



Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1  
Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia  
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:)

Mr Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

2-21-17  
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

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1  
Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia  
County and State

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</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>3</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: Manufacturing Facility

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Warehouse

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK; CONCRETE; METAL; GLASS

### 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.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1 is a small industrial complex located at 2734 Fort Avenue in Lynchburg, Virginia. The four-acre property contains three buildings consisting of two early twentieth century Commercial Style mill buildings and a small, utilitarian garage built in 1949. The property was initially developed as a small hosiery mill operation within one building in 1900 but expanded several times throughout the first half of the twentieth century to include additional specialized processing facilities within enlargements and building additions. The buildings within the property represent the evolution of the hosiery mill industry in the early- to mid-twentieth from all-in-one warehouses to specialized processing facilities outfitted for changes in materials, including specifically the introduction of nylon. In 1980, a fire destroyed most of the 1900 and 1908 sections of one building, although portions of the foundations are still extant today. Overall, the Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1 remains a good representation of industrial architecture from the early-twentieth century with a high level of integrity of location, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association; integrity of design is somewhat diminished by loss of some sections of one mill building. Continuing to reflect the property's function as a hosiery mill complex, the resources within the property boundaries consist of two contributing mill buildings and one contributing garage, while there are no non-contributing resources.

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### Narrative Description

The Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1 complex is located in the midtown section of Lynchburg, Virginia, at 2734 Fort Avenue. The complex is presently composed of two separate tax parcels

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

and contains approximately four acres of land. It is generally bound by Fort Avenue to the northwest, Lancaster Street to the southwest, Reed Street to the southeast, and by adjacent properties to the northeast. The northeastern boundary follows the property line of the larger, northern of the two parcels along the rear of two adjacent properties that front Fort Avenue and then along the side boundary of adjacent property facing Reed Street. The complex is surrounded by commercial development to the front along Fort Avenue, residential development that represents the remains of a former mill village to the rear along Reed Street, and by Spring Hill, a civic cemetery across Lancaster Street to the south side.

Within the Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1 property boundaries is Building A, located on the smaller, southern parcel. It is set in the corner of Fort Avenue and Lancaster Street and extends perpendicularly along Fort Avenue. Extending further along Fort Avenue is a low stone and brick wall that is the remains of the foundation from a building destroyed by fire in 1980. Building B is located on the larger, northern parcel and set back from Fort Avenue, adjacent to Reed Street. Building C is also located on the northern parcel, sited to the north of Building B. The building lettering is not historic nomenclature, but rather a modern designation in order to differentiate the structures.

The most notable physical feature of the overall property is a change in elevation of nearly 40 feet from the lowest point along Fort Avenue to the rear of the complex along Reed Street. In general, the front of the complex along Fort Avenue is relatively flat with Building A and an adjacent parking area at this level. Extending along the rear edge of Building A and the parking lot and roughly parallel to Fort Avenue, through the central part of the property, is a steep slope and rock outcropping that generally slopes down from an approximately one-acre level plateau at the northeastern corner of the property to the side along Lancaster Street. Building C is built on the level plateau while Building B is built atop of and into the rocky cliff.

As a primarily industrial complex, not intended for commercial or public access, there is no formal front to the complex or Buildings A and B. However, the primary orientation and access of the buildings, as well as the street address, is Fort Avenue. Secondary vehicular accesses are also provided from the side along Lancaster Street as well as the rear from Reed Street. Both the main access from Fort Avenue and secondary entry from Lancaster Street connect to a central, gravel-covered driveway that leads through the complex, beginning at the north end and extending along the base of the rocky cliff, uphill to the rear of Building A. A large gravel parking area is located on the flat site of a building demolished in 1980 after a fire, and a smaller parking area is located immediately behind Building A. At this parking area, the driveway switchbacks uphill to the lower, south end of Building B. The third access to the property off Reed Street is located at the northeastern edge of the property and leads into the flat plateau area with a large gravel parking pad adjacent to the upper, north end of Building B.

### **Building A – Contributing**

Within the Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1 are two large mill buildings and a small garage. Building A, the smaller of the two mill buildings, represents the oldest extant development on the

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

property, although the earliest portions of the building were destroyed by a fire in 1980. The building was initially constructed in 1900 and consisted of a one-story rectangular building set parallel to Fort Avenue. Based on historic photos, the brick building rested on a continuous stone foundation and was fenestrated with a series of arched 12/12 double-hung sash windows. The building was expanded with a two-story wing to the north end and a series of small blocks and wings attached to the south end in 1908 (see Historic Photo 1). The new wing to the north rested on brick pier foundations with stone infill and the brick walls were pierced by a similar pattern of windows. Also in 1908, the original one-story building was enlarged by constructing a second story. Most of the 1900 and 1908 portions were destroyed by a fire in 1980, leaving only the foundation and a short portion of the exterior walls from each remaining along the sidewalk on Fort Avenue as a wall for the property.

The next expansion of Building A, and the earliest of which currently remains, was built in the late-1920s.<sup>1</sup> This portion of the building consists of a wider two-story block that was attached to the south end of the 1908 building. It is five bays long along Fort Avenue and six bays deep, such that the front three bays adjoined the south end of the 1908 building while the three additional bays projected to the rear.

The late-1920s block of the building has a brick structural system laid in a 5:1 American Bond that rests on a continuous at-grade poured concrete foundation. It is topped by a low-pitched gable roof covered with bituminous materials and flanked by a stepped brick parapet with terra cotta tile coping along the south side of the block and the back half of the north side. The front half of the north end of the building that historically adjoined the 1908 building was infilled with a wood frame wall that was clad with vinyl siding after the 1980 fire. A short length of the first-story portion of the rear wall of the 1908 building was left attached to the 1920s block at that time, and a small utility shed was framed off of it. A single pedestrian door leads into this utility shed and a single roll-up garage door was placed centrally along the infilled wall. A historic pedestrian entrance leads into the rear of the building at the second story. The entry consists of a single reinforced wood door with metal sheathing. It is sheltered by a short shed roof overhang supported by knee braces and is approached by a cantilevered poured concrete walkway from a parking lot that crosses over a walkway along the rear of the building at ground level.

Fenestration on the late-1920s block consists of a series of industrial-style casement windows on both stories of the front and rear as well as the rear three bays of the north end. Each opening on the north end is filled with paired 20-light windows with an 8-light awning sash located one row of lights up from the bottom. Openings on the front and rear have 36-light windows also with an 8-light awning sash. All of the windows are set on brick sills and topped by soldier brick lintels. Both the first- and second-story windows sit within a one-course recessed panel between brick pilasters. On the front and rear, the pilasters extend to the roof cornice and on the north side they end at the top of the second-story window lintels. The first-story windows along the Fort Avenue façade have been encased behind metal grate security screens, likely added in the 1970s.

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<sup>1</sup> Earl Alvin Gerhardt, Jr. Collection, MS1299, Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, VA

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

Building A was expanded further in 1936 with a large addition to the south. This block is four-bays deep and extends 14 bays along Fort Avenue with several small projecting masses to the rear, including one in the corner adjacent to the 1920s wing and centrally on the rear wall. The 1936 block extends the remainder of the property along Fort Avenue to Lancaster Street. The addition has a brick structural system laid in a 5:1 American Bond that rests on a continuous at-grade poured concrete foundation. It is topped by a low-pitched gable roof covered with bituminous materials and flanked by a stepped brick parapet with terra cotta tile coping along the south end of the block.

The projecting mass along the rear wall appears to be from the second-half of the twentieth century and consists of a concrete block enclosure that is one-bay wide and one-bay deep and topped by a shed roof. It has two small window openings that have since been infilled with concrete block. In the corner adjacent to the 1920s wing is a square mass that was built at the same time as the 1936 block and is two-stories tall against the 1920s wing with a one-story area beyond. This mass was built to serve as a boiler house and mechanical area. It is clad in brick and the two-story area features a stepped parapet with terra cotta tile coping that matches the south wall of the building. There are two 6-light fixed windows on the wall. The connected one-story mass is topped by a flat roof pierced by a hipped skylight. A tall, cylindrical metal chimney flue and two shorter square chimney flues also extend up from this block. Set atop this massing are a wood frame canopy with a shed roof and the deteriorated remains of a concrete block wall that appears to date to sometime in the second-half of the twentieth century.

Fenestration on this portion of the building is generally similar to the 1920s block and consists of a series of industrial-style casement windows on both stories, although many of the first-story windows have been removed and the openings infilled with concrete block. The configuration of the windows that remain on the front and rear are 30-light with 8-light awning sashes along the top and bottom edge. Configurations on the south end have paired 20-light windows with 8-light awning sashes one row of lights up from the bottom. All of the window openings are set on concrete sills and topped by soldier brick lintels. Above the second floor windows are three-course corbeled brick details. Both the first- and second-story windows sit within a one-course recessed panel between brick pilasters. On the front and rear, the pilasters extend to the roof cornice and on the south end they end just above second-story window lintels.

There are several entrances into the 1936 part of the building located on the south end and rear. The entry on the south end is located on the first story and consists of a replacement double leaf metal door. Because of the surrounding topography, which slopes up along the edge of the building, a bulkhead with concrete retaining walls extends along the south end of the building to provide access to this entrance. Atop the bulkhead, a raised walkway further extends around the rear of the building and provides access to another double leaf metal door. A third set of double leaf metal doors leads into the second floor of the building from the rear parking lot. This entrance is located on a cast concrete loading dock that is cantilevered over the first-story bulkhead below. This loading dock is sheltered by a late-twentieth century shed-roofed canopy supported by plain wood posts.



Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

The last substantial structural addition to Building A occurred in the early 1950s and consists of an enlarged boiler house appended to the rear of the building. The enlarged boiler house consists of a rectangular two-bay deep by four-bay wide block that spans the late-1920s wing and the 1936 block. It has a brick structural system laid in a 5:1 American Bond and rests on a continuous poured concrete foundation. It is topped by a flat roof behind a flat parapet on three sides with terra cotta tile coping. The outside (rear) edge of the roof is open, but pierced by a single exterior brick end chimney.

Fenestration on this block consists of 16-light industrial casement windows on each end and 12-light windows on the rear. There are single leaf, metal clad pedestrian doors in the outermost bay of the south end and the northernmost bay of the rear on the second story. Both of these doorways are topped by fixed, two-light windows. Due to the topography of the site, both entrances are just above grade and accessed by concrete stoops. A pedestrian entrance is also located on the first story of this block's north end and accessed by the bulkhead and walkway that extends along the 1920s block.

The interior of Building A consists primarily of large open spaces on each floor, although the separate building phases can be discerned from masonry walls. Due to the topography of the site, much of the second floor of the building is at ground level on the east side of the property. On the first floor, the interior of the late-1920s north end consists of a single, open space interrupted only by support posts. The area flows into the interior of the 1936 portion of the building which has been divided into three rooms along the length of the mass. The 1936 and 1950s boiler house ell consists of two small rooms with a wrap-around L-shaped room on the first floor and two small rooms with an offset rectangular room on the second floor.

There is one set of interior stairs in the building located within the 1936 block against the original exterior wall of the 1920s block. The stairs are a quarter-turn with the lower stringer attached to the masonry wall. The stairs are not original to the building, but their date of construction is unclear. The lower half of the staircase has been recently rebuilt. The upper half of the stairwell is enclosed with plywood and is supported by plain wood posts under the landing. A door is at the landing.

The majority of the interior is unfinished with the structural system exposed. Several interior walls that were originally built as exterior walls remain throughout the building. The original east exterior wall of the 1920s block now forms the barrier between the open space and lavatories within the 1936 boiler house area. This wall still retains two windows that have now been painted over. A portion of the original south exterior brick wall delineates this portion of the building from the main mass of the 1936 block although much of the wall was dismantled when the 1936 addition was attached and the resulting opening spanned by a steel I-beam brace. Within the 1936 part of the building, the first floor is divided by two exposed masonry walls at the sixth and tenth bays. Each brick wall is painted and perforated by a double-width opening at its center. A makeshift office area has been constructed on the second floor in the 1936 portion of the building along the rear wall. The wood frame office enclosure is clad in drywall.



Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

The floors throughout the interior of the building are varied depending on the original usage of the area as well as the date of construction. All of the existing first-floor flooring is exposed poured concrete. The second-story floorings is painted narrow-gauge wood. A concrete ramp spans the passage between the second floor of the 1920s block and 1936 block due to a slight difference in level.

All ceilings throughout the building are exposed. On the first floor, wood support beams and the bottom of the second-floor decking is visible. On the second story, metal I-beams, wood beams, and the bottom of the roof decking is exposed. On both levels, the ceiling beams are supported by a grid of support posts that punctuate each bay. In the 1920s block, the posts are square wood timbers and attached to the concrete floor by metal post-holders. The posts in the 1936 block are steel I-beams.

Mechanical systems and fixtures throughout Building A are limited. Plumbing is located throughout the building and consists of piping for fire suppression sprinklers, the historic steam heat system, and bathrooms. All of the sprinkler and steam system piping is exposed and suspended from the ceiling by tie rods. The electrical system throughout the building appears to have been replaced in the second-half of the twentieth century to accommodate the changing machinery and needs of the mill and is contained by a system of rigid conduit. Electric conduit is suspended from the ceiling joists throughout the building as well as mounted to the exterior walls and transformer boxes and circuit breaker panels are located throughout the building. No lighting remains in the building. Historically, the building was climate-controlled by steam heat powered by a boiler system. The majority of mechanical equipment throughout the building has been removed although some sections of exposed ductwork remain in the 1936 block of the building. The remnants of the boiler system are in the brick boiler room; however it has been extensively dismantled, and what remains is corroded from rust.

Although the interior of Building A historically held a large amount of machinery related to the operation of the mill, all of this was removed when it ceased operations. Equipment would have included pressing and knitting machines, as well as dyeing equipment as the dye house for the mill complex was located in this building.

### **Building B – Contributing**

The second mill building, and largest within the Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1 complex, is Building B. Similarly to Building A, this building was enlarged several times throughout the twentieth century to accommodate the growth of the operation. The earliest of the four phases of the building was constructed in 1928 and represents what is now the northeastern portion of the building. As built, this L-shaped block was fifteen bays long by four bays wide at the north end and three bays at the south end, set parallel and adjacent to Reed Street. The one-story building area has a brick structural system laid in a 5:1 American Bond and rests on a raised, poured concrete foundation. It is topped by a low-pitched gable roof covered with bituminous materials and flanked at the north end by a stepped parapet wall with terra cotta tile coping.

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

Entrances into this block are from the north end and include a garage bay and a set of replacement double leaf metal doors. Next to the double doors and spanning the rest of the north end of this block are three large window openings, now occupied by later-installed glass block panels. The windows are set on concrete sills in recessed bays and topped by soldier brick lintels with two corbeled brick courses above. Fenestration on the side of the 1928 block consists of a series of fifteen window bays. Each window opening sits within a one-course recessed panel between brick pilasters. All of the windows are set on brick sills and topped by soldier brick lintels. The windows are a mix of original industrial-style casement windows with paired 35-light windows and later glass block panels.

The second phase of Building B occurred in 1933 when it was enlarged to the south. At that time a two-story addition was attached to the south end, built so that the second story was even with the 1928 block, and the first story at ground level due to the slope of the site. The 1933 block is four bays wide to align with the original area, and an additional seven bays long along Reed Street. The building generally matches and blends with the original building with similar brickwork, window openings, and roof; the south end of the block was built with a frame wall, reportedly to facilitate further expansion that did not occur. The frame wall is now clad with vinyl siding that was added following a fire in 1980. Fenestration on the south end also differs slightly with a mix of one-, two-, three-, and four-part industrial casement windows. The only exterior entrance into this block of the building is by a garage bay at ground level on the south end. The garage bay was shortened slightly and filled with a roll-up door in the 1970s.

The third phase of the building consists of an expansion at the north end in 1943. This block consists of a five-bay wide by five-bay long area that was attached to the west side of the north end of the building. The block is primarily one-story; however because of the slope of the site, the westernmost bay of the block is set on a basement. This block generally matches the construction and detail of the two earlier phases with similar brickwork and fenestration. The lower-level brick façade is smooth while the main level features recessed window panels between pilasters. It is set on a poured concrete foundation that is below-grade on the north end, but raised and tied into the exposed bedrock on the side and rear. It is topped by a low-pitched gable roof parallel to the original block and set behind a stepped parapet. There are several entrances into this block including a large garage bay and two pedestrian doors on the north end, and a single pedestrian door into the lower level from the west side. A poured concrete loading dock extends along the north end to provide access to the garage bay.

The fourth and final phase of the building was added in 1946 and consists of a one-bay extension along the west side of the 1928 block with an adjacent stair tower and penthouse. The block is primarily two stories tall with the second level even with the 1928 block and the lower level adjoining the lower level of the 1933 block. The stair tower area is slightly wider at two bays and is four bays long. It is three stories tall, creating a small penthouse that rises above the rest of the building. The lower level of the 1946 block is poured concrete that ties into and follows the contour of the exposed bedrock below. The bays within the portion along the original building are pierced by window openings set within brick panels while the smaller openings in the stair tower area pierce the concrete without brick surrounds. The second and third floor of the block

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

are brick laid in a 5:1 American Bond. The bays along the original block as well as the third floor of the penthouse are recessed with brick pilasters while the second story of the stair tower is smooth brick walls. It is topped by a flat roof with a flat parapet on three sides. All of the windows on this block have been replaced by polycarbonate panels with faux "muntins" to resemble the original industrial-style casement windows. There are two entrances into the 1946 block, both of which are located on the lower level of the stair tower. Both are single pedestrian entries with replacement metal doors. The door on the west side of the tower is set above the rock outcropping but currently not accessible as the stairs or landing that approached it have been removed. The entry on the south side is accessible from a loading dock that extends from the driveway at the south end of the building.

This loading dock consists of a cast concrete platform supported by poured concrete posts at the southern end and by a full poured concrete base at the north end. The loading dock is approached by an angled concrete ramp from the parking lot as well as two flights of steel stringer stairs along its length. It is lined by a pole-type metal railing.

The interior of Building B consists primarily of large open spaces on each floor, although the first floor is more segmented and irregularly shaped, reflective of its construction in several phases and due to the topography of the site, and has two discontinuous areas. The larger area within the 1933 section at the south end of the building consists of an open, irregularly shaped room that spans the full width of the building for seven bays and then extends into the 1946 block along the west side of the building as a narrow corridor for an additional seven bays. The open space is interrupted only by a grid of concrete support posts. Projecting from the west side of this area within the stair tower area are three additional small rooms plus an enclosed stairwell. Also on the first level, under the west side of the 1943 north wing is a narrow single room accessed only from the west side exterior.

