina, 1793-1943*, p.19-22; Heather Slane and Cheri Szcodronski, *Elizabeth City Industrial Historic District, National Register of Historic Places* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2021), p.22-23.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

City Milling Company in 1900; what would become the Elizabeth City Hosiery Company in 1902; and the F.G. Thompson Brick Works and the Elizabeth City Brick Works, both in 1902. Later one additional textile resource, the Pasquotank Hosiery Mill, opened north of the city in 1914. Besides the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills, only one resource from the Elizabeth City Brick Works and one building from the Pasquotank Hosiery Mill remain, with all of the others demolished.⁵⁰ The Great Depression began a rapid decline in Elizabeth City's industrial economy which extended after the World War II boom. Of the several dozen lumber related industries which existed in 1910, only Foreman-Blades, Kramer and Chesson companies remained by 1942 and most of the other large scale industrial mills and business were closed by the 1950s.⁵¹

Regional Industrial Context

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, the textile industry in North Carolina remained limited, particularly as compared to the dominant position of the New England mills. However, led by Daniel A. Tomkins and several other industrialists, the "Cotton Mill Campaign" began to bear fruit in the late nineteenth century as the textile industry in North Carolina, and the southern United States, began a rapid expansion. For most of the nineteenth century, the location and success of the mills was limited by the location and power of local waterways. It was the arrival of the railroads, and later electricity which finally expanded the location and dependence of mills away from water power. The railroads allowed for not only greater access for their goods, but

⁵⁰ Thomas R. Butchko, *Historic and Architectural Resources of Elizabeth City, North Carolina, 1793-1943*, p.22, 31-32; Heather Slane and Cheri Szcodronski, *Elizabeth City Industrial Historic District, National Register of Historic Places* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2021), p.24-25.

⁵¹ Thomas R. Butchko, *Historic and Architectural Resources of Elizabeth City, North Carolina, 1793-1943*, p.32.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

also provided the mills with access to cheap and abundant fuel, namely coal. Even as late as 1890, seventy of the ninety-one textile mills in North Carolina used water for some or all of their power. Water as a source of power peaked in the 1880, and then rapidly declined as mills moved to steam engines and boilers.⁵²

For much of the post-Civil War nineteenth century, the mill work force was heavily segregated with African Americans forbidden from operating machinery to protect the jobs of white workers. Black workers were relegated to manual labor positions in a warehouse or picker room, largely separated from whites. In the primary mill work space, utilizing the new continuous-spinning ring frame technology, white women and children made up more than seventy-five percent of the workforce. White men worked as machinists or in management.⁵³ Another feature of the nineteenth century textile mill workforce in North Carolina was the depiction of the mill owners as benevolent, paternalistic caretakers of their workers, who were content and formed an efficient cotton production machine. The reality was poverty and a high rate of injury and mortality.⁵⁴

With railroads and now steam engines in place the textile industry was set to expand quickly and massively. Between 1880 and 1900 steam engines as a source of power increased from sixteen to sixty-four percent, while railroad track mileage increased from 1,500 to 4,000 miles. The work of Daniel A. Tomkins complimented the technological developments. He led the creation of the School of Textiles at North Carolina Agricultural and Mechanical College in Raleigh (now North Carolina State University) as well as publishing countless books and articles on cotton

⁵² Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina*, p.4, 11, 14, 27.

⁵³ Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina*, p.19-21.

⁵⁴ Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina*, p.25-26.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

manufacturing and textile marketing for investors and engineers to use in establishing and running textile mills. It has been declared that D.A. Tomkins did more for the development of the cotton manufacturing industry of the South than any other man.⁵⁵ It was this combination of factors which provided the foundation for so many more mills to be opened in the late nineteenth century, such as the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills.

