

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Olympia Mill

other names/site number Pacific Mill

2. Location

street & number 500 Heyward Street not for publication N/A  
city or town Columbia vicinity N/A  
state South Carolina code SC county Richland code 079 zip code 29201

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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      nationally X statewide      locally. (      See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mary W. Edwards 12/17/04  
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register      See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register      See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Edson B. Beall 2/2/05

other (explain):

Olympia Mill  
Name of Property

Richland County, SC  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

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

Textile Mills in South Carolina Designed by W.B. Smith Whaley, 1893-1903

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

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN / Romanesque

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls brick

terra cotta

roof synthetic

other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

Olympia Mill  
Name of Property

Richland County, SC  
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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY  
ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1899 - 1954

**Significant Dates**

1899

**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 a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

W.B. Smith Whaley & Company

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

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

See continuation Sheet.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS)**

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

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repositories: S.C. Dept. of Archives & History

Olympia Mill  
Name of Property

Richland County, SC  
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 6.7 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	496708	3760148
2	17	496744	3760047
3	17	496579	3759918
4	17	496514	3760092

See continuation sheet.

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

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cynthia Rose Hamilton

organization Powers & Company, Inc. date August 11, 2004

street & number 211 N. 13<sup>th</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor telephone (215) 636-0192

city or town Philadelphia state PA zip code 19107

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

Property Owner

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

name SC Mill Properties, LLC

street & number 1411 Walnut Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor telephone (215) 241-0200

city or town Philadelphia state PA zip code 19102

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

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

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Olympia Mill, Richland County, SC

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Olympia Mill is located on the southwest corner of Heyward Street and Olympia Avenue in Columbia, South Carolina. Constructed in 1899, Olympia Mill is comprised of a massive four-story, red brick, rectangular shaped, main mill building that is connected to an original one and two-story red brick power plant. Other buildings that are part of the mill complex include: a one-story brick power plant auxiliary building and a one-story storage building that are located to the rear of the site, and two small brick one-story gate houses that are located along Heyward Street. Surrounding the site is the historically related Granby Mill (National Register, Granby Mill Village Historic District, September 1993) to the west, a partially paved parking lot to the north, and the Olympia Mill housing village to the east and south. A chain link fence borders the property along the two street elevations. The main mill building contains features representative of the Romanesque style of architecture with a red brick exterior embellished with terra cotta detailing, large segmental arched window openings, and twin pyramidal roofed towers that rise above the flat roofline. Aside from the infilling of the windows, the building has been little altered over the years and remains intact and in excellent condition. The secondary buildings continue the vocabulary of materials and similar architectural detailing and survive in largely original condition. Olympia Mill maintains its ability to reflect its historic function and retains integrity.

The total number of resources includes five contributing buildings (Main Mill with Power Plant, Power Plant Auxiliary Building, Storage Building, East Gate House, and the West Gate House).

**Main Mill Building with Power Plant (1 Contributing Building)**

Main Mill Building

The four-story main mill building is 550' long by 150' wide and is organized into 53 bays on the primary Heyward Street (north) elevation and spans 13 bays deep along the Olympia Avenue (east) and west elevations (see photographs 1-3). The brick is largely unornamented aside from recessed courses of brick that articulate the corners and stepped brick buttresses that are spaced in regular intervals along the north and south elevations.

Soaring above the roofline on the north elevation are twin pyramidal roofed towers, the mill's most striking architectural features (see photographs 4, 6). All elevations are characterized by massive regularly spaced segmental arched window openings. In the early 1960s, all window sash and frames were removed throughout the building and the openings were bricked-in when air and humidity control machinery was installed. The dimensions of the window openings exactly match the size of the adjacent Granby Mill window openings. Thus it appears that Olympia's windows were original paired 12/12 wood sash with paired 6-light transoms. One window on the second story of the west elevation was removed at some point and a metal conveyor was installed that connected to the adjacent Granby Mill.

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The towers are robust compositions that are heavily embellished with orange brick and terra cotta detailing. At the base of each tower is a wide entrance opening enframed by a molded terra cotta surround that is topped by a terra cotta belt course and plaque containing the words, "Olympia Cotton Mills" (see photographs 5, 7). Tall orange brick pilasters with terra cotta bases and Corinthian capitals rise above the entrance blocks, further emphasizing the verticality of the towers. Wide terra cotta arches spring from the pilaster capitals defining each of the three tower bays. Above the arches are two wide terra cotta belt courses, the uppermost also containing a dentil mold. Above the beltcourse are three arched openings with terra cotta surrounds. The west tower serves as the bell tower; the east tower as the clock tower. Crowning each tower is a terra cotta cornice with running arch details and a pyramidal shaped standing seam metal roof with flagpole.

Two main entrances serve the main mill building, one at the base of each tower. Both entrances have been partially infilled with brick to accommodate square-headed, ca. 1980 double-leaf, flush wood doors.

Four, small, two-story brick flat roofed additions were added to the north elevation ca. 1960 to house modern air and humidity control equipment (see photographs 1-4). Those additions have multi-light aluminum windows and louvered openings. Entrance to those additions is gained through single-leaf flush steel doors.

Access to the interior is provided by the two entrances located at the base of each tower on the north elevation. Each entrance leads to a small vestibule featuring an original terrazzo floor (see photograph 16). The building's two main stairs originate within these vestibules. The stairs contain wood treads and risers, beaded board wood knee walls, and painted brick walls with plaster wainscoting (see photographs 18, 19). Metal fire doors separate the stair towers from the main manufacturing area on each floor. The tower appendages on the south elevation contain the washrooms and the elevators (see photograph 20).

The interior of the main mill building is primarily open in plan with no original partitioning (see photographs 17-26). Some modern partition walls were inserted ca. 1970 on the first and second floors. Interior finishes reflect the utilitarian use of the building with wood floors, painted brick and plaster walls, and exposed wood beamed ceilings. Five rows of rounded wood columns run the length of the building on each floor.

Alterations to the main mill building have been primarily limited to changes made ca. 1960 for the accommodation of air and humidity control equipment. Those changes included the removal of the window sash and the construction of four two-story brick appendages that were added to the north elevation to house the air handling equipment. Research indicates that a few original partition walls did exist in the original plan, but those have been removed. Historic photographs also show regularly spaced skylights on the roof which would have allowed for

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abundant natural light necessary for the spinning operations; those skylights have been removed or covered over. Despite those changes, the main mill Building has been little altered and retains its industrial character and its ability to express the features and construction details typical of a late nineteenth century textile mill.

Power Plant Extension

Attached to the rear or south elevation of the main Olympia Mill building is the one and two story power plant that was constructed in conjunction with the main mill building in 1899 (see photographs 11, 12). The power plant housed four interrelated functions: machine shop, engine room, boiler room, and the induced draft room. The buildings are unified on the exterior by a common vocabulary of red brick articulated in the form of arched window surrounds, molded brick belt courses and a corbelled cornice. The roof is flat throughout. All window sash were removed ca. 1970 and the openings were infilled with wood shingles. In some instances the window openings were infilled with brick. Two entrances are located on the west elevation, each containing ca. 1980 steel doors. Entrances are also located on the south and east elevations. Those entrances each contain double-leaf paneled wood doors; the east elevation entrance contains four-light windows.

The interior of the power plant is utilitarian in character with concrete floors, painted brick walls, and exposed wood beam ceiling (see photographs 27-29). The two-story sections remain as two-story spaces within the interior with small mezzanines in certain areas. There does not appear to be any surviving original machinery.

Alterations to the power plant building include the infilling of the windows, door replacement, and the addition of a free-standing terra cotta smokestack and free-standing cooling equipment near the rear in the mid-twentieth century.