The second floor of the building is primarily a large open space occupying the entire footprint of the building, interrupted by a grid of timber support posts and further broken up by several nonhistoric partitions. A room has been partitioned in the northeast corner of the building with frame and plywood walls and the building has been divided by a nonhistoric wood frame and plywood clad partition roughly dividing the overall floor in half. A small office area has been enclosed from this wall as well. Additionally, there are three small rooms, two of which are bathrooms, plus the enclosed stairwell. The third floor (penthouse) consists of a single open room accessed only by the interior stairwell.

The majority of the interior is unfinished with the structural system exposed. Within the first floor, the west walls are exposed poured concrete, the south end wall is exposed wood frame, and the east wall is exposed structural brick. The poured concrete support piers and reinforced beams are exposed on the ceiling, as is the poured concrete slab for the floor above. All of the first level flooring is exposed poured concrete slab. On the second floor, the majority of the walls are exposed structural brick although the wood-framed south end wall is clad with plywood. The small bathrooms within the 1946 block have plastered walls with late-twentieth century ceramic tile partly up the walls. All of the modern partition walls are also wood framed and clad with

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

plywood. Throughout the main floor area, the timber support posts that support the roof system are exposed. The exposed roofing system consists of timber joists set atop the posts and wood decking above. The exception is the area under the third floor penthouse in which steel I-beams support poured concrete girders and a poured concrete slab for the floor above. Flooring throughout the second level is varied. In both the 1928 original block and 1933 south wing the floors have poured concrete slabs that are partially exposed, and partially channeled and in-laid with wood flooring. The concrete and wood flooring are in alternating strips which allowed for machinery to be set on and supported by concrete strips with in-laid wood corridors for the comfort of workers to stand and move throughout the building. The concrete areas are generally rough with exposed aggregate and have inset metal anchors for machinery. The in-laid wood strips are set within channels cut into the concrete. The wood is narrow-gauge (2 1/2"), tongue-and-groove maple flooring set on sleepers in the channels. The floors throughout the 1943 north wing and within the 1946 block addition are smooth poured concrete slabs, but with wide expansion gaps.

On the third floor (penthouse), the walls are exposed structural brick and the ceiling is the exposed roof system with steel I-beam girders supporting a system of wood joists with scissor-bracing and wood decking above. The floors are a poured concrete slab, but with a large bulkhead cut for mechanical equipment to pass through.

The one set of interior stairs in the building is located within the 1946 block and extends from the lower level up to the third floor penthouse. There is no elevator within the building, and there was no connectivity between the first and second floors until this addition was built. The stairs are half-turn with landings at each floor as well as half-way between. The stringers and landings are steel frame and attached directly to the exposed brick walls. The decking and treads are diamond-patterned steel and lined by pole-type steel railings. The stairs are open from the lower level up to the final flight that leads to the penthouse which is enclosed within a metal firewall bulkhead.

A variety of mechanical systems and fixtures remain throughout Building B. Plumbing is located throughout the building and consists of piping for fire suppression sprinklers, the historic steam heat system, and bathrooms. All of the sprinkler and steam system piping is exposed and suspended from the ceiling by tie rods. The electrical system throughout the building all appears to have been replaced in the second-half of the twentieth century to accommodate the changing machinery and needs of the mill and is contained by a system of rigid conduit. Electric conduit is suspended from the ceiling joists throughout the building as well as mounted to the exterior walls and transformer boxes and circuit breaker panels are located throughout the building. All lighting throughout the building is modern replacements and consists primarily of numerous florescent tube light units suspended from the ceiling. The exception is in the second floor of the 1933 block which has a series of ceiling-mounted lamps attached to the joists.

Historically, the building was heated by steam heat powered by a boiler system. Radiators with electric fans are suspended from ceilings joists throughout the building and connected by a system of plumbing. Each unit has a vent that projects through the adjacent window opening to

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

the exterior. In 1946, an air conditioning system was installed in the third floor penthouse addition. This massive system occupies the majority of the third floor but has been disconnected and much of the equipment dismantled.

Although the interior of Building B historically held a large amount of machinery related to the operation of the mill, all of this was removed when it ceased operations. Equipment would have included pressing and knitting machines, many of which were affixed to the concrete strips located throughout the main floor of the building.

### **Building C - Contributing**

The third building within the Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1 complex is Building C, a small garage built in 1949. The two-bay building has an exposed concrete block structural system set on a continuous foundation and topped by a front-gabled roof with exposed rafter tails covered with standing-seam metal. There are two sets of swing-out metal garage doors on the front façade approached by a concrete apron. The sides and rear of the building are pierced by fixed four-light windows set on concrete sills. The interior of the building is unfinished with the structural system exposed.

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1  
Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia  
County and State

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

### Criteria Considerations

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

- 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

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1  
Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia  
County and State

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1900-1972

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1900

1905

1928

1933

1936

1943

1946

1971

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

\_\_\_\_\_



Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

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**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 Lynchburg Hosiery Mills #1 is being nominated for inclusion in the NRHP for local significance under Criterion A in the areas of Industry and Social History for its role in the hosiery industry throughout much of the twentieth century, as well as under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The period of significance begins in 1900 when the earliest development of the property occurred and ends in 1972 when the company was sold to an interest in Chicago and the mill was subsequently closed. Soon thereafter, the complex was badly damaged by a fire resulting in the partial demolition of one building in 1980. Criteria Consideration G does not apply to this property because, although the period of significance ends less than fifty years ago, the vast preponderance of its significance predates the traditional fifty-year cutoff for properties where significant activities have continued into the more recent past. Starting in 1900 and over seven decades of continuous operation, the Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1 played a variety of important roles in the economy, culture, and landscape of Lynchburg. In 1913, it became one of the first mills in the American South to manufacture socks with a government contract for the military. Its association with the military continued during World War II when it was one of the largest producers and innovators of G.I. cushioned socks and also produced parachute material. Throughout this period, the mill continued to produce commercial material as well and was one of the most productive hosiery mills in the country. Socially, the mill was significant as the only business or industry in Lynchburg that hired African-American women following the opening of a second, segregated mill complex in downtown Lynchburg in 1919. Although that facility's workforce was physically segregated from Mill #1, the two groups of workers were integrated in 1971. Architecturally, the property also remains as a character-defining industrial feature of south Lynchburg and is reflective of industrial construction from that time. Furthermore, Building B was the first hosiery mill building in the United States to be completely air conditioned in 1946 when it began processing the newly developed products of rayon and nylon distributed by DuPont and used for military applications.

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

### **Historical Background**

The Lynchburg Hosiery Mill came to be following the emigration of English fabric manufacturer Joseph Godber Burton to the United States. In the late-nineteenth century, J.G. Burton owned a bleach yard and finishing plant in Nottingham, England, in a partnership with his uncle. The operation was affiliated with I. and R. Morley, one of the world's largest manufacturers and exporters of knit goods at that time. In 1884, Burton moved to Thornton, Rhode Island, to serve as the first superintendent of the British Hosiery Company, one of the first 'full-fashioned'

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

hosiery mills in America, established by Robert W. Cooper who brought his own equipment and workforce of 120 employees from England to start the mill.

In 1899, the British Hosiery Company expanded their operations in the United States through the opening of a branch in Lynchburg, Virginia. At that time, J.G. Burton was selected to serve as Vice President of the new branch, and moved to Lynchburg, Virginia, to help develop what would be known as the Midland Hosiery Company.<sup>2</sup> The Midland Hosiery Company was officially chartered on May 17, 1899. The plant was situated at Fourteenth Street and Stephenson Avenue, just outside Lynchburg town limits. The mill contained 125 knitting machines and had a daily output of 500 pairs of men's, women's, and children's hosiery.<sup>3</sup>

Within a year of helping to build the Midland Hosiery Company, J.G. Burton was compelled to venture out on his own, and joined with local attorney R. Colston Blackford, to establish a new hosiery company. On October 11, 1900, Burton formally chartered the Lynchburg Hosiery Company, himself serving as President and Superintendent, and R.M. Patten as Secretary and Treasurer.<sup>4</sup> The new company was located just several blocks away from the Midland Hosiery on Twelfth Street (present-day Fort Avenue).

The site was ideal for the plant due to the springs of water above the building which provided a gravity water supply to the dye house. The mill consisted of a single one-story brick building approximately 100 feet by 40 feet that included the full range of hosiery operations. It went into operation with 25 fully automatic seamless knitting machines, and was one of the first mills in the country to utilize this technology.<sup>5</sup>

The business became the Lynchburg Hosiery Mill Company in 1902, by which time it had grown into a lucrative business which had expanded to 50 knitting machines.<sup>6</sup> It appears to have been so successful in fact, that in 1903, the nearby Midland Hosiery Company was closed and its entire plant and stock of equipment put up for sale.<sup>7</sup> In 1907, the Lynchburg Hosiery Company was incorporated with capital stock of \$50,000 and became the Lynchburg Hosiery Mills, Inc.<sup>8</sup> At that time, J.G. Burton's son, Clarence Godber Burton became Treasurer of the company. In 1908, the plant was enlarged with a second story and a new wing that allowed for an additional 90 knitting machines to go into operation.<sup>9</sup> According to a report from the Textile World Record, that year the plant operated with 105 knitters, 19 ribbers, 26 loopers, and 21 sewing machines manufacturing cotton, woolen, and merino half hose.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> "Midland Hosiery Co., Large Plant of This Company in Lynchburg," *The News*, 20th Century Edition, Lynchburg, VA, October, 1900, p.115.

<sup>3</sup> Boston Evening Transcript. June 5, 1899.

<sup>4</sup> "The Blue Book": Textile Directory of the United States and Canada, 1901-1902.

<sup>5</sup> Pou, Enoch. Lynchburg Hosiery Mill Preliminary Information Form, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> "Lynchburg Plant Ranks Among Largest Hosiery Mills," *The Daily Advance*, October 21, 1946.