From 1885 to 1915 the number of textile mills in North Carolina increased from sixty to three hundred and eighteen. The number of spindles grew from 200,000 to 3.88 million. The number of workers in textile mills rose from approximately 10,000 to 51,000. The size of mills also grew, from an average of 3-4,000 spindles to almost 10,000 spindles, which would put the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills above the state average. Additionally, it was the ring-spinning and automatic loom technologies which specifically allowed the mills to produce low-grade yarns at low cost and with unskilled workers, exactly as seen at the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills.⁵⁶

The design of mills also changed dramatically in the late nineteenth century following the lead of New England mills. New mills were always brick to prevent or slow fires, and incorporated flat roofs, heavy timber interiors and large windows for light and ventilation. Fire walls were added to the interior to separate different sections and operations of the mill, and prevent the spread of fires. Elevated water tanks, fire pumps and automatic sprinklers were also utilized. These mills also embraced simple exterior design with few architectural features or embellishments. The location of mills also changed with new plants built just outside of town with houses for employees and to avoid local property taxes and local government. This design also allowed for

⁵⁵ Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina*, p.32-33.

⁵⁶ Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina*, p.34-35.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

the accommodation of workers who often were arriving from rural settings and transitioning to factory work and life.⁵⁷

The Elizabeth City Cotton Mills incorporated all of these mill design elements, both in its initial construction, and through its physical development through the late twentieth century. The original mill building and initial additions feature a flat roof, brick masonry construction and heavy timber interiors, punctuated by many large windows, for light and ventilation. This mill also retains brick fire walls between different sections of the mill, dividing each operation into its own space to limit the damage from a potential fire. As they became available, elevated water tanks, fire pumps and automatic sprinklers were added to improve the safety of the mill. The last water tower to be built is still extant behind the mill. The Elizabeth City Cotton Mills are also fairly simple in design with limited decorative architectural elements, following the trend of late nineteenth century mill design. Beyond its initial period of construction, as the nature of the cotton mill industry changed, the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills also added multiple storage warehouses beginning in the early twentieth century. This reflected the change in the mill business model from storing cotton only for mill operations, versus the new trend of serving as a cotton storage facility for farmers and investors as well. Finally, smaller additions were made, primarily to the rear of the building as the mill was upgraded to add electrical power and, later air conditioning. However, unlike many mills which changed their products, the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills core group of buildings and additions remained little changed for much of its history as yarn remained its singular product for its history.

⁵⁷ Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina*, p.38-42.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Andrews, Mildred Gwin. *The Men and the Mills, a history of the southern textile industry*. (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1987).

“An Introduction to Elizabeth City Cotton Mills.” Elizabeth City Cotton Mills, 1997.

Berry, Marjorie Ann. *Legendary Locals of Elizabeth City*. Legendary Locals. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2014.

Bishir, Catherine W., and Michael T. Southern. “Pasquotank County (PK).” In *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Eastern North Carolina*, 98–110. Chapel Hill, NC & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

Branson, Levi. “The North Carolina Business Directory 1890.” Levi Branson, Office Publisher, 1890.

———, ed. “The North Carolina Business Directory 1896.” Levi Branson, Office Publisher, 1896.

———, ed. “The North Carolina Business Directory 1897.” Levi Branson, Office Publisher, 1897.

Branson, Rev. L., ed. “The North Carolina Business Directory.” J.A. Jones, 1872.

———, ed. “The North Carolina Business Directory 1877 and 1878.” L. Branson, Publisher and Bookseller, 1877.

Branson, Rev. Levi, ed. “The North Carolina Business Directory for 1884.” Levi Branson, Office Publisher, n.d.

“Branson’s North Carolina Business Directory, for 1867-8, Containing Facts, Figures, Names and Locations.” Branson & Jones Publishers, 1867.

“Branson’s North Carolina Business Directory, for 1869, Containing Facts, Figures, Names and Locations.” J.A. Jones, 1869.

Brook, David. Letter to Dan Argabright. “Memorandum,” August 2, 1996.

Butchko, Thomas R. “National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form—Historic and Architectural Resources of Elizabeth City, North Carolina, 1793-1943.” United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, September 30, 1992.

Butchko, Thomas R. *On the Shores of the Pasquotank: The Architectural Heritage of Elizabeth City and Pasquotank County, North Carolina*. Elizabeth City, NC: The Museum of the Albemarle, 1989.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills

Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC

County and State

Collins, Herbert. "The Idea of Cotton Textile Industry in the South, 1870-1900." *The North Carolina Historical Review* 34, no. 3 (July 1957): 358-92. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23516902>.

"Elizabeth City, North Carolina City Directory 1923-1924." Commercial Service Co., 1923.