**Power Plant Auxiliary Building, 1 Contributing Building**

Standing to the immediate east of the power plant is a small one-story, flat roofed, red brick auxiliary building that was erected some time after 1903 (see photograph 13). The historical use of this building is unclear. Entrance to the building is gained through a single-leaf opening on the south elevation and a second single-leaf opening on the west elevation. There are currently no doors remaining at these entrances. All windows have been infilled either with red brick, wood shingles, or ventilation louvers. Some openings have concrete lintels and sills and some openings have brick segmental arched heads. The cornice is corbelled brick.

The interior of the building contains a concrete floor, painted brick walls, and exposed wood beam ceiling.

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Beyond the infilling of the windows, the building has been little altered and thus retains integrity.

**Storage Building, 1 Contributing Building**

At the rear of the site stands a one-story, flat roofed, brick storage building (see photograph 15). The main (north) elevation spans eleven bays across and the building is one bay deep. One bay retains its original configuration with a central segmental arched window opening flanked by smaller segmental arched window openings; the remaining bays have been bricked-in or shingled over. There are no surviving windows. Two single-leaf entrances exist, both of which contain modern flush steel doors.

The interior is utilitarian in character with concrete floor, painted brick walls and wood beamed ceiling.

Despite the alterations to the bays, the building retains its overall form, scale and primary building materials and thus retains integrity.

**East Gate House, 1 Contributing Building**

On the south side of Heyward Street, centered in front of the main mill building, is the east gate house (see photograph 8). This building is comprised of two small, brick, hipped roof pavilions that are connected by a narrow gabled roof. The entire roof is slate and the cornice contains a running arch motif. The windows in the two pavilions are boarded over. Two entrances access the west pavilion, and one entrance accesses in the east pavilion; the entrances are partially boarded over.

Access to the interior was not possible.

The east gate house retains its original form, materials, and fenestration pattern and thus retains integrity.

**West Gate House, 1 Contributing Building**

Positioned along Heyward Street, to the west of the east gate house, stands the west gate house (see photograph 9). This gate house is similar in design to the west gate house and is a small brick pavilion with a running arch cornice and slate hipped roof. Fenestration is provided by 8-light wood casement windows. A single entrance accesses the interior and contains a single-leaf door.

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The interior was not accessible.

The west gate house retains its original form, materials and fenestration and thus retains integrity.

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Olympia Mill, situated at the southwest corner of Heyward Street and Olympia Avenue in Columbia, South Carolina, stands as an intact example of late nineteenth century textile mill architecture. Constructed in 1899, the Olympia Mill factory building meets National Register Criterion A and C for its significance in the areas of Industry and Architecture. The building is significant in the area of Industry for its association with one of Columbia's most important cotton textile manufacturers. Olympia Mill also possesses significance in the area of Architecture as an important example of the Romanesque style applied to industrial architecture and the work of important mill designers, W.B. Smith Whaley & Company. The period of significance begins with the completion of the building in 1899 and extends to 1954, in compliance with the fifty years closing date of the National Register standards. Olympia Mill retains its original form and industrial-defining characteristics, such as its exposed timber framing and massive window openings and thus retains a high level of architectural integrity.

### SUMMARY HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

William Burroughs Smith Whaley designed, owned and operated Olympia Mill, serving as its first president. Olympia was one of four cotton mills the firm designed and constructed in Columbia. The firm's innovations in mill design contributed to the rise of the textile industry in South Carolina and helped to secure their position as one of the most important textile mill designers in the nation.

When Olympia Mill opened in 1899, it was widely recognized as "the largest cotton mill under one roof in the world."<sup>1</sup> Planning for Olympia was begun before Whaley completed the adjacent Granby Mill (1896-97).<sup>2</sup> Like Granby, Olympia had its own village, which lies to the southeast. Such mill villages were common in South Carolina's textile industry as the promise of comfortable housing enticed workers to migrate from rural areas, while allowing the mill owners to exert certain social and economic controls over their workers.<sup>3</sup>

Whaley financed the construction of Olympia, as well as his three other Columbia mills, exclusively through local investment. This was a novel concept at a time when most southern mill owners sought backing from investors in the north.<sup>4</sup> Whaley's exclusive reliance on local capital, coupled with his commitment to progressive mill design and the use of expensive

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<sup>1</sup> The claim that Olympia was the largest mill at the time of construction is widely published in primary and secondary source material, including, "The Latest and Greatest," *The State*, May 17, 1899.

<sup>2</sup> Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc., "Olympia Mill and Village," c. 2001, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> D.A. Thompkins of Charlotte, promoted the idea of mill villages and established recommended guidelines in his 1899 treatise, *Cotton Mill Commercial Features: A Textbook for the use of Textile Schools and Investors*, Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc., "Olympia Mill and Village," c. 2001, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc., "Olympia Mill and Village," c. 2001, p. 16.

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equipment, led to a significantly underfunded venture from its inception. By mid-1900, just one year after the mill opened, Whaley was forced to secure additional loans, but was unable to raise sufficient capital to keep the mill operational. A new board of directors was elected in November 1903. While Whaley remained on the board, he was joined by a majority from the northern states.<sup>5</sup> Following the reorganization, Whaley resigned as president and moved to Boston, but retained an ownership interest in the mill for several years thereafter.

Lewis W. Parker stepped in as Whaley's successor around 1905.<sup>6</sup> In 1911, Olympia and Granby were sold to Parker Cotton Mills of Greenville, South Carolina.<sup>7</sup> For a short time, Olympia and Granby then became known as Hampton Cotton Mills Company.<sup>8</sup> Pacific Mills of Lawrence, Massachusetts purchased four Columbia mills in 1916, including Olympia and Granby, and together those mills became known as the Hampton Mills Department of Pacific Mills.<sup>9</sup> Pacific Mills retained ownership for nearly four decades, when in 1954, the entire Pacific Mills chain was purchased by Burlington Industries.<sup>10</sup> The following year, Burlington Industries was sold to M. Lowenstein & Sons.<sup>11</sup> In 1988, M. Lowenstein & Sons Mills sold the Olympia and Granby mills to Springs Corporation who immediately instituted production cuts and began downsizing until they closed all operations at Olympia in 1996.<sup>12</sup>

**SIGNIFICANCE IN INDUSTRY**

Olympia Mill is significant in the area of Industry for its association with an important manufacturer of cotton print cloths, a sub-sector of South Carolina's powerful cotton industry. This building has been little altered and thus retains its capacity to convey the process of cotton textile manufacturing in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Historical records indicate that cotton goods were made in South Carolina as early as 1768, but those early efforts were concentrated in private homes and in small factories and were exclusively distributed to a local market. The first cotton mill in the state was not established

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<sup>5</sup> New board members hailed from Massachusetts, Maryland, New York and Rhode Island, Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc., "Olympia Mill and Village," c. 2001, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> Official American Textile Directory; Containing Reports of All the Textile Manufacturing Establishments in the United States and Canada (Boston, MA: Guild & Lord, 1905), 306.

<sup>7</sup> "Olympia Mill," <http://www.midnet.sc.edu/histcola/olympia/olybase.htm> (April 8, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> Official American Textile Directory; Containing Reports of All the Textile Manufacturing Establishments in the United States and Canada (Boston, MA: Guild & Lord, 1915), 343.

<sup>9</sup> "Olympia Mill," <http://www.midnet.sc.edu/histcola/olympia/olybase.htm> (April 8, 2004) and *Dockham's American Report & Directory of the Textile Manufacture & Dry Goods Trade*, (Boston, MA, 1919), p. 394.

<sup>10</sup> "Olympia Mill," <http://www.midnet.sc.edu/histcola/olympia/olybase.htm> (April 8, 2004).

<sup>11</sup> "Olympia Mill," <http://www.midnet.sc.edu/histcola/olympia/olybase.htm> (April 8, 2004).

<sup>12</sup> Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc., "Olympia Mill and Village," c. 2001, p. 17.