<sup>7</sup> America's Textile Reporter: For the Combined Textile Industries, Volume 17. 1903.

<sup>8</sup> Earl Alvin Gerhardt, Jr. Collection, MS1299, Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, VA.

<sup>9</sup> Earl Alvin Gerhardt, Jr. Collection, MS1299, Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, VA.

<sup>10</sup> Textile World Record, Volume 36. 1908.

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

Most of the employees of the mill at that time were women. Lynchburg was a heavily industrial town at the turn-of-the-twentieth century so there were numerous factories, warehouses, and other businesses for male employment. This left out a tremendous potential workforce of women who at that time were seen as unfit for many jobs outside the home. The hosiery industry, however, was considered safe and appropriate for female employment due to its linkages to traditional sewing and piecework paid labor tasks that women had been performing since the early nineteenth century. Female workers also commonly were paid a fraction of what male workers received, thus creating an abundant and cheap labor force. With only one other operating textile mill in town, the Lynchburg Hosiery Company was able to capitalize on this form of cheap labor for many years. The usage of female workers became especially prevalent and necessary with the outbreak of World War I when men were needed not only for military service, but also industrial and production jobs in support of the war effort.

During the early years of the war in Europe, the Lynchburg Hosiery Company secured their first government contract in 1913 and became one of the first mills in the American South to manufacture socks for the military.<sup>11</sup> Before the war, the company had developed and was the first to produce cushioned sole socks. It presented samples of its cushioned sole golf socks to the Research and Development Department of the Army Quartermaster Depot. The cushion sole sock was adopted as standard issue by the Army and became its principal marching sock. Working with the Army, the Lynchburg Hosiery Company developed a new pre-shrinking process with special emphasis on cushioned sole socks for field usage where laundries were scarce. Using this process, the mill attributed a large part of its capacity to the production of socks for the Army during the war. In 1917 alone, the mill supplied 240,000 pairs of socks to the War Department at a price of \$0.13 each.<sup>12</sup> The mill also produced full fashioned stockings for the Women's Army Corps and heavy woolen desert top socks for the British and American armies during the North Africa campaign.<sup>13</sup>

The continued relationship with the military following the war, coupled with continued non-governmental contracts prompted substantial growth and expansion of the Lynchburg Hosiery Mill company in the 1920s.<sup>14</sup> In 1920, the Lynchburg Hosiery Mills Association was established "to promote friendship among its members, to furnish a method of full and frank discussion of the business of the mill in its relation to those who work for it, the promotion of constructive criticism of methods of manufacture, working conditions, and manufactured product; and for the creation of health benefit funds." The Association was opened to all "white persons" employed by Lynchburg Hosiery Mills, Inc. The Shop Committee consisted of the foremen of the several departments in the mill and was the governing body of the Association. A separate committee, the Benefit Committee, had jurisdiction over the payment of benefits, approving claims before payment and calling on ill or disabled members. Members made weekly contributions to the

<sup>11</sup> Gerhardt, E. Alvin, Jr. Telephone Interview of January 3, 2011.

<sup>12</sup> Investigation of the War Department, 1918.

<sup>13</sup> Pou, Enouch, Lynchburg Hosiery Mill PIF, 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Earl Alvin Gerhardt, Jr. Collection, MS1299, Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, VA.

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

Association, these being matched by the company. In addition to claims for disability and sickness, the Association also paid benefits to members laid off by the company.<sup>15</sup>

That same year, the company purchased a second building to increase their production of men's, women's, and children's cotton and silk hosiery. The building, a former tobacco warehouse, was located in downtown Lynchburg at 410 Court Street, within the predominantly African-American populated Fifth Street neighborhood. Following the opening of the second plant, this facility became Mill #2 while the original complex on Fort Avenue became Mill #1.

The placement of the mill was an important and bold move by Burton and the other officers of the corporation as it made Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #2 the first business or industry in Lynchburg to hire African American women and was considered the first economic opportunity for African American women to gain employment other than domestic work in the homes of White Lynchburg residents. Mill #2 operated on African American employment exclusively,<sup>16</sup> and between opening in 1919 through closing in 1971, the branch employed between 150-200 African American women. This had a tremendous social effect on the City of Lynchburg, especially early on in its operation, in that many African American women aspired to work at the mill, thereby reducing the domestic service base available for hire by white upper class residents. However, Mill #2 operated only two shifts, as opposed to the three shifts that took place at Mill #1, as African American women did not seek to work a third (night) shift due to safety and transportation concerns.<sup>17</sup>

Just as the physical plants were racially segregated, the mutual benefit associations for the workers were as well. The administration of the two Associations, the secretarial work involved, and the printing of all necessary literature took place at the company's administrative offices located at Mill #1 on Fort Avenue. Both Associations provided the same benefits to each set of employees: an early form of medical insurance, disability benefits, an early form of unemployment payments, and savings plans to include Christmas Savings Accounts. Because of the sheer number of women employees at both mills, women were permitted to serve on the Shop Committee and as part of the governing body of the Associations, an unusual allowance at a time that men typically held all leadership positions.<sup>18</sup> Because of these benefits as well as the steady income that came with employment at the mills, both African American and white women continued to seek employment at the Lynchburg Hosiery Mills Company.

In 1921, C.G. Burton assumed control of the Lynchburg Hosiery Mills from his father when he was named the new company President. Under C.G.'s leadership, coupled with the increased production of the second mill, the company continued to grow. During the 1920s, Mill #2 produced the tops and bottoms for men's socks, which then were taken to Mill #1 on Fort Avenue where the facilities and machines for finishing and dyeing of the socks were located. By

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<sup>15</sup> Earl Alvin Gerhardt, Jr. Collection, MS1299, Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, VA

<sup>16</sup> "Around the Trade," *The Underwear and Hosiery Review*. June 1920.

<sup>17</sup> Pou, Enoch, Lynchburg Hosiery Mill PIF, 2011.

<sup>18</sup> Gerhardt, E. Alvin, Jr. Telephone Interview of January 31, 2011.

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

the late 1920s, the facilities at Mill #1 were no longer able to manage the increased workload and a variety of expansions were undertaken. The primary mill building that housed the complete operation from knitting to finishing and administration was expanded with a large addition. A second, completely new building (Building B) was also constructed on the property, just uphill from the original facility.

As employment at the enlarged Mill #1 increased, many workers and their families moved closer to the plant in a neighborhood that became a sort of informal “company town” just uphill from the second building. The road that led from Fort Avenue past the mill and bordered the neighborhood (present-day Lancaster) came to be known as Burton Street in the 1920s, after the company president.

In addition to men’s and military socks, the mill’s production expanded through the 1920s to include ladies’ hosiery, golf socks, parachutes, and wool blankets. Despite the economic struggles of the Great Depression, the company continued to grow in the 1930s. In its 1936 report, the Lynchburg Sesquicentennial Association wrote in reference to Lynchburg Hosiery Mills that “This has been an outstanding success, particularly notable during the recent years of depression, when general conditions were so strained. The Lynchburg Hosiery Mills have added both to their equipment and staff and have run many months at a time with both day and night shifts operating.”<sup>19</sup> Physical growth during the 1930s included substantial additions to the second building (Building B) at Mill #1 in 1933 and the original building (Building A) in 1936.

The advent of World War II brought tremendous prosperity for the Lynchburg Hosiery Mills as they retained a substantial government contract for wartime supplies. During World War II, the mill made several items for use by the military including socks, parachutes, and artillery powder bags.<sup>20</sup> The mill manufactured 8,400 pairs of socks a day for the Government that were issued to members of the Armed Forces and Civilian Conservation Corps. Throughout the course of the war, the mill produced more than 28 million pairs of hose for the Armed Forces.<sup>21</sup> A 1943 newspaper article noted the company won “high praise” from the military for its superior product, quoting a telegram sent by a rear admiral that read in part: “Our boys can’t get enough of these fine socks. Don’t keep them waiting.”<sup>22</sup>

Because of increases in cost of traditional materials like cotton, wool, and silk due to the war, engineers and designers at the mill began to incorporate ‘new’ materials that were gaining popularity in the textile industry such as rayon and nylon distributed by the DuPont Corporation. The Lynchburg Hosiery Mills also produced specialty parachutes, known as drogue parachutes. These parachutes were attached to bombs dropped on enemy positions. The parachutes slowed

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<sup>19</sup> Horner, John V. & Winfree, P.B., Jr. *The Saga of a City*, Lynchburg, Lynchburg Sesquicentennial Association, Inc., 1936, p.130.

<sup>20</sup> Elson, James M., *Lynchburg, Virginia, The First Two Hundred Years 1786-1986*, Lynchburg, Virginia, Warwick House Publishers, 2004, p.373.

<sup>21</sup> Earl Alvin Gerhardt, Jr. Collection, MS1299, Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, VA.

<sup>22</sup> Lynchburg Hosiery Mill, Inc., Research by Vince Desmond, Lynchburg Museum System, Lynchburg, VA, July 29, 2010.

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

the descent of the bomb, thereby allowing the plane and pilot that dropped them enough time to move a safe distance from the exploding bomb. Drogue parachutes are also used to help open larger parachutes.<sup>23</sup> The mill also produced woolen blankets for the Army and cargo parachutes for the Navy.