"Elizabeth City, Pasquotank Co., N.C. 1902." Sanborn. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1902.

"Elizabeth City, Pasquotank Co, N.C. June 1896." Sanborn. New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Co., Limited, June 1896.

Glass, Brent D. "Cotton Mills." In *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, edited by William S. Powell and Jay Mazzocchi, 194-95. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Glass, Brent D. *The Textile Industry in North Carolina*. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1992.

Griffin, Richard W. "Reconstruction of the North Carolina Textile Industry, 1865-1885." *The North Carolina Historical Review* 41, no. 1 (January 1964): 34-53. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23517504>.

Hamilton, J.G. de Roulhac. *History of North Carolina Volume III, North Carolina Since 1860*. Vol. 3. Chicago and New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1919.

Hampton, Jeff. "Elizabeth City Cotton Mills Closes after 113 Years," October 24, 2008, PilotOnline.com.

Hearden, Patrick J. *Independence and Empire: The New South's Cotton Mill Campaign, 1865-1901*. DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1982.

"Historic Edenton Cotton Mill Village." Preservation North Carolina, Northeast Regional Office, n.d.

"Insurance Maps of Elizabeth City, Pasquotank Co., North Carolina March 1914." New York: Sanborn Map Company, March 1914.

"Insurance Maps of Elizabeth City, Pasquotank Co., North Carolina March 1923." New York: Sanborn Map Company, n.d.

"Insurance Maps of Elizabeth City, Pasquotank County, North Carolina. March 1908." New York: Sanborn Map Company, March 1908.

McLaurin, Melton Alonza. *Paternalism and Protest: Southern Cotton Mill Workers and Organized Labor, 1875-1905*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Corporation, 1971.

Miller, Ernest H, ed. "Elizabeth City, North Carolina City Directory 1912-13." Piedmont Directory Company Inc., 1912.

"Miller's Elizabeth City, North Carolina City Directory 1936-37." Southern Directory Co., 1936.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills

Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC

County and State

“Miller’s Elizabeth City, North Carolina City Directory 1938-39.” Southern Directory Co., 1938.

“Miller’s Elizabeth City, North Carolina City Directory 1942-43.” Southern Directory Co., 1942.

“Miller’s Elizabeth City, North Carolina City Directory 1949-1950.” Southern Directory Co., 1949.

“Miller’s Elizabeth City, North Carolina City Directory 1955-56.” Southern Directory Co., 1955.

“Miller’s Elizabeth City, North Carolina City Directory 1962-1963.” Southern Directory Co., 1963
1962.

Mitchell, Broadus. *The Rise of Cotton Mills in the South*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1921.

Moore, Toby. “Discourses of Work and Consumption in the Demis of the Southern Cotton Mill Village System.” *Business and Economic History* 28, no. 2 (Winter 1999): 163–72.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/23703329>.

Overman, Lou N., and Edna M. Shannonhouse, eds. *Yearbook Pasquotank Historical Society*. Vol. 3. Baltimore: Gateway Press, Inc, 1976.

Owen, Scott. “Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report Final Identification- Elizabeth City Thoroughfare Plan Pasquotank County.” North Carolina Department of Transportation, June, 1996.

Robinson, Harry J. (Last owner of the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills) Telephone interview with Marcus Pollard, February 13, 2024.

Stern, Boris. *Mechanical Changes in the Cotton-Textile Industry, 1910 to 1936*. Studies in Changing Labor Productivity. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1937.

Talmage Lefler, Hugh, and Alberty Ray Newsome. *The History of a Southern State-North Carolina*. Third. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973.

Tar Heel. “Various Articles.” n.d.

The Daily Advance. “Various Articles.” n.d.

The Daily Economist. “Various Articles.” n.d.

The Independent. “Various Articles.” n.d.

“The North Carolina Year Book and Business Directory 1905.” The News and Observer, 1905.

“The North Carolina Year Book and Business Directory 1910.” The News and Observer, 1910.

“The North Carolina Year Book and Business Directory 1916.” The News and Observer, 1916.

The North Carolinian. “Various Articles.” n.d.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

The Weekly Advance. "Various Articles." n.d.

The Weekly Economist. "Various Articles." n.d.