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until 1790.<sup>13</sup> The first large scale mill, which featured 8,400 spindles and 300 looms, was built in Graniteville in 1846.<sup>14</sup> Over the next decade, additional mills were erected. While work was disrupted during the Civil War, 11 mills remained in operation in South Carolina during the war.<sup>15</sup> After 1860, the state's cotton textile industry began to prosper, a result, in part, of the establishment of the railroads and a simultaneous population boom. In 1860, there were 17 mills in the state, employing 2,612 operatives who produced cotton yarns and cloths.<sup>16</sup> The flourishing cotton industry played a significant role in helping the state to recover from the war during the reconstruction period.

During the 1880s, South Carolina's cotton textile industry was thriving and mills opened in Anderson, Greenville and Spartanburg Counties. The number of mills grew during this decade from 14 in 1880 to 31 in 1885, representing a collective increase in spindles from 82,424 to 217,761.<sup>17</sup>

Simultaneously, significant advancements were made in powering mills. Reliance on water resources had long dictated the location of textile mills, but by the late nineteenth century, developments in steam power and electricity offered greater flexibility for mill owners to select locations to construct their facilities. By 1905, South Carolina's cotton mills were powered primarily by steam (62 percent) with 19 percent of the mills powered by electric and 19 percent still powered by water.<sup>18</sup> Such developments in mill design facilitated the construction of larger textile mills. In 1880, the state's typical textile mill had fewer than 6,000 spindles; by 1910 it had more than 25,000.<sup>19</sup>

The industry's most significant period of growth, however, occurred after 1895. In the decade after 1895, the period in which Olympia was completed, 61 mills were constructed in the state and the older mills were updated and enlarged. The production capacity at the new mills was far greater than the previous generation of mills.

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<sup>13</sup> William Hays Simpson, Ph.D. *Life in Mill Communities* (Clinton, SC: P.C. Press, 1941), 11.

<sup>14</sup> William Hays Simpson, Ph.D. *Life in Mill Communities* (Clinton, SC: P.C. Press, 1941), 13.

<sup>15</sup> William Hays Simpson, Ph.D. *Life in Mill Communities* (Clinton, SC: P.C. Press, 1941), 14.

<sup>16</sup> William Hays Simpson, Ph.D. *Life in Mill Communities* (Clinton, SC: P.C. Press, 1941), 14.

<sup>17</sup> Between 1880 and 1885, the production capacity at South Carolina's cotton mills increased almost threefold, William Hays Simpson, Ph.D. *Life in Mill Communities* (Clinton, SC: P.C. Press, 1941), 19.

<sup>18</sup> William Hays Simpson, Ph.D. *Life in Mill Communities* (Clinton, SC: P.C. Press, 1941), 18.

<sup>19</sup> "Textile Mills in South Carolina Designed by W.B. Smith Whaley, 1893-1903," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, (October 1990).

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Olympia Mill opened in 1899 with 1,200 operatives manning 2,600 Northrop looms and 100,000 spindles.<sup>20</sup> It was widely reported to be “the greatest single mill in the south, exceeding the largest in this State by 30,000 spindles.”<sup>21</sup> Unlike most southern textile mills that produced rough, unfinished cloth, Olympia produced fine print cloth that was made from sea island cotton. Sea island cotton was widely cultivated in the south for its fine, long-staple, silky fibers. The cloth produced at Olympia was 64 x 64 print cloth 38 ½” wide, weighing 5 ½ yards to the pound. The finished cloth was transported via the nearby tracks of the Southern, the Seaboard, and the Atlantic Coast Line Railways and was sold exclusively through agents in Baltimore and New York.<sup>22</sup>

Seven textile mills were in operation in Columbia in 1900. Production statistics available for that year indicate that Olympia had the largest capacity.<sup>23</sup> The adjacent Granby Mill (Whaley, 1896-97) produced the same type and quality print cloth as Olympia on 1,500 looms and 57,000 spindles; almost half the number as Olympia. Palmetto Mill (1898) produced 64 x 64 brown sheeting on 250 looms and 8,000 spindles. Richland Mill (Whaley, 1894-95) produced twills and fine sheetings on 750 looms and 26,112 spindles.

Olympia operated as a fully integrated textile mill; with all steps in the production process housed under one roof. Raw cotton was brought into the mill and converted into fine cloth. The first floor held the opening machinery with some weaving operations; the second floor contained the spooling, weaving and slashing functions; the third floor contained the carding and roving operations; the fourth floor was entirely dedicated to spinning.<sup>24</sup> The success of this arrangement is evidenced by the fact that the mill layout remained virtually unchanged for decades after its completion.

While Whaley & Company was building their Columbia mills, Greenville’s Lewis W. Parker (who became president of Olympia in 1905 and owner in 1911), was assembling his own textile empire. After acquiring Granby and Olympia in 1911, Parker’s company operated more than one million spindles in sixteen mills in Greenville, Greer and Columbia.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *Official American Textile Directory; Containing Reports of All the Textile Manufacturing Establishments in the United States and Canada* (Boston, MA: Guild & Lord, 1900), 261 and “The Latest and Greatest,” *The State*, May 17, 1899.

<sup>21</sup> This claim was reported in numerous articles including, “The Latest and Greatest,” *The State*, May 17, 1899.

<sup>22</sup> Reference to the New York and Baltimore agents was included in *Davison’s Textile Blue Book* (New York: Davison Publishing Co., 1903-1904), 161. Mention of the railroad company’s with tracks servicing Olympia was made in, W.B. Smith Whaley and Company, *Modern Cotton Mill Engineering* (Columbia, SC: The State Company, 1903), 31.

<sup>23</sup> Information on the capacity of Columbia’s mills in 1900 was published in, *Official American Textile Directory; Containing Reports of All the Textile Manufacturing Establishments in the United States and Canada* (Boston, MA: Guild & Lord, 1900).

<sup>24</sup> A traverse section of the mill detailing the functions per floor was published in, W.B. Smith Whaley and Company, *Modern Cotton Mill Engineering* (Columbia, SC: The State Company, 1903), 30.

<sup>25</sup> Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 1998), 456.

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In 1910, South Carolina was home to 167 mills that employed 47,000 operatives and ranked second only to Massachusetts as a textile producing state.<sup>26</sup> Although local investors continued to provide much of the capital, by 1916 northern interests controlled 28 percent of the outstanding stock in South Carolina's mills.<sup>27</sup>

In the early 1920s, South Carolina's cotton industry suffered staggering financial losses. As much of the country was experiencing economic prosperity, a series of droughts and boll weevil attacks led to the collapse of the cotton industry and a distressed local economy. During this period most of the state's textile firms were only marginally profitable or were actually losing money.<sup>28</sup>

The country's Great Depression worsened the already troubled industry. Seeking to quell the labor unrest, the National Industry Recovery Act provided textile workers with better pay, but allowed companies to cut their workforces.<sup>29</sup> After years of failed unionization attempts, by 1934, half of South Carolina's textile workers were members of the United Textile Workers.<sup>30</sup> In spite of the strides made by the workers, labor turmoil continued throughout the 1930s.

While many of the state's textile mills either closed or adapted their product lines during this period, Olympia (then part of Pacific Mills), continued manufacturing fine print cloths, even adding to their spindleage around 1930.<sup>31</sup> Olympia's adherence to their original product line throughout the 1920s and 1930s is indicative of their continued dominance in the fine print cloth industry.

In the mid-1930s, mill owners across the state began selling of the associated villages as they had become burdensome for a variety of reasons. In 1939, 12 companies sold over thirty of the state's mill villages, including Pacific Mills' sale of the Olympia village.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 1998), 456.

<sup>27</sup> Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 1998), 456.

<sup>28</sup> Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 1998), 488.

<sup>29</sup> Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc., "Olympia Mill and Village," c. 2001, p. 13.

<sup>30</sup> Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc., "Olympia Mill and Village," c. 2001, p. 13.

<sup>31</sup> *Official American Textile Directory; Containing Reports of All the Textile Manufacturing Establishments in the United States and Canada* (Boston, MA: Guild & Lord, 1930) 526.