Wartime production further solidified the trend that the hosiery mill was already following with the increase in female employment. With Lynchburg's draft quota, there was a shortage of men for necessary jobs, including essential war-related industries. This included the many foundries, shoe and clothing factories, as well as textile and hosiery mills under government contract. A call was placed throughout town, just as it was across the nation, for all able persons to fill the jobs, which resulted in more and more women doing what was previously considered men's work. In this way, most of the need for workers at the Lynchburg Hosiery Mill and other industries was met.<sup>24</sup> Wartime manufacturing also required more space in addition to more workers, and this was met by the construction of a north wing to the second building at Mill #1 in 1943.

The local prominence of the Lynchburg Hosiery Mill during the war brought notoriety to President C.G. Burton, who was selected to serve as a member of the Lynchburg City Council from 1942-1948, and even elected City Mayor for the period of 1946-1948. Following his stint as Mayor, Burton was elected as a Democrat to the Eightieth Congress in 1948 and served in that role until 1953.<sup>25</sup> At that time, Burton stepped down as President of the Lynchburg Hosiery Company to become Chairman of the Board. His nephew and the grandson of J.G. Burton, the founder of the company, C. Burton Gerhardt stepped up as President.

Under the new leadership of Gerhardt, the mill continued to grow into its peak of operations, becoming one of the largest producers of hosiery in the country, turning out approximately 25,000 dozen pairs of half hose and 2,500 dozen pairs of ladies full-fashioned hose per week. The mill produced stockings of nylon, rayon, and silk, including mesh or clocked hose.

In the post-war years, the mill was operating 825 seamless knitting machines making men's socks and 30 full fashion machines. One area of the mill produced 3,000 dozen pairs of women's sheer silk hose per week with the balance of the mill producing 18,000 dozen pairs of men's socks weekly. In the late 1940s, the mill employed 926 men and women with a weekly payroll of \$15,000. Twenty-five salesmen sold the mill's products. Customers of the mill were wholesale houses and large chain stores based primarily in New York and Chicago.

The company produced 102 different men's patterns utilizing 32 colors of yarn dyed at the plant. Women's hose were produced in 15 colors that changed seasonally and were offered in 2, 3, and 4-thread count and included novelties such as Queen Anne's lace stockings and knee-length

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<sup>23</sup> Lynchburg Hosiery Mill, Inc., Research by Vince Desmond, Lynchburg Museum System, Lynchburg, VA, July 29, 2010.

<sup>24</sup> Scruggs, Philip Lightfoot, *The History of Lynchburg, Virginia: 1786-1946*, Lynchburg, Virginia, J.P. Bell Company, 1972, p.259.

<sup>25</sup> "Clarence Burton," *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*.

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

sports hose. A team of four full-time designers were on staff to keep up with trends in styles and imagine new designs.<sup>26</sup>

To create these different patterns, the mill used a combination of human and machine work, including a variety of modern specialized machinery. A 1946 newspaper article described the complex as being filled with endless rows of knitting machines throughout the company's three buildings. It goes on to describe the various processes for making both men's and women socks. Both socks were produced using generally similar methods, with the primary differences being in material and color. Also, men's half socks and women's knee length hose were seamless, while the majority of socks and hose consisted of a separate foot section and upper "ribbed" section produced by a ribber seamed together. As such, the primary machines within the complex were leggers, footers, loopers, seamers, and ribbers. The leggers were 47 feet long and could knit 21 full-fashioned hose at a time. The machine automatically adjusted itself to knit the hose the shape of the leg. In order to distinguish between hose of different qualities and thread counts for women's wear, the thread fed to the machine was tinted various shades of pink and yellow. The foot of the hose was started by hand by a worker called the "topper." The topper would attach the leg of the hose to a transfer bar which was then placed on the footer machine. The footer was a machine that knitted the foot of the hose. Each footer could knit 24 hose at a time, the same amount the legger could knit. However, as the footer knitted much faster than the legger, the complex employed only eight footer machines as opposed to 22 leggers.<sup>27</sup>

Once the foot was knitted, it was taken to a worker in charge of "topping" or fastening up the toe and heel on a single machine called a "looper." The loopers were used to top the toe and heel and some of the men's socks. Meanwhile, for men's socks, ribbers were the machines that knit the upper part of the sock which was then attached to the remainder of the sock by the knitting machine. The ribber machine knitted a continuous chain of ribbings that were then cut apart and each set on a bar attached to the knitting machine. At that point, the hose was ready for finishing on the "seamer" machine which connected the foot of the hose with upper portion. Once seamed, the women's hose was ready to be stretched over the dying form and dyed one of the fifteen offered colors.<sup>28</sup>

For menswear, all the socks come off the knitting machine gray. They were then bleached with sodium peroxide before being dyed the desired color. The products were dyed in a state of the art dye house facility at the complex. The dyeing machines were made of Monel, a naturally non-corrosive alloy resistant to the action of dye chemicals. A sock could be dyed a pattern of as many as three different colors in one water, accomplished by knitting the sock of three different materials. There were dyes for vegetable, animal, and acetate materials with the affinity for only one of the materials, therefore the dye coloring the cotton would not affect wool or rayon, why other dyes may only color those materials.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> "Lynchburg Plant Ranks Among Largest Hosiery Mills," *The Daily Advance*, October 21, 1946

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Ibid



Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

Throughout the entire process, the hose and socks were inspected for defects. The most common defect was when the looper left thread ends loose on the wrong side of the sock. To remove these, the mill employed machines which were a combination of clippers and vacuums. The operator ran the clipper over the sock while stretched on a form. It would cut the dangling thread and remove them with the vacuum. The complex nature of the machines and their operation 24-hours a day required a full-time staff of 35 machinists at the mill to keep them in repair.<sup>30</sup>

Although wool from Australia and silk from Japan were the principal fabrics used, the increased cost for these materials due to the war, particularly silk from Japan, led the Lynchburg Hosiery Mill to continue incorporating the newly developed materials of rayon and nylon into their products. As these materials were expected to become the principal material for women's hose the company took the substantial step in 1946 to air condition one of the mill buildings as temperature control was an important factor in the processing of nylon. To accomplish this upgrade, a large addition with a third-floor penthouse had to be appended to Building B to accommodate the massive air conditioning system. Once completed, the Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1 became the first hosiery mill in the country to be completely air conditioned.<sup>31</sup> Just a few years after the second mill building (Building B) at the complex was air conditioned, a new boiler house was added to the first mill building (Building A) in the early-1950s. Around the same time, a two-bay, concrete block garage was constructed within the complex to serve as a storage space and garage.

Phenomenal growth of manufacturing payrolls in the post-war years made Lynchburg's factories and mills, including the Lynchburg Hosiery Mills, a substantial component of the City's business and economy. By the 1950s, industrial payrolls in Lynchburg were nearly twice as great as in the last year of World War II and more than three times as much as in the pre-war year of 1939.<sup>32</sup>

In 1964, Congressional passage of the Civil Rights Act led to changes in the organization of the workers' Associations, but not the workplace. By law, the two separate Lynchburg Hosiery Mill Associations were merged, bringing both the African American and white employees into the same Association. As a part of the merger, the Association had to issue the African American employees of Mill #2 a partial return of monies that they had paid into the Association to have an equitable pro rata share of the Association upon completion of the merger after it was determined that the white employees had used the medical and other benefits much more than their African American counterparts. The workforces of the two mills, however, remained physically segregated until 1971 with all African American employees working at Mill #2 while the white employees and administrative offices stayed at Mill #1 on Fort Avenue.

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<sup>30</sup> "Lynchburg Plant Ranks Among Largest Hosiery Mills," *The Daily Advance*, October 21, 1946

<sup>31</sup> Gerhardt, E. Alvin, Jr. Telephone Interview of January 3, 2011.

<sup>32</sup> Greater Lynchburg Chamber of Commerce, Lynchburg, Industrial, Geographical, and Transportation Center of Virginia, pamphlet ca. 1951, Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, VA.

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

The two mills remained segregated until 1971 when the decision was made to close Mill #2. At that time, all of the equipment was transferred to Mill #1 and the two workforces were integrated within the one facility. The combined operation did not continue for long though, for the following year, it was announced that the company and operation would be sold to an investment firm based in Chicago. The formal announcement was made September 16, 1972, by acting President C. Burton Gerhardt, former President and grandson of the founder Joseph G. Burton, and William H. Rentschler of Chicago, the new President. With the sale of all issued and outstanding capital stock of the Lynchburg Hosiery Mills, Inc., it was described as being among the top 10 percent of the nation's hosiery producers at that time. As part of the sale, founding family members C. Burton Gerhardt, Clarence G. Burton, and E. Alvin Gerhardt, Jr., agreed to continue to be active on a day to day basis as consultants.<sup>33</sup> Operations only continued briefly though as the company fell on hard times and closed completely in 1972 after the Chicago investors who purchased it became mired in legal troubles and allegations of fraud.<sup>34</sup>

The company no longer maintained a presence in Lynchburg and the mill complex ceased to operate. For the next eight years, the large empty buildings that formerly held row upon row of knitting machines and other equipment were leased out as general storage space, used primarily to store window displays for a local department store.<sup>35</sup>

On the afternoon of Saturday April 5, 1980, a fire broke out in the 1900-1908 portions of Building A fronting Fort Avenue where the administrative offices and some manufacturing space had been located. Fire fighters battled the fire, but by the time it was extinguished, both of the large mill buildings were severely damaged and several smaller storage buildings set between them were completely destroyed. The following day, crews under the supervision of the fire department knocked down the most heavily damaged portions of the administrative building (Building A), leaving just the foundation and lower part of the walls in case the property owners wished to rebuild the structure atop them.<sup>36</sup>

Reconstruction did not take place, and instead the wall at the north end of Building A was closed off with a framed wall and vinyl siding. The remaining portions of the two mill buildings were repaired and continued to be leased out as general warehouse space for the next three decades. As of 2016, the complex was purchased by a real estate developer with plans to rehabilitate the buildings, and restore their historic character while converting them into mixed-use commercial and loft space.