Tompkins, D.A. *Cotton Mill, Commercial Features. A Text Book for the Use of Textile Schools and Investors. With Tables Showing Cost of Machinery and Equipment for Mills Making Cotton Yarns and Plain Cotton Cloths*. Charlotte, N.C.: D.A. Tompkins, 1899.

Weaver, C.E. *Elizabeth City, Rich in Natural Beauty, Unsurpassed in Location, Unlimited in Resources. Manufacturing, Lumbering, Trucking and Fishing Center*. The C.E. Weaver Series: Illustrated Cities. Richmond, VA: Central Publishing Co, 1915.

Wood, John Elliot. "Brief Sketch of Pasquotank County." *Pasquotank Historical Society Yearbook* 1 (n.d.): 2-15.

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 # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): PK-316

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 8.58

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 36.306779 Longitude: -76.232395

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The National Register boundary encompasses the 8.58-acre parcel historically associated with The Elizabeth City Cotton Mills. The mill is located on a single rectangular parcel oriented toward North Hughes Boulevard to the southeast, and bordered by Mill Street to the northwest, Parsonage Street to the northeast, the Norfolk Southern Railroad to the southeast, and a line of trees from North Hughes Boulevard to Mill Street on the southwest side. The true and correct historic boundary is shown on the attached Sketch Map, which has a bar scale of 1" = 200'.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The National Register boundary for the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills includes all of the property historically associated with the mill since its completion in c.1896. The boundary includes the single parcel associated with the mill and is clearly defined by streets on three sides and a natural border of trees along the property line on the fourth/west side. The property's historic setting and all known associated extant resources have been included within the historic boundary.

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Marcus Pollard and Victoria Leonard
organization: Commonwealth Preservation Group
street & number: 536 W 35th Street
city or town: Norfolk state: VA zip: 23517
e-mail: admin@commonwealthpreservationgroup.com
telephone: 757-923-1900
date: August 2023

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Elizabeth City Cotton Mills

City or Vicinity: Elizabeth City

County: NA

State: VA

Photographer: Victoria Leonard and Marcus Pollard

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

Date Photographed: 2/24/23, 3/21/23, 5/1/23

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 54.

Photo No. of 54	Description	Camera Direction	Date	Photographer
1	Main Building (Factory), Façade/Southeast Elevation, two-story c.1908 and one-story c.1989 Office in foreground	NW	2/24/2023	MP
2	Main Building (Factory), south corner of façade, c.1902 addition	NE	2/24/2023	MP
3	Main Building (Factory), south corner of two-story c.1908 office addition	N	2/24/2023	MP
4	Main Building (Factory), northeastern end of Façade/Southeast Elevation	NE	2/24/2023	MP
5	Foundation of Original (c.1896)/First Section of the Cotton Warehouse	NW	2/24/2023	MP
6	Cotton Warehouse, Façade/Southeast Elevation	NE	2/24/2023	MP
7	Cotton Warehouse, Northeast Elevation	W	2/24/2023	MP
8	North corner of Cotton Warehouse	SW	2/24/2023	MP
9	Cotton Warehouse, Northwest Elevation, post 1993 ramp in foreground, Main Building in background	SW	2/24/2023	MP
10	Cotton Warehouse, Northwest Elevation, post 1993 ramp in foreground	SE	2/24/2023	MP
11	North corner of Main Building (Factory), c.1998 modern addition and c.1914 Dry Valve House Foundation in foreground, c.1896 Cotton Warehouse foundation in background	S	2/24/2023	MP
12	Main Building (Factory) – View toward c.1896 Boiler House and Engine House, c.1902 Pump House No. 7 and Pre 1989 Cooling Pump/Electric in foreground	S	2/24/2023	MP
13	Main Building (Factory) – View toward c.1896 Boiler House and Engine House	SE	2/24/2023	MP