<sup>32</sup> Various factors led to the sale of the village including: ongoing maintenance responsibilities; the abolition of child labor which meant that it was less advantageous to provide housing when only the adults were potential employees; the 1938 federal minimum wage law which brought further economic burdens to mill owners; and finally, the villages served as gathering places for dissatisfied workers to organize. Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc., "Olympia Mill and Village," c. 2001, p. 14.

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A brief boom in the cotton industry was brought about by the wartime demand for cotton supplies during World War II, but following the war the industry's decline resumed.<sup>33</sup> Mechanization of the industry and overseas competition led to the closure of most of the state's great textile mills in the last half of the twentieth century.

Operations at Olympia continued until the mid-1990s, in part, a result of the adequate number of looms and spindles that were provided for in the original design. Olympia's ample size, high-quality equipment, and innovative mill design enabled the mill to remain efficient and profitable through the economically distressed periods in the twentieth century.

**SIGNIFICANCE IN ARCHITECTURE**

Olympia Mill is significant in the area of Architecture as an intact example of a late nineteenth century textile mill building and a noteworthy example of the Romanesque style used for industrial architecture and the work of a significant mill designer, W.B. Smith Whaley & Company. The surviving mill building has been virtually unaltered from its original construction and is typical of local mill architecture of the last decade of the nineteenth century. The design of this building reflects the standardization of textile mill architecture, brought on, in part, by the evolution of fire codes and the requirements of the fire insurance companies in the late nineteenth century and also by the writings and teachings of mill design experts.

**Romanesque Style of Architecture**

Elements of the Romanesque style evident on the Olympia Mill building include: red brick exterior richly embellished with terra cotta details, regularly spaced grid of segmental arched window openings, and soaring pyramidal roofed twin towers embellished with tall pilasters from which spring wide terra cotta arches. The use of the Romanesque style for Whaley's textile mill buildings was an established trend in Whaley & Company's mills by the time Olympia was completed in 1899. This was a result of the fact that the Romanesque style was in vogue during the period that Whaley & Company's mills were erected. In addition, the Romanesque style also adapted well to the robust massing of industrial architecture, it promoted the aesthetic of red brick on the exterior (a fire-resistive material), and the large window openings provided an abundance of natural light for manufacturing.

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<sup>33</sup> Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc., "Olympia Mill and Village," c. 2001, p. 14.

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**W.B. Smith Whaley & Company**

The dramatic growth of the cotton textile industry in South Carolina was in large part a result of the work of W.B. Smith Whaley & Co. (designers of Olympia Mill), an engineering and architectural firm that specialized in cotton mill design. In January 1894, the firm of W.B. Smith Whaley & Co. was formed by W.B. Smith Whaley and Gadsden E. Shand.<sup>34</sup> While both partners were skilled engineers, Shand's role in the firm appears to have been that of chief architectural designer, while Whaley's focus was in the mechanics of their mills.

The firm of W.B. Smith Whaley & Co. published a book on modern cotton mill engineering in 1903 that featured a number of the firm's mill projects and detailed the components of a modern, efficient cotton mill. Therein, they stated that "the proper designing of a cotton mill requires a knowledge of mechanical, civil, and electrical engineering and a certain amount of architectural skill, in that order."<sup>35</sup> The firm's approach to mill design was to construct substantial, economical mills with the very best equipment available; the most efficient layout of that equipment; and the most efficient and economical means for generating and transmitting the power necessary to drive the machinery. Their ability to merge the disciplines of architecture and engineering led to their success in industrial design.

William Burroughs Smith Whaley (1866-1929) was one of South Carolina's most significant designers of textile mill buildings at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>36</sup> A native of Charleston, Whaley attended the Stevens Institute of Technology and graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering from the Cornell University in 1888. While attending Cornell, Whaley was schooled in the newly conceived methods of fire resistant construction. Charles Woodbury, a noted expert in the field, delivered a lecture to Whaley's class in 1888 entitled, "The Evolution of the Modern Mill," in which he discussed slow-burning construction.<sup>37</sup> Early in his career, Whaley was employed by the Providence, Rhode Island firm of Thompson and Nagle, where he first gained experience in textile mill design, under partner D.M. Thompson, general manager of a textile corporation and engineer for several mills in the northeast. In 1892, Whaley traveled to

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<sup>34</sup> Shand graduated with a degree in Civil Engineering from South Carolina College in 1888 and then attended the architecture program at Columbia College (later Columbia University) in New York. W.B. Smith Whaley and Company, *Modern Cotton Mill Engineering* (Columbia, SC: The State Company, 1903), 11.

<sup>35</sup> "Textile Mills in South Carolina Designed by W.B. Smith Whaley, 1893-1903," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, (October 1990).

<sup>36</sup> Biographical information on Whaley derived from "Textile Mills in South Carolina Designed by W.B. Smith Whaley, 1893-1903," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, (October 1990) and Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc., "Olympia Mill and Village," c. 2001, p. 8-9.

<sup>37</sup> Sara E. Wermiel, *The Fireproof Building: Technology and Public Safety in the Nineteenth-Century American City* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press), 2000, 116.

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South Carolina to seek out potential sites for the construction of textile mills powered by hydroelectricity. Whaley settled in Columbia later that year and began his independent practice as a mechanical engineer, specializing in the design of textile mill buildings. He was joined in partnership with Shand in 1894.

Whaley & Company's first mill project was the 10,000 spindle Union Cotton Mill (1893-94) in Union County.<sup>38</sup> The firm's second mill was a 10,000 spindle factory for the Courtenay Manufacturing Company (1894) in Oconee County. That was followed by the 10,000 spindle Richland Cotton Mill (1894-95) in Columbia, the Granby Cotton Mill (1896-97) also in Columbia (which contained 10,000 spindles at the time of opening, and 57,000 by 1900), the 35,000 spindle Avondale Cotton Mill (1897) in Birmingham, Alabama, the 10,000 spindle Enterprise Cotton Mill (1896) in Orangeburg County, the 33,000 spindle Warren Manufacturing Company (1897-98) in Aiken County, and then the Olympia Cotton Mill which opened in 1899 with 100,000 spindles, three times the size of Whaley & Company's other mills.<sup>39</sup> Over the next fifteen years, Whaley & Company was responsible for the design of 21 textile mills.<sup>40</sup> The firm's second office opened in Boston in 1899, the year Olympia was completed.<sup>41</sup> By the close of the nineteenth century, the firm had received national attention for their innovative textile mills.<sup>42</sup> Whaley & Company moved to Boston in 1903 where they continued to design textile mills in the New England region. Olympia Mill was constructed at the height of the firm's career as textile mill developers and designers.

### **Olympia Mill Power Plant**

Perhaps the most significant feature of the Olympia Mill was its innovative power plant. Driven by their interest in mechanical engineering, Whaley & Company sought to secure the most efficient and economical power for their textile mills. In their book on modern cotton mill engineering, the firm stated that the power plant required the greatest amount of engineering skill in its design and that it is the power plant that is the very life of each mill.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> "Textile Mills in South Carolina Designed by W.B. Smith Whaley, 1893-1903," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, (October 1990).

<sup>39</sup> "Textile Mills in South Carolina Designed by W.B. Smith Whaley, 1893-1903," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, (October 1990) and *Official American Textile Directory; Containing Reports of All the Textile Manufacturing Establishments in the United States and Canada* (Boston, MA: Guild & Lord, 1900), 261.

<sup>40</sup> Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 1998), 456.

<sup>41</sup> W.B. Smith Whaley and Company, *Modern Cotton Mill Engineering* (Columbia, SC: The State Company, 1903), 11.

<sup>42</sup> "Textile Mills in South Carolina Designed by W.B. Smith Whaley, 1893-1903," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, (October 1990).

<sup>43</sup> W.B. Smith Whaley and Company, *Modern Cotton Mill Engineering* (Columbia, SC: The State Company, 1903), 15.