**Significance: Industry**

The Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1 is eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A at the local level for its association with the industrial heritage of the City of Lynchburg and the hosiery

<sup>33</sup> "Hosiery Firm Sold to Chicago Group," *The News*, Lynchburg, VA, September 17, 1972.

<sup>34</sup> "Developer seeks to flip old Fort Ave. mills for lofts, commercial space." *The News and Advance*. March 14, 2010.

<sup>35</sup> "Fire Guttled Walls of Mill Knocked Down." *The Free Lance Star*. April 7, 1980.

<sup>36</sup> "Fire Guttled Walls of Mill Knocked Down." *The Free Lance Star*. April 7, 1980.

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

industry at large. The Lynchburg Hosiery Mills Company, and particularly Mill #1, played a variety of important roles in the economic and commercial evolution of Lynchburg from the time of its charter in 1900 through its sale to an outside business investment firm in 1972. During that time, the mill employed thousands of local residents with a substantial payroll. As one of the largest industrial concerns in the city, the mill was a substantial component of Lynchburg's economy throughout the twentieth century. As one of the largest hosieries in the nation, the products they produced brought attention to Lynchburg as these products were distributed to major centers of fashion in New York and Chicago where a number of their trademark lines were among the most popular brands.

The Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1 is also significant for a variety of developments and industry "firsts" that occurred there. Early in its operation, the mill was credited with the invention and first production of the cushioned sole sock. The invention of the cushioned sole sock, which is still widely manufactured and considered now to be a standard attribute to virtually all manufactured socks. The cushioned sole sock and a variety of other products manufactured at the Lynchburg Hosiery Mill also contributed greatly to the military and war efforts during both World War I and II. During World War I, the mill was one of the largest providers of socks to the Army. During World War II, it continued to be a major producer of socks in addition to other textiles such as blankets and parachutes including the newly developed nylon "drogue parachutes." The drogue parachute was a crucial component in the weaponry used by Allied Forces in their effort to win World War II, and saved the lives of countless pilots and assuredly turned many battles during the war. The production of nylon parachutes by the Lynchburg Hosiery Mill was significant as an early example of the use of new, synthetic materials purchased from DuPont being used by the military after Japanese silk became scarce during the war.

After the war, the Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1 continued the use of nylon as well as another synthetic material produced by DuPont, rayon. The mill's use of these new products also led to its significance as the first hosiery facility in the country to be completely air-conditioned due to the specific climate requirements needed for the manufacture of nylon products. Development and improvement of various hosiery products resulting from the cutting-edge use of nylon was clearly evident at the mill as its overall production, and particularly that of women's nylon stockings, tripled in the years following its adoption.

### **Significance: Social History**

The Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1 is eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A at the local level for its role in the social history of Lynchburg throughout its operation. At the turn-of-the-twentieth century, Lynchburg was the site of many large industrial concerns, including the Glamorgan Pipe and Foundry Company, one the largest foundries in the South. As such, there were many opportunities for men to find work in the area; however few jobs were deemed safe and appropriate for women. Textiles were one line of work that was considered fit for females as it was non-threatening to the traditional norms for male/female relationships in a household while affording an extra income. From the time of its opening through its closure in 1972, the

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1 took advantage of the extensive potential female workforce in Lynchburg, employing thousands of women during its operation. An average of 75% of the mill's employees were female and at its peak of almost 1,200 employees, less than 100 were men. As such, the Lynchburg Hosiery Mill was one of the major employers of women in the Lynchburg area, and in many ways was responsible for helping to solidify the two income household in town.

The Lynchburg Hosiery Mill Company is also significant for its role in the employment of African American women outside of domestic servitude. In 1920, the company opened a second mill in the predominantly African American Fifth Street neighborhood of Lynchburg. At this plant the company employed an almost exclusively African American female workforce that fundamentally changed hiring practices in the region. While this employment occurred at Mill #2 and not within the Mill #1, the decision to enact this policy and the subsequent management occurred within the corporate administrative offices at Mill #1. Following the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, the two separate worker Associations were merged and compensation was paid to the African American members who had received less benefits under the segregated system. In 1971, Mill #2 was closed and all the employees were at that time integrated into the single operation at Mill #1. As such, the Lynchburg Hosiery Mill Company is significant as an early employer of African American workers, and the first to employ African American women in Lynchburg, but also conveys the strained racial relationships and segregation prevalent throughout the region during the Jim Crow era of segregation.

### **Significance: Architecture**

The Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1 is also locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a representative example of industrial development throughout the first half of the twentieth century and an early example of industrial construction specifically for textile mills in the Lynchburg area. The mill buildings on the property were built and expanded a number of times between 1900 and the 1950s and thus reflect a variety of construction techniques and innovations. The earliest construction on the property consisted of a primarily one-story building set on a stacked stone foundation with masonry walls but internal timber support posts and beams. The later additions are illustrative of improved large-scale construction techniques through the use of concrete foundations, reinforced concrete subfloors, posts, and beams, and the eventual transition to structural I-beams; all of which allowed for larger open industrial areas while supporting heavier and more extensive machinery as the twentieth century progressed.

Not only do the buildings at Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1 exhibit these general construction advances, they also retain and display a variety of specialized components designed specifically for textile mills. The exterior of the buildings reflects textile mill construction prevalent in the first-half of the twentieth century with rows of large, industrial-style casement windows to provide suitable illumination for the workers inside. The need for daylight in work areas has always been a dominant factor in mill design. Within the long, relatively narrow manufacturing spaces of early mill buildings, workbenches lined exterior walls or were placed perpendicular to them, next to windows. Workers sat or stood at these benches, usually facing windows, to

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

perform the operations that required the best lighting – precision work and color matching.<sup>37</sup> These early mills relied on rows of smaller windows; however by the turn of the twentieth century, larger casement windows arranged in curtain wall configurations greatly improved interior illumination, particularly as electric lighting was still not always readily available. The portions of Mill #1 built in 1900 and 1908 exhibited the earlier form with regularly spaced double-hung sash windows while those portions built from the 1920s through the 1950s feature the larger casement style windows. Within the buildings at Mill #1, the interiors also reflect of textile mill construction with large, undivided open rooms sufficient for rows of machinery, workbenches, and other equipment including some, such as leggers, which were nearly 50-foot long.

The interior of Building B is particularly notable for several characteristic mill designs. The flooring throughout the main level was specially designed for the type of work performed there. The floor is a structural concrete slab that is channeled and in-laid with wood flooring. The concrete and wood floors are in alternating strips which allowed for machinery to be set on the concrete and stabilized by inset metal anchors, while channeled strips for in-laid wood corridors provided for the comfort of workers standing and moving about the building. Building B was also expanded and adapted in 1946 to meet the specialized manufacturing process for the newly developed material nylon. Nylon requires cool conditions and thus a large penthouse was added to the building to house a massive air conditioner system, reportedly making Building B the first textile mill building in the nation to be outfitted in this way specifically for nylon. Meanwhile, the modestly scaled Building C, a two-bay, concrete block garage, is illustrative of the transition from brick to standardized concrete masonry units for construction of service buildings such as garages, shops, and other utilitarian purposes.

As such, the Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1 conveys architectural significance for its representation of not only general industrial construction from the first-half of the twentieth century, but for specialized design related to its role as a textile mill. Several of the small ancillary buildings present during the operation of the mill have been demolished, and a portion of one of the mills was destroyed by fire in 1980; however the two mill buildings that remain continue to convey their historic function, association, and character. Together they display a complex of early industrial architecture and various construction methods necessary to function as a hosiery mill complex throughout the first-half of the twentieth century.

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<sup>37</sup> Bradley, Betsy Hunter. *The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States*, New York , Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 31.

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

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Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1  
Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia  
County and State

United States Geological Service. Topographical Quadrangles. Assorted Dates.

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**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: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA; City of Lynchburg, VA

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** VDHR File #118-0126

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** approximately 4

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: 37.398160                      Longitude: 79.163450

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

The boundary of the Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1 is composed of portions of two separate property tax parcels (identified as 02733066 and 02733019 by the City of Lynchburg) and contains approximately 4 acres of land. The property is located at 2734 Fort Avenue in Lynchburg, Virginia and is generally bound by Fort Avenue to the northwest, Lancaster Street to the southwest, Reed Street to the southeast, and by adjacent properties to the northeast. The northeastern boundary follows the property line of the larger, northern of the

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1  
Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia  
County and State

two parcels along the rear of two adjacent properties that front Fort Avenue and then along the side boundary of adjacent property facing Reed Street. The true and correct historic boundaries are shown on the attached Location Map and Sketch Map.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The historic boundaries include the acreage historically associated with the Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1 and includes all extant buildings and structures historically associated with the complex as well as its original setting.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Robert J. Taylor, Jr.  
organization: Dutton & Associates, LLC  
street & number: 1115 Crowder Drive  
city or town: Midlothian state: Virginia zip code: 23313  
telephone: 804-897-1960  
date: August 2016

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**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.)