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

14	Main Building (Factory) – View toward c.1951 addition and c.1951-1967 Apparatus Building No. 1 (addition), c.1940 electric/transformer enclosure in foreground	S	2/24/2023	MP
15	West corner of Main Building (Factory), c.1940 addition in foreground, post 1993/pre 1998 Boiler Addition in background	SE	2/24/2023	MP
16	Main Building (Factory), Southwest Elevation, post 1993/pre 1998 Boiler Addition in foreground	NE	2/24/2023	MP
17	c.1940 No. 12 Shank Storage Building	NE	2/24/2023	MP
18	Opener Room No. 8 Foundation	W	2/24/2023	MP
19	Water Tower and Well/Pump House	NW	5/1/2023	VL
20	c.1993 Warehouse	SW	2/24/2023	MP
21	Billboards	W	5/1/2023	VL
22	Post 1993 Fuel Tank	NW	5/1/2023	VL
23	Elizabeth City Cotton Mills Substation – including the power building and power structure	W	5/1/2023	VL
24	Main Building (Factory), interior, main room at southwest end/c.1902 addition	SW	5/1/2023	VL
25	Main Building (Factory), interior, main room at southwest end/c.1902 addition	NW	3/21/2023	MP
26	Main Building (Factory), interior, c.1951 Addition	SW	5/1/2023	VL
27	Main Building (Factory), interior, c.1951 Addition, view toward main room	SE	5/1/2023	VL
28	Main Building (Factory), interior, main room a southwest end/c.1902 addition	E	5/1/2023	VL
29	Main Building (Factory), interior, main room at southwest end/c.1902 addition	NE	5/1/2023	VL
30	Main Building (Factory), interior, main room, view toward dividing wall between the main room and the northeast factory room	N	5/1/2023	VL
31	Main Building (Factory), interior, main room, view toward the Apparatus Building No. 1 (addition)	NW	5/1/2023	VL

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

32	Main Building (Factory), interior, main room, view toward entrance to the historic Engine House and Boiler House	NW	5/1/2023	VL
33	Main Building (Factory), interior, storage room within the Engine House	E	5/1/2023	VL
34	Main Building (Factory), interior, storage room within the Engine House, view toward clerestory windows	SW	5/1/2023	VL
35	Main Building (Factory), interior, main room of Engine House	NW	5/1/2023	VL
36	Main Building (Factory), interior, main room of Engine House	SE	5/1/2023	VL
37	Main Building (Factory), interior, Apparatus Building No. 1 (addition)	SW	3/21/2023	MP
38	Main Building (Factory), interior, northeast factory room	SW	5/1/2023	VL
39	Main Building (Factory), interior, historic Picker House	S	5/1/2023	VL
40	Main Building (Factory), interior, historic Picker House	SW	5/1/2023	VL
41	Main Building (Factory), interior, historic Picker House, door detail/former exterior door on the northeast wall	NE	5/1/2023	VL
42	Main Building (Factory), interior, c.1998 modern brick and metal frame addition	NW	3/21/2023	MP
43	Main Building (Factory), interior, c.1998 modern brick and metal frame addition, view toward original factory exterior wall	SW	5/1/2023	VL
44	Main Building (Factory), interior, main room, view toward two-story c.1908 office addition	S	5/1/2023	VL
45	Main Building (Factory), interior, two-story, c.1908 office addition, first-floor office	SW	5/1/2023	VL
46	Main Building (Factory), interior, one-story c.1989 office addition, main entrance	N	5/1/2023	VL
47	Main Building (Factory), interior, one-story c.1989 office addition, main office	S	5/1/2023	VL

Elizabeth City Cotton Mills
Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC
County and State

48	Main Building (Factory), interior, two-story c.1908 office addition, first set of stairs to the second floor	SW	5/1/2023	VL
49	Main Building (Factory), interior, two-story c.1908 office addition, second-floor office	S	5/1/2023	VL
50	Main Building (Factory), interior, two-story c.1908 office addition, second-floor office	N	5/1/2023	VL
51	Cotton Warehouse, interior, Section No. 3/c.1908 addition	SE	5/1/2023	VL
52	Cotton Warehouse, interior, Section No. 5/c.1917 addition	SE	5/1/2023	VL
53	Cotton Warehouse, interior, Section No. 6/c.1931 addition	S	5/1/2023	VL
54	Cotton Warehouse, interior, Section No. 7/c.1940 addition	NW	5/1/2023	VL

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

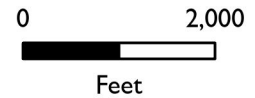
The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.



Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community, City of Elizabeth City, State of North Carolina, OT, Esri, HERE, Garmin, Swisstopo, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, SUS Census Bureau, USDA, NC In Map, NC Center for Geographic Information and Analysis, NC 911 Board, Common Health Preservation Group/Erin Howard

Location Map

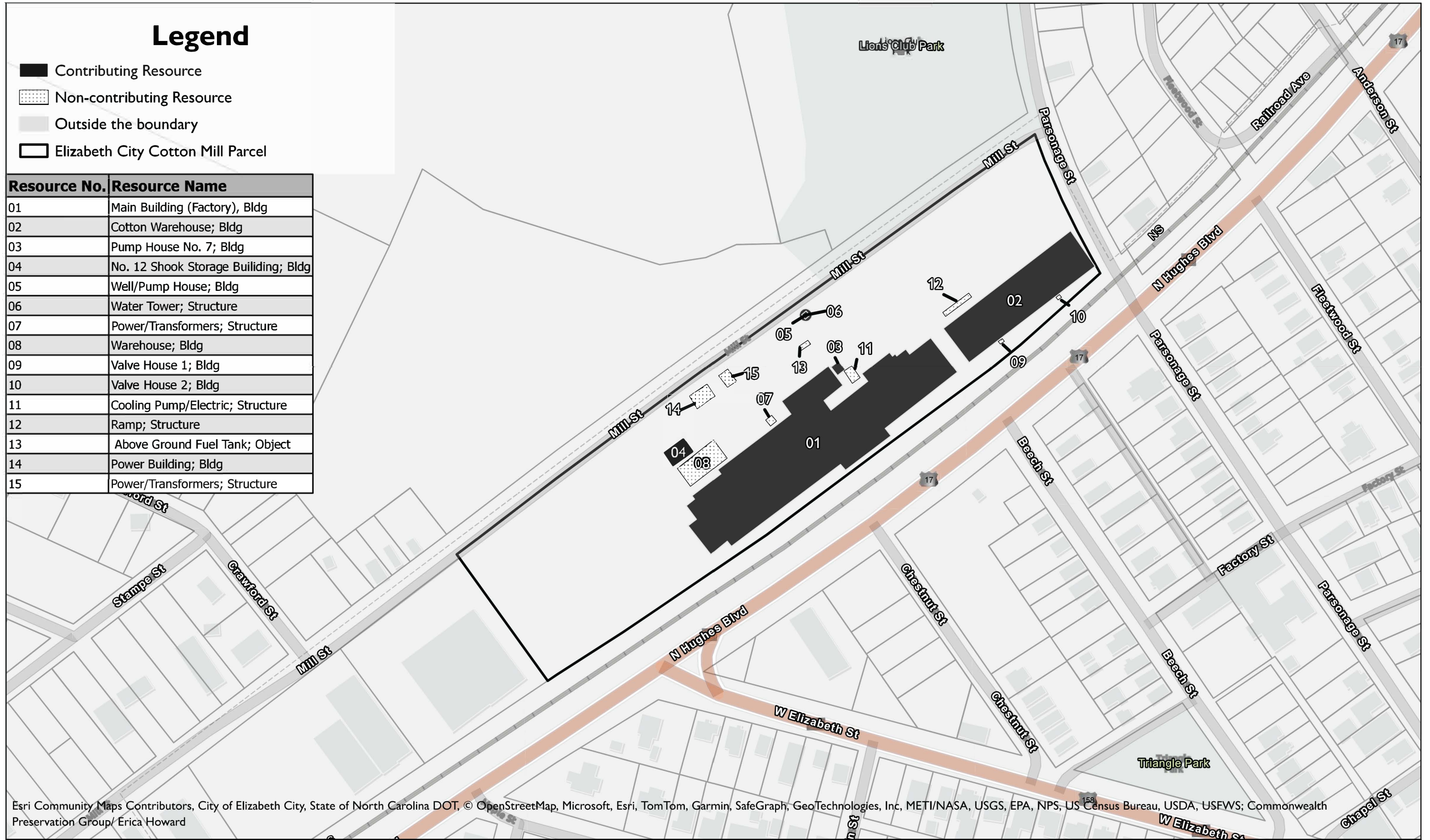
Elizabeth City Cotton Mill
 451 North Hughes Boulevard
 Elizabeth City, Pasquotank County, North Carolina
 PK-316