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In their four Columbia mills, Whaley & Company experimented with various methods of generating and distributing power to their mills.<sup>44</sup> Richland Mill (1894-95) was originally powered by the traditional system of a single steam engine connected to shafting by a rope drive. This system led to frequent shut-downs of the entire mill. Granby Mill (1896-97) was powered by electricity generated at the nearby Columbia Canal. The power was then distributed through the mill by a series of transformers. Granby Mill was plagued by frequent power interruptions as a result of changing water levels in the canal. Olympia featured an entirely new departure in the powering of mills. At Olympia, power was generated on-site by three General Electric generators that were so powerful that they also powered the Richland and Granby Mills as well as the street railway system and street lighting for the city.<sup>45</sup>

**Fire-Resistive Construction**

The method of construction and the floor plan of Olympia Mill reflects the most modern trends in mill construction of the period, largely developed in response to the fires that plagued earlier industrial buildings. Around 1880, a number of principles were formulated by an association of mutual fire insurance companies on the eastern seaboard that exclusively covered factories.<sup>46</sup> This fire insurance association set minimum standards and only insured those manufacturers that complied with their fire safety criteria. Textile mills, with their dangerous combination of combustible stock and numerous sources of ignition, were among the most hazardous types of factories. As a result, the insurance rates were high, which served as an incentive for mill owners to abandon their outdated factories in favor of new slow burning factory buildings.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the main principles of fire-resistive methods of construction as mandated by the fire insurance association were: masonry walls, compartmentation of functions (isolating the most fire prone operations), separation of horizontal from vertical spaces (exterior stair towers separated by fire-resistive doors), on-site fire extinguishing capabilities (a source of water such as a reservoir or standpipes with hose outlets), and the implementation of "slow burning construction" techniques.<sup>47</sup> While the term

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<sup>44</sup> Information on powering Whaley's mills was derived directly from, "Textile Mills in South Carolina Designed by W.B. Smith Whaley, 1893-1903," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, (October 1990).

<sup>45</sup> "Mr. Whaley and the Mills," *The State*, November 15, 1903 and "Textile Mills in South Carolina Designed by W.B. Smith Whaley, 1893-1903," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, (October 1990).

<sup>46</sup> After 1888, the association of mutual fire insurance companies was known as the Associated Factory Mutual Fire Insurance Companies. Sara E. Wermiel, *The Fireproof Building: Technology and Public Safety in the Nineteenth-Century American City* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press), 2000, 105.

<sup>47</sup> The main principles of fire-resistive construction are addressed in pages 104 – 112 in Wermiel, 104.

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“slow burning construction” was not coined until 1888, nearly a decade earlier, *American Architect and Building News* had begun publishing information on slow burning construction techniques.<sup>48</sup> By the time Olympia was constructed in 1899, slow burning mills had become standard.<sup>49</sup>

Slow burning construction referred to the use of large dimension timbers and the use of plank floors. It was recognized that large dimension timbers tended to char to a certain depth, at which point the charcoal slowed combustion, allowing the member to stay in place longer.<sup>50</sup> Another characteristic of slow burning construction was the use of plank flooring, constructed of planks three to four inches thick with a finish floor.<sup>51</sup> This system of flooring was found to be the most fire-resistive and thus was required by the fire insurance association. Flat roof construction was also required, as pitched roofs created inaccessible attics where uncontrollable fires could burn. Thus a standard roof system developed, that was similar to the floor system, with three inch thick wood planks that were then covered with gravel, duck cloth, or tin.<sup>52</sup> All of the features that characterize slow burning construction were incorporated into the design of Olympia Mill.

The interior of the Olympia Mill building retains its exposed structural framework with large dimension timbers that expresses the primary principles of slow burning construction. The flooring system evident at Olympia is comprised of a 3-3/4” thick pine splined plank floor, over which is a 7/8” diagonally-laid intermediate floor, topped by a 7/8” maple finish floor. The walls were originally plastered with the lower five feet coated with a Portland cement-based plaster to withstand the heavy industrial use. To limit the spread of fire from floor to floor, access from floor to floor was provided through two stairs located in attached exterior towers on the north wall. Access to the towers was provided by a fire door on each floor. Whaley & Company incorporated sprinkler systems into the original design, as was common in factory construction during the period.<sup>53</sup>

Beyond the fire-resistive attributes, heavy timber construction was also desirable for textile factory architecture as it provided the required structural capacity that was needed to support the massive equipment and allowed for a greater span between the columns, which meant largely uninterrupted floor area.

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<sup>48</sup> Wermiel, 116.

<sup>49</sup> Wermiel, 115.

<sup>50</sup> Wermiel, 111, 112.

<sup>51</sup> Wermiel, 111, 112.

<sup>52</sup> Hatches accessing the roof had to have a fire-resistive cover. Wermiel, 113.

<sup>53</sup> A statement in, Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc., “Olympia Mill and Village,” c. 2001, p. 16, indicates that the tower original held 15,000 gallon reservoirs that supplied the sprinkler system. The towers were not accessible during the preparation of this nomination.

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**Comparable Textile Mills of the Period**

Comparison of the design of Olympia Mill with other textile mill buildings of a comparable date in South Carolina reinforces the notion that a standardization of mill architecture had been established by the mid-1890s, largely as a result of Whaley & Company's influence in the field.

Whaley & Company's cotton mills share a common vocabulary of exterior materials including: massive rectangular compositions, red brick walls with regularly spaced buttresses, ornament and detailing consistent with the Romanesque style of architecture, uniform fenestration with large multi-light wood windows, flat roofs, and exterior entrance / stair towers.<sup>54</sup> In the interiors, the mills are generally open in plan with partitioning limited to those areas where the most hazardous operations occurred, primarily surrounding the opening and picker equipment. Whaley's mills of the last decade of the nineteenth century and first decade of the twentieth century feature the typical methods of slow burning construction with heavy timber framing and plank floors.

The adjacent Granby Mill, which pre-dates Olympia by two years, is nearly identical in the interior to Olympia with the same heavy timber construction, 3-/4" thick plank floors, and exterior stair towers, though of a reduced scale. Buffalo Mill (1901-02) in Union County is strikingly similar in appearance to Olympia with a massive red brick exterior, large segmental arched windows, and an identical twin tower arrangement. Improvements were made with each of Whaley's mills, particularly in terms of the power plant.

Although there are a number of surviving examples of contemporary textile mill complexes in South Carolina, the majority have been altered either with entire sections demolished or significant exterior alterations. Alterations most commonly have involved changes to fenestration such as the covering-over or bricking-in of window openings as air control units were installed in the mid-twentieth century.

**Conclusion**

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<sup>54</sup> Characteristic features of Whaley's textile mills is detailed in, "Textile Mills in South Carolina Designed by W.B. Smith Whaley, 1893-1903," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, (October 1990).

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Olympia Mill factory building stands intact and retains the ability to express the architectural features characteristic of a late nineteenth century textile manufacturing facility. The large window openings convey the importance of natural light; the surviving open floor plan and heavy timber framing that remains exposed on each floor expresses the methods of slow burning construction as well as the need for uninterrupted floors with the structural capacity necessary to support the massive machines utilized in textile manufacturing. The power plant, which was revolutionary at the time the mill opened, survives virtually unaltered. The mill is a representative example of the work of W.B. Smith Whaley & Company, the most significant architectural and engineering firm of textile mill buildings in the state.