**Photograph Log**

Name of Property: Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1  
City or Vicinity: Lynchburg  
County: Independent City State: Virginia  
Photographer: Todd Dykshorn

Photo 1 of 17: Building A  
North End, Facing Southwest  
Photo taken March 2010

Photo 2 of 17: Building A

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

South End, Facing Northeast

Photo taken March 2010

Photo 3 of 17: Building A

East Facade, Facing North

Photo taken March 2010

Photo 4 of 17: Building A

Northeast Corner, Facing West

Photo taken March 2010

Photo 5 of 17: Building B

Site, Facing Northeast

Photo taken March 2010

Photo 6 of 17: Building B

West Facade, Facing Southeast

Photo taken March 2010

Photo 7 of 17: Building B

South End, Facing Northeast

Photo taken March 2010

Photo 8 of 17: Building B

North End, Facing Southwest

Photo taken March 2010

Photo 9 of 17: Building C

Front and West Side, Facing Northwest

Photo taken March 2010

Photo 10 of 17: Building A

Second Story Interior (1920s Block), Facing Southeast

Photo taken March 2010

Photo 11 of 17: Building A

Second Story Interior (1936 Block), Facing West/Southwest

Photo taken March 2010

Photo 12 of 17: Building A

First Story Interior, Facing Northeast

Photo taken March 2010

Photo 13 of 17: Building B

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State

Second Story Interior (1928 and 1943 Blocks), Facing Southwest  
Photo taken March 2010

Photo 14 of 17: Building B  
Second Story Interior (1928 Block), Facing North  
Photo taken March 2010

Photo 15 of 17: Building B  
Second Story Interior (1943 Block), Facing North  
Photo taken March 2010

Photo 16 of 17: Building A  
Second Story Interior (1928 and 1933 Blocks), Facing Southwest  
Photo taken March 2010

Photo 17 of 17: Building A  
First Story Interior (1933 Block), Facing Southwest  
Photo taken March 2010

### **List of Historic Photos**

Historic Photo 1: Lynchburg Hosiery Mill, Circa 1900s,  
Unknown Photographer. Source: Lynchburg History.

Historic Photo 2: Lynchburg Hosiery Mill, Circa 1920s.  
Unknown Photographer. Source: Lynchburg History.

Historic Photo 3: Lynchburg Hosiery Mill Interior, 1946.  
Unknown Photographer. Source: *The Daily Advance: Lynchburg, Virginia*. Monday October  
21, 1946. On file at the City of Lynchburg Museum System.

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1  
Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia  
County and State

**Historic Photographs**



Historic Photo 1: Lynchburg Hosiery Mill, Circa 1900s.  
Unknown Photographer. Source: Lynchburg History.

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1  
Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia  
County and State



Historic Photo 2: Lynchburg Hosiery Mill, Circa 1920s.  
Unknown Photographer. Source: Lynchburg History.

Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1

Name of Property

Lynchburg, Virginia

County and State



Historic Photo 3: Lynchburg Hosiery Mill Interior, 1946.

Unknown Photographer. Source: *The Daily Advance: Lynchburg, Virginia*. Monday October 21, 1946. On file at the City of Lynchburg Museum System.