Legend

- Contributing Resource
- Non-contributing Resource
- Outside the boundary
- Elizabeth City Cotton Mill Parcel

Resource No.	Resource Name
01	Main Building (Factory), Bldg
02	Cotton Warehouse; Bldg
03	Pump House No. 7; Bldg
04	No. 12 Shook Storage Building; Bldg
05	Well/Pump House; Bldg
06	Water Tower; Structure
07	Power/Transformers; Structure
08	Warehouse; Bldg
09	Valve House 1; Bldg
10	Valve House 2; Bldg
11	Cooling Pump/Electric; Structure
12	Ramp; Structure
13	Above Ground Fuel Tank; Object
14	Power Building; Bldg
15	Power/Transformers; Structure



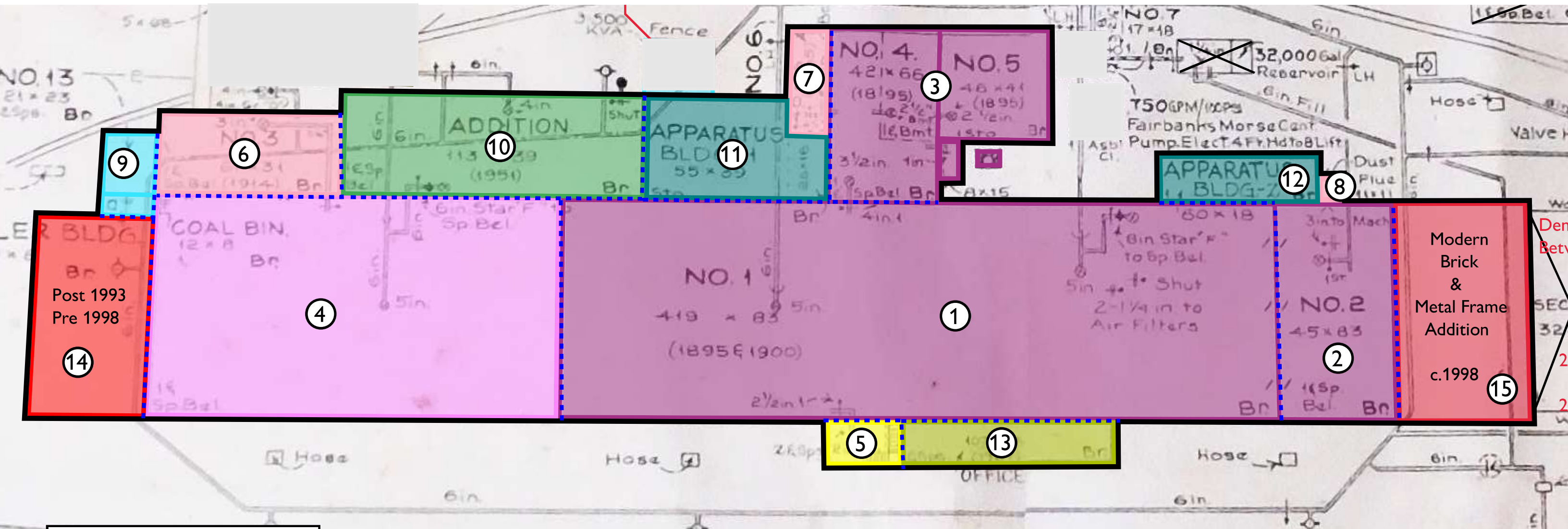
Esri Community Maps Contributors, City of Elizabeth City, State of North Carolina DOT, © OpenStreetMap, Microsoft, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USEWS; Commonwealth Preservation Group/ Erica Howard

Boundary Map & Site Plan

Elizabeth City Cotton Mill
 451 North Hughes Boulevard
 Elizabeth City, Pasquotank County, North Carolina
 PK-316