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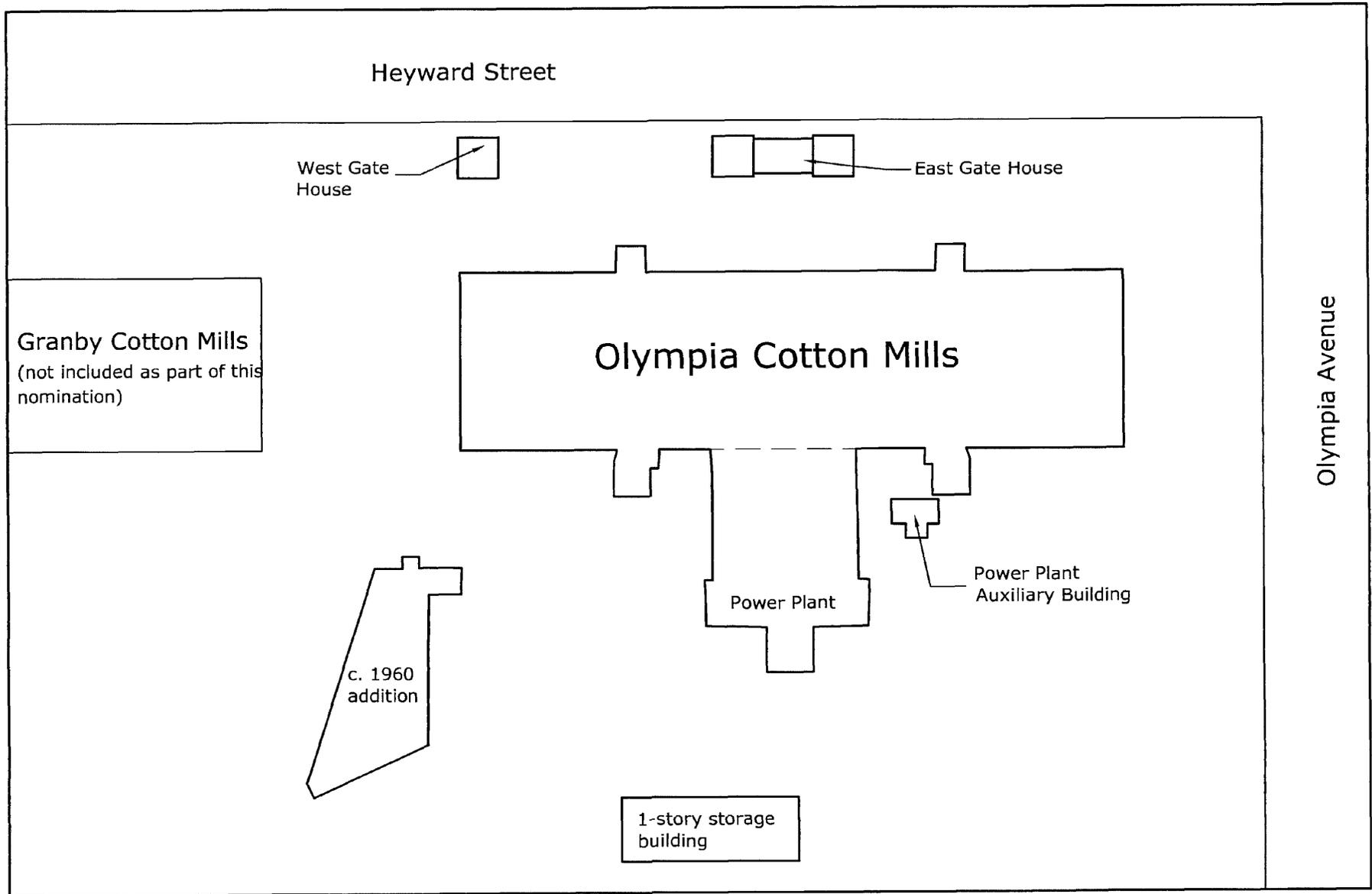
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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

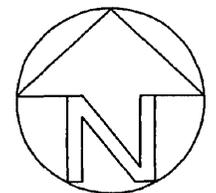
The boundary of the nominated property is shown as the heavy black line marked "Olympia Cotton Mills" on the accompanying Richland County Tax Map #08816, Block 9, drawn at a scale of 1" = 100'.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

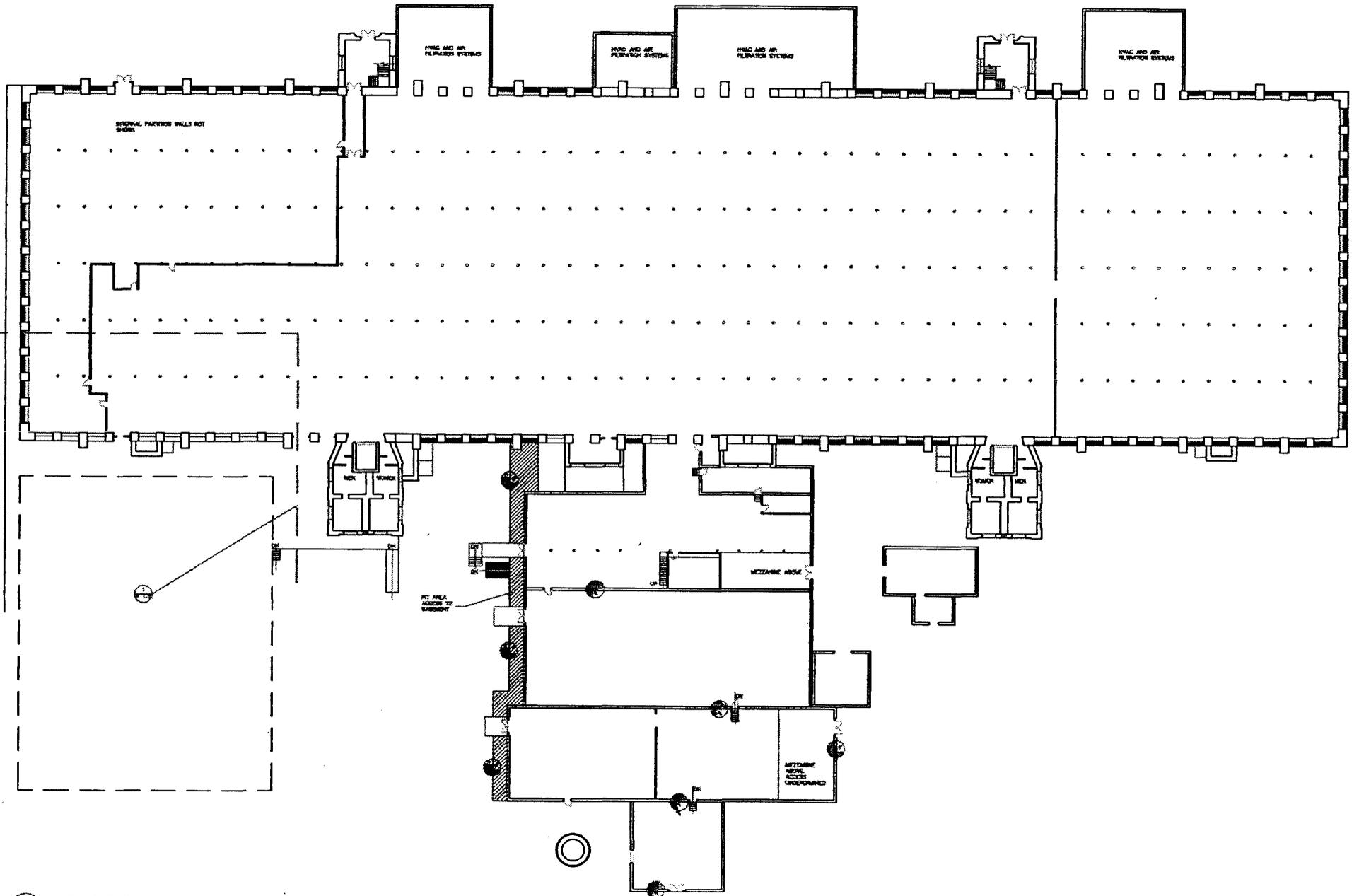
The nominated property is restricted to the main mill and power plant, the power plant auxiliary building, storage building, east gate house, and west gate house. No historically associated resources have been excluded.



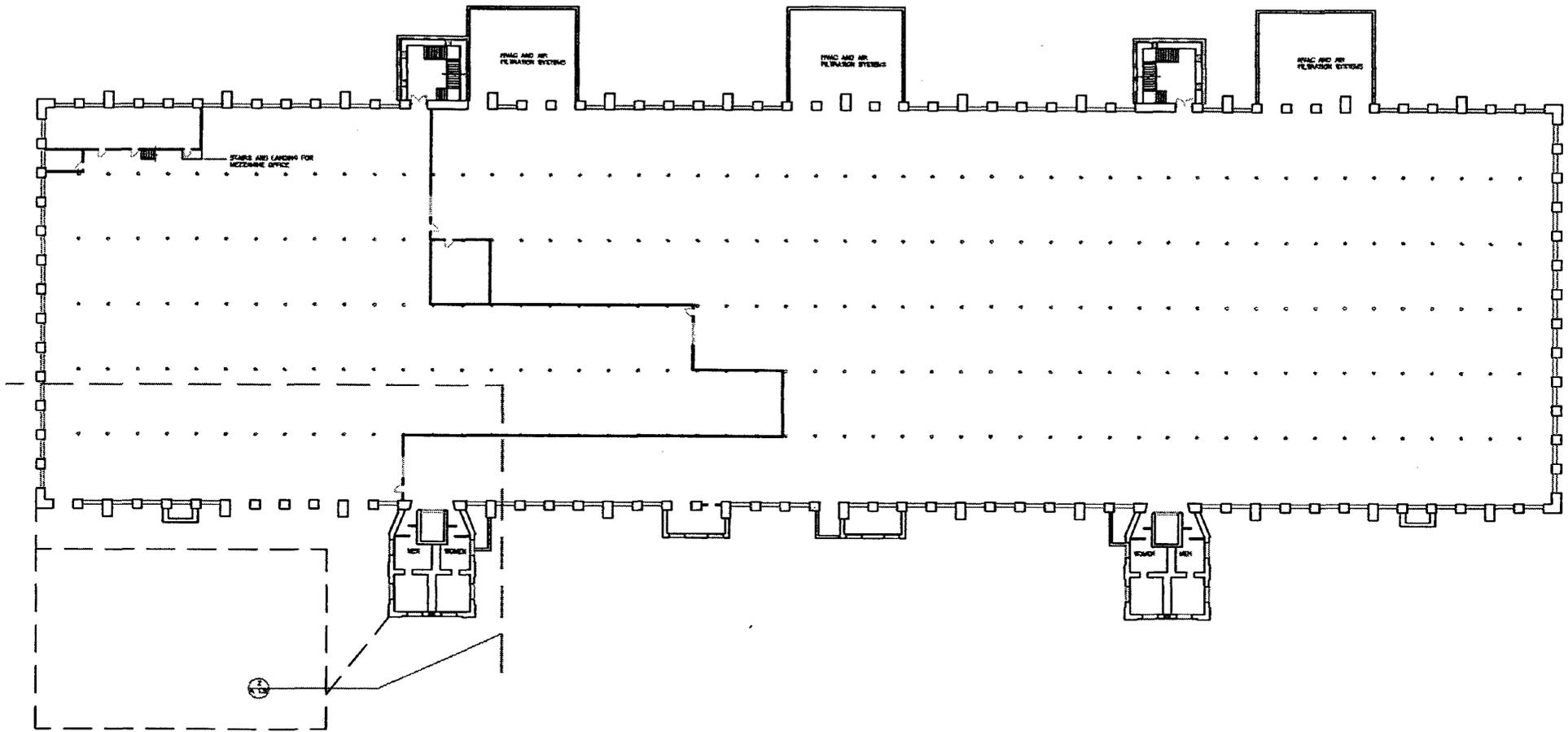
SITE PLAN (n.t.s.)  
 Olympia Cotton Mills  
 500 Heyward Street  
 Richland County, SC