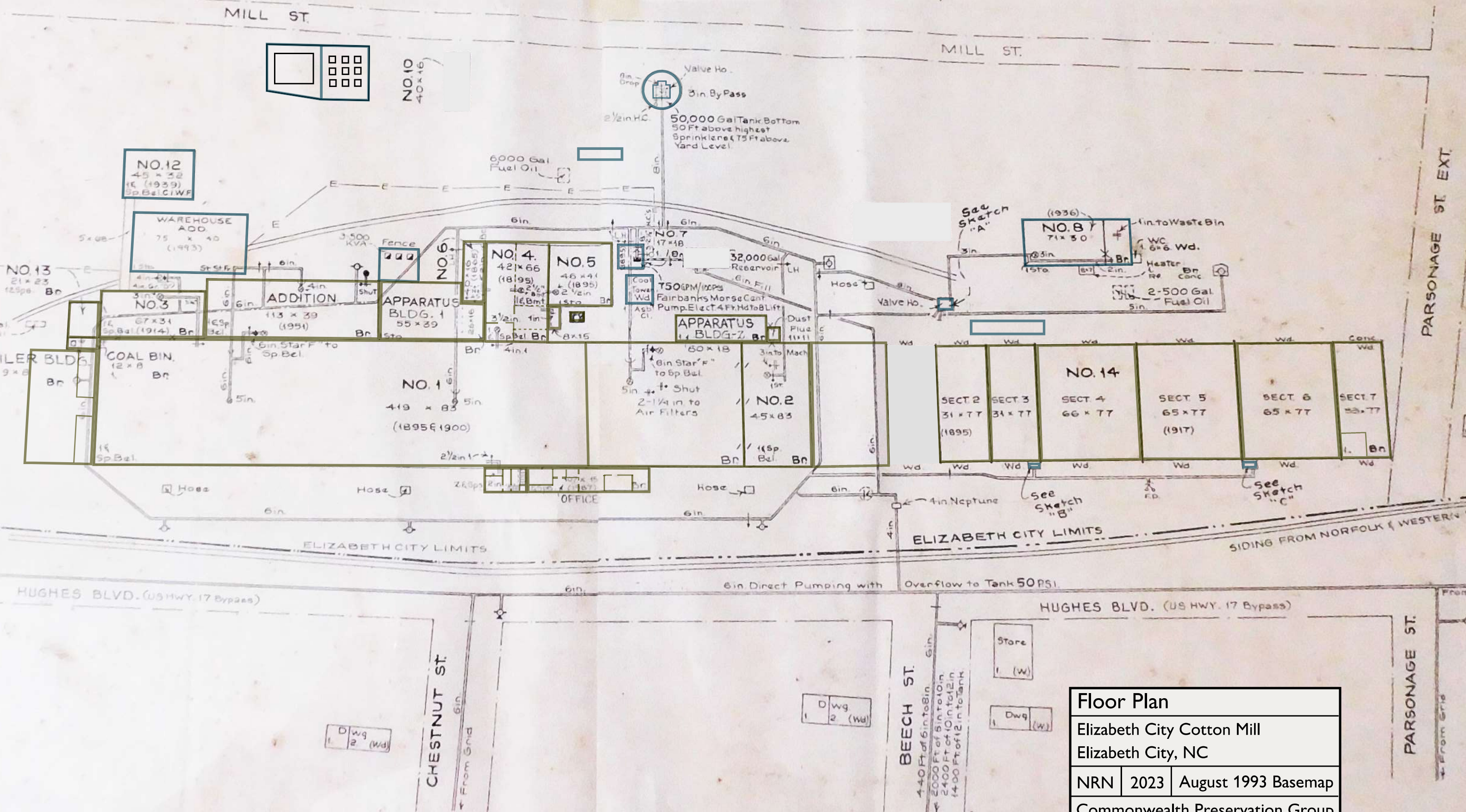
Main Building: Section Key



- = Main Building Outline
- = Building Section Dividers (for descriptive purposes)
- = Section Number

Main Building Section Key		
Elizabeth City Cotton Mill		
Elizabeth City, NC		
NRN	2023	August 1993 Basemap
Commonwealth Preservation Group		

SKETCH "B"
PIPING IN VALVE HO.
Not to Scale



Floor Plan
Elizabeth City Cotton Mill
Elizabeth City, NC
NRN | 2023 | August 1993 Basemap
Commonwealth Preservation Group



Esri, Community Maps Contributors, City of Elizabeth City, State of North Carolina, DOT, © OpenStreetMap, Microsoft, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA

Photo Key

Elizabeth City Cotton Mill
451 North Hughes Boulevard
Elizabeth City, Pasquotank County, North Carolina
PK-316