Olympia Cotton Mills  
Richland County, SC

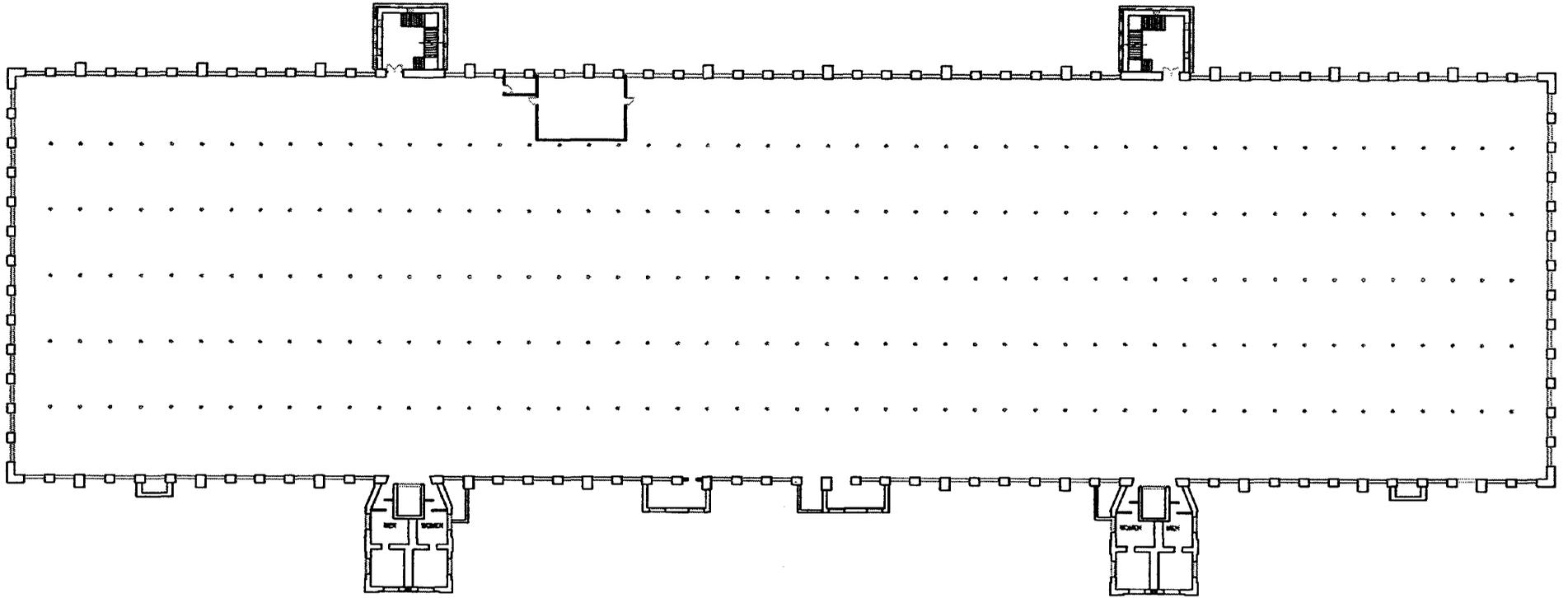


Olympia Cotton Mills  
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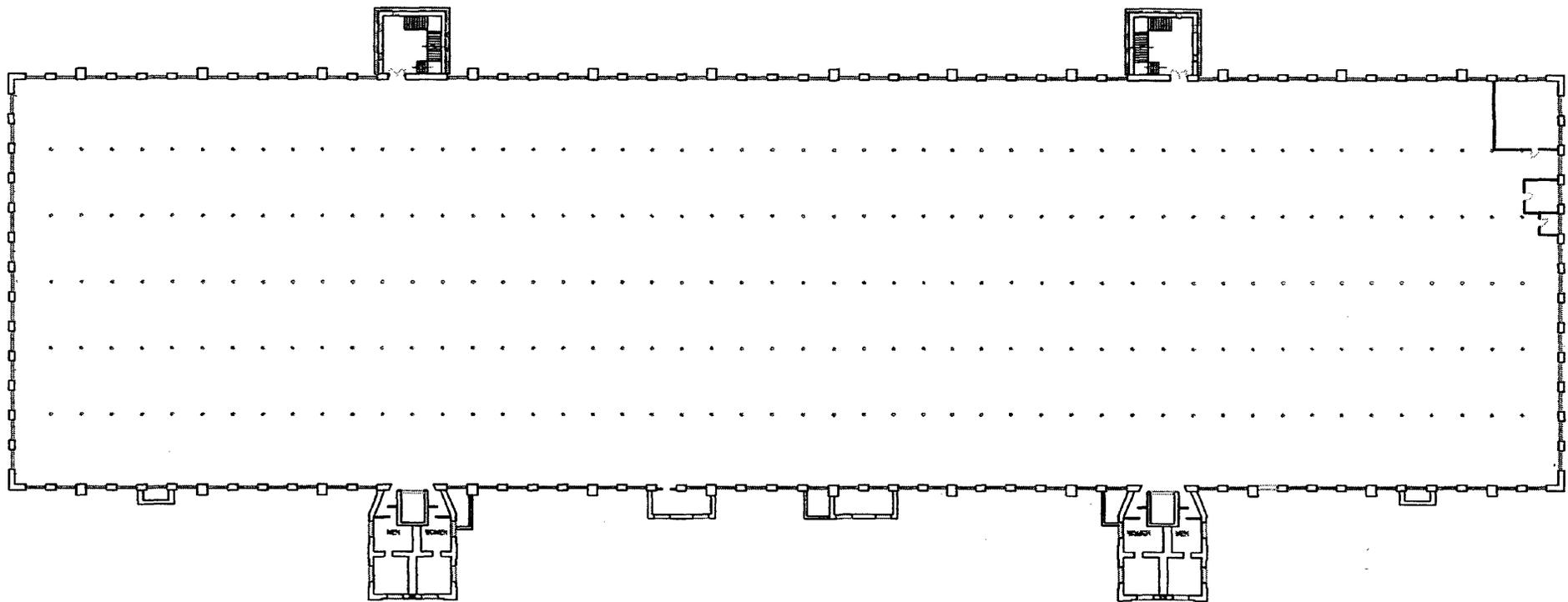
1 SECOND FLOOR PLAN  
A. I. B. 10/12/1940

Olympia Cotton Mills  
Richland County, SC



1 THIRD FLOOR PLAN  
A 1.7

Olympia Cotton Mills  
Richland County, SC



1 FOURTH FLOOR PLAN  
A 1.8

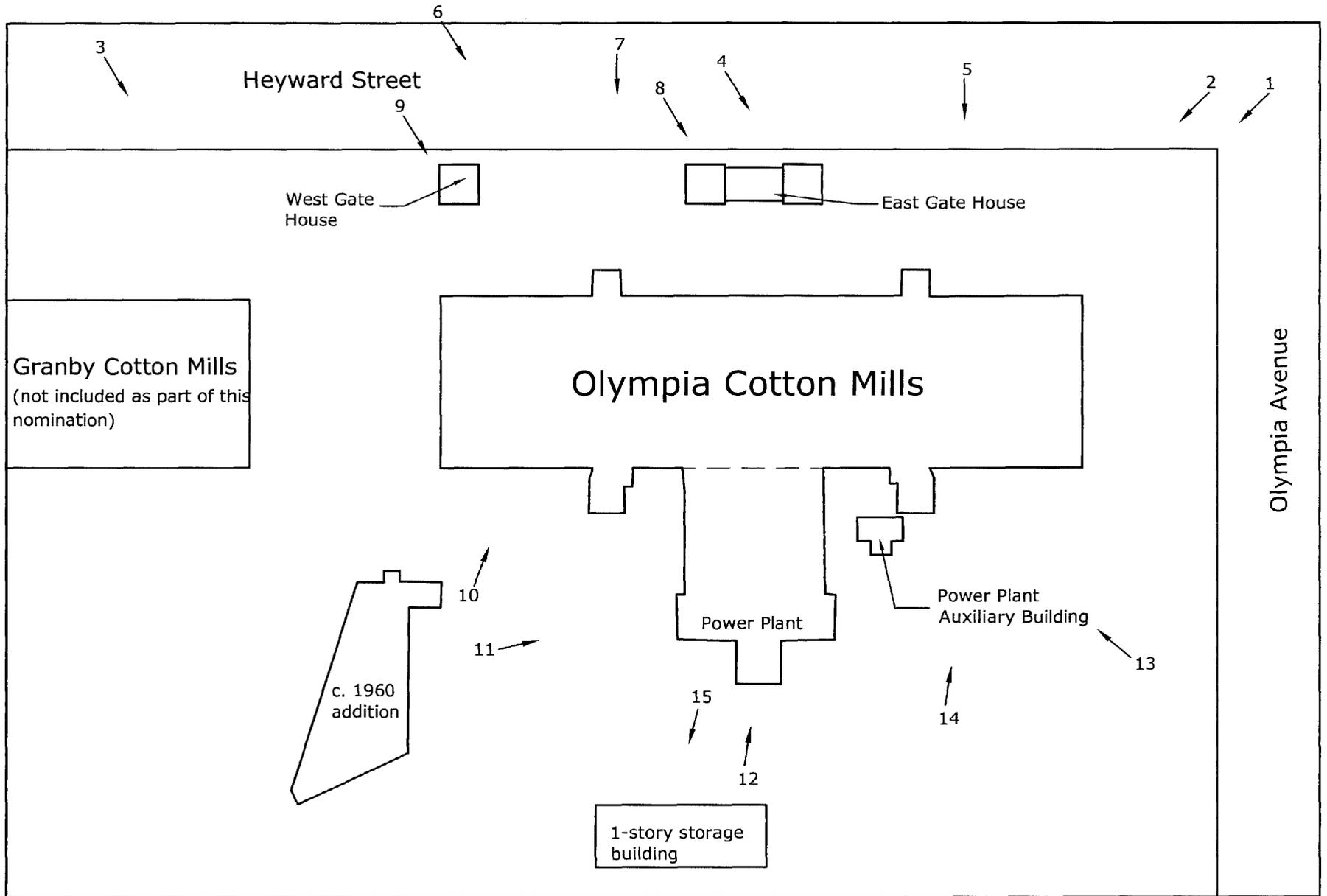
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**PHOTOGRAPH LIST****Olympia Cotton Mills  
Richland County, South Carolina  
Cynthia Rose Hamilton  
April 2004  
Powers & Company, Inc.**

<b><u>Photograph #</u></b>	<b><u>Description of View</u></b>
1	Main Mill Building, Looking Southwest at East and North Elevations
2	Main Mill Building, Looking Southwest at North Elevation
3	Main Mill Building, Looking Southeast at North and West Elevations
4	Main Mill Building, Looking Southeast at Eastern Tower on North Elevation
5	Main Mill Building, Detail of Entrance on East Tower, North Elevation
6	Main Mill Building, Looking Southeast at West Tower, North Elevation
7	Main Mill Building, Detail of Entrance on West Tower, North Elevation
8	East Gate House, Looking Southeast
9	West Gate House, Looking Southeast
10	Main Mill Building, Looking Northeast at South Elevation
11	Power Plant, Looking Northeast at West and South Elevations
12	Power Plant, Looking North at South Elevation
13	Power Plant Auxiliary Building, Looking Northwest
14	Main Mill Building, Looking Northeast at South Elevation
15	Storage Building, Looking South
16	Main Mill Building, 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor, Looking South in East Vestibule
17	Main Mill Building, 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor, Looking West
18	Main Mill Building, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Looking Southwest in West Stair Tower
19	Main Mill Building, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Detail of West Stair
20	Main Mill Building, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Detail of Freight Elevator
21	Main Mill Building, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Looking East
22	Main Mill Building, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Looking Northwest
23	Main Mill Building, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor, Looking West
24	Main Mill Building, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Looking East
25	Main Mill Building, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Looking West
26	Main Mill Building, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Ceiling Detail
27	Power Plant, Machine Shop, 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor, Looking East
28	Power Plant, Engine Room, 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor, Looking East
29	Power Plant, Boiler Room, 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor, Looking West



Photograph Locations  
 Olympia Cotton Mills  
 500 Heyward Street  
 Richland County, SC