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

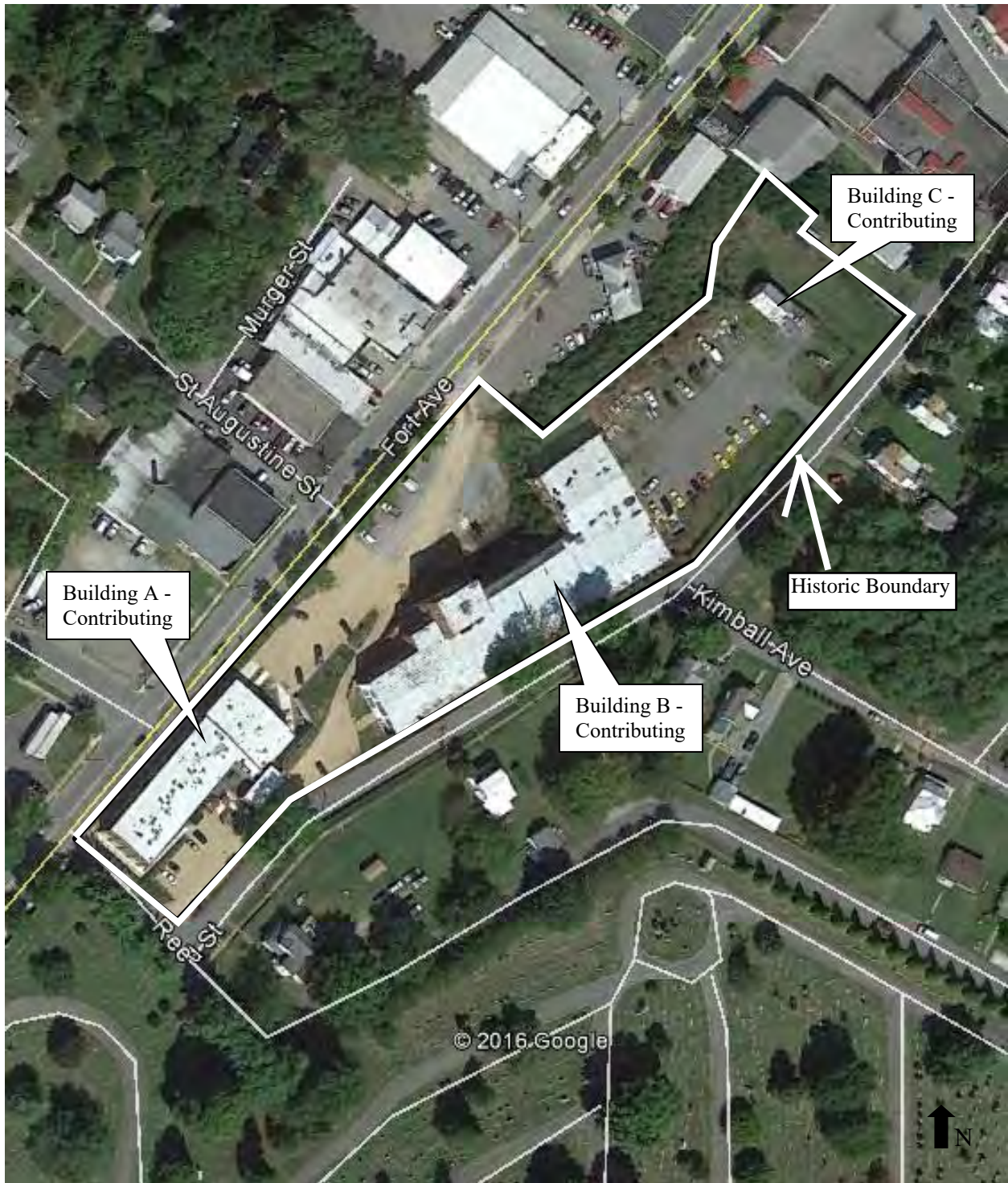




**Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1  
Lynchburg, Virginia  
VDHR # 118-0126**

**Location Map (point coincides with latitude/longitude provided in Section 10)**





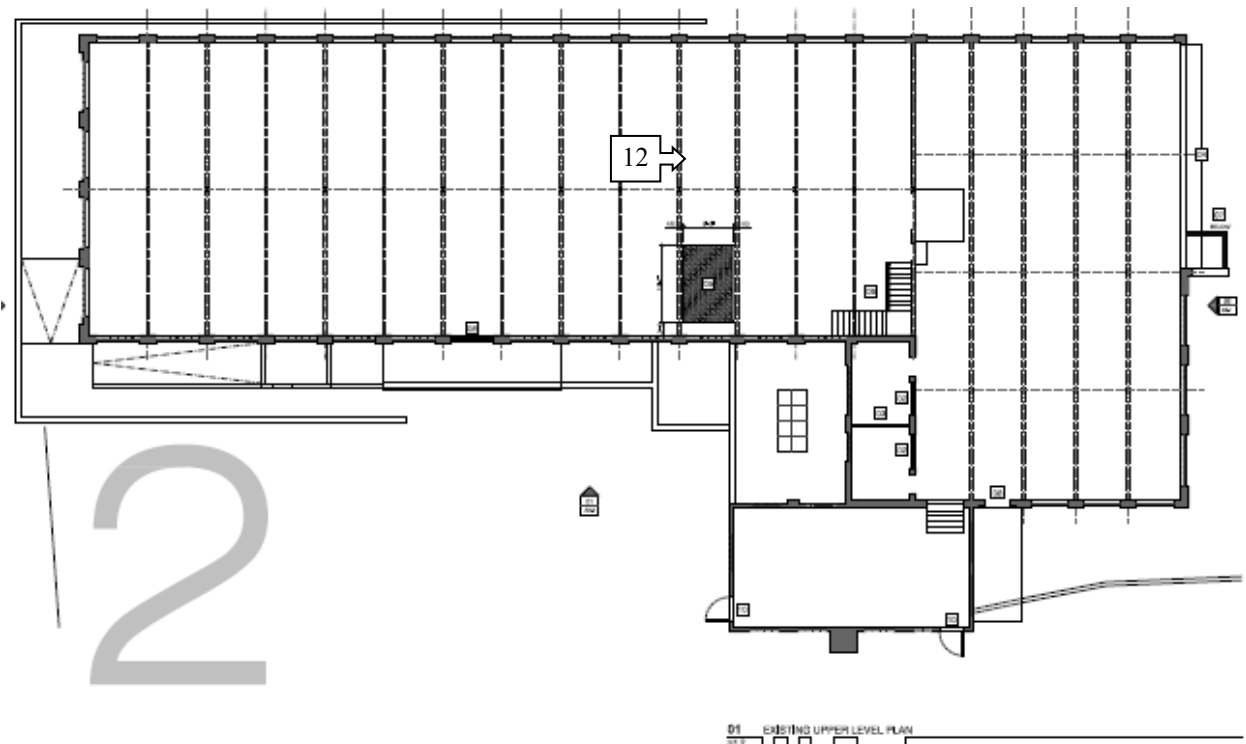
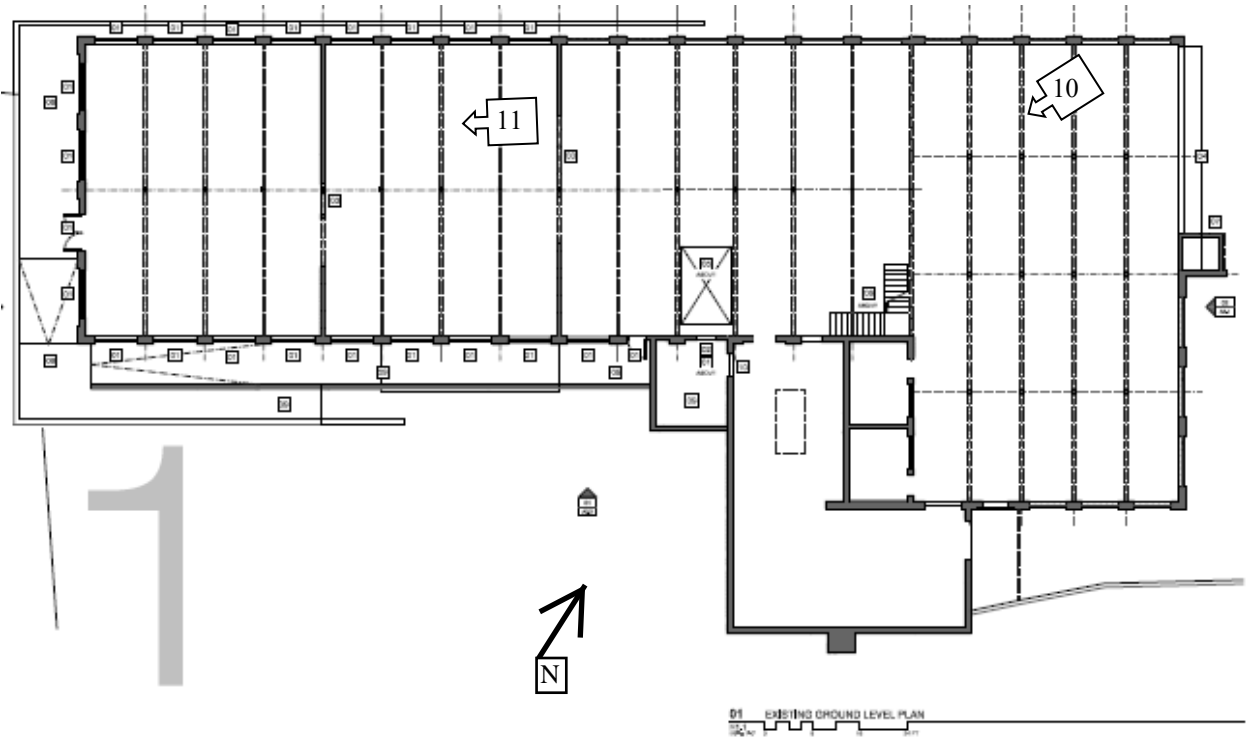
**Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1  
Lynchburg, VA  
VDHR # 118-0126**

**Sketch Map (with contributing status for individual buildings)**

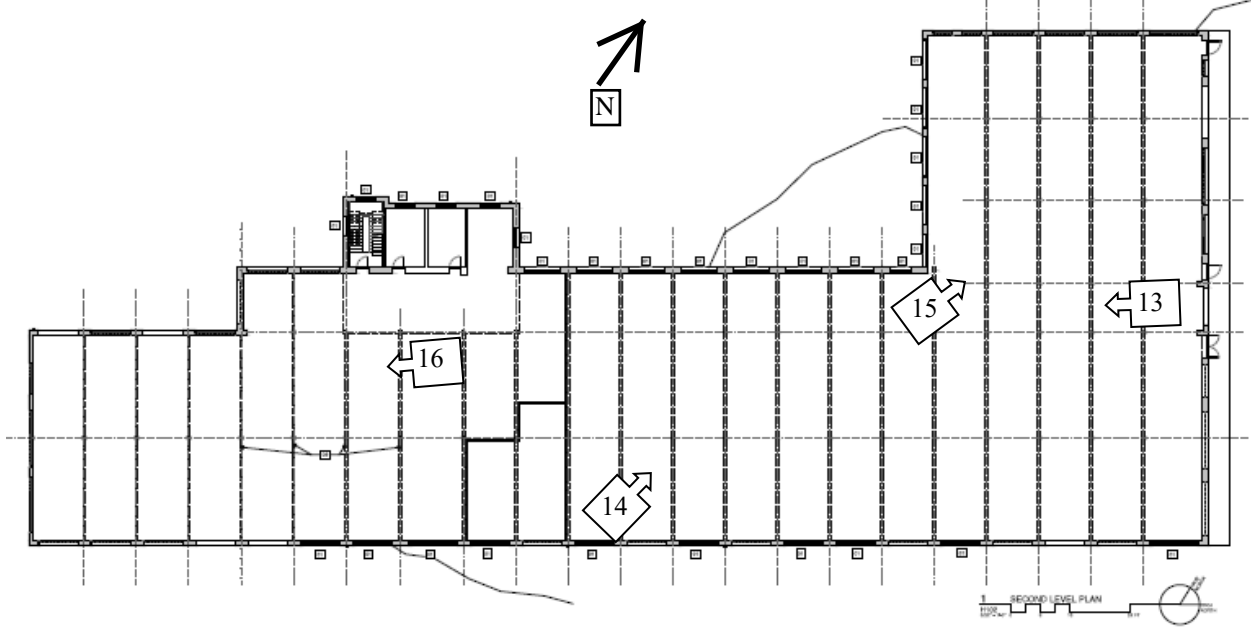
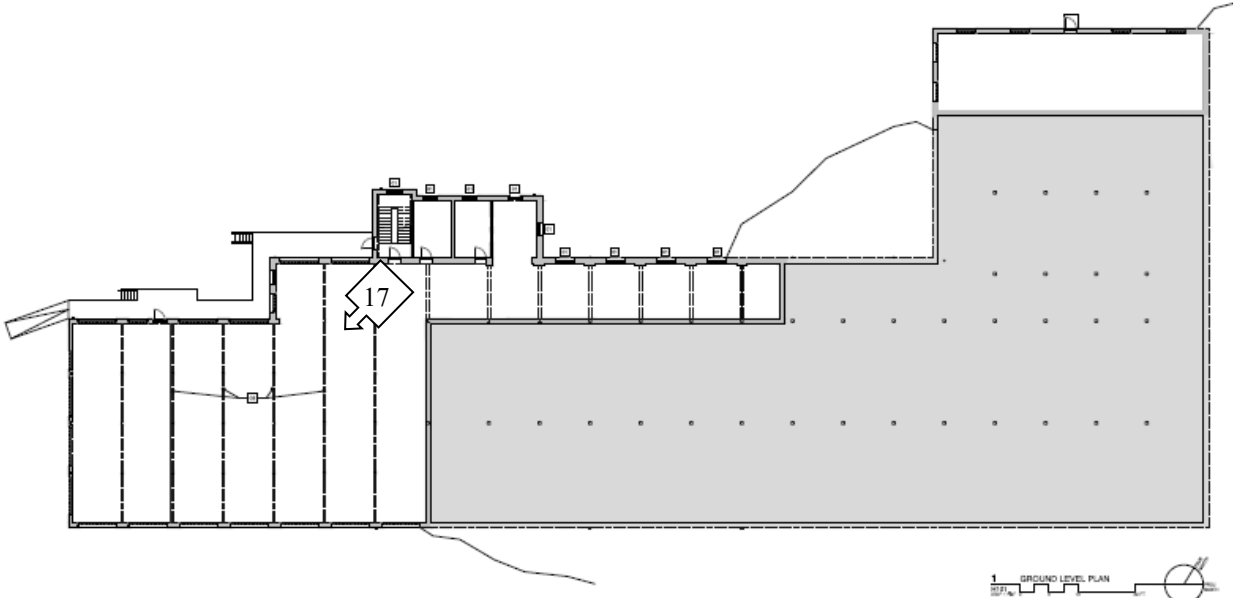




**Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1**  
**Lynchburg, VA**  
**VDHR # 118-0126**  
**Photo Key (Site and Exterior)**



**Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1**  
**Lynchburg, VA**  
**VDHR # 118-0126**  
**Photo Key (Building A Interior)**



**Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1**  
**Lynchburg, VA**  
**VDHR # 118-0126**  
**Photo Key (Building B Interior)**







LEASE  
TOP FLOOR  
424-977-4187  
800-770-7000

1st  
Lancaster St

FOR RENT

FOR RENT

FOR RENT











Industrial building under renovation or demolition. The structure features a combination of red brick and white siding. Large windows are boarded up with plywood. The building is situated on a slight rise.

Yellow skid steer loader with the number 3 on its side.

Yellow Deere excavator with the number 120 on its side.

Stack of pipes, including green and brown ones.

White truck parked in the background.

























DANGER  
NO SMOKING  
NO OPEN FLAMES











UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 1/6/2017      Date of Pending List:      Date of 16th Day:      Date of 45th Day: 2/21/2017      Date of Weekly List: 3/2/2017

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept       Return       Reject      2/21/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Edson Beall      Discipline Historian

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.





# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## Department of Historic Resources

2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221

Molly Joseph Ward  
*Secretary of Natural Resources*

Julie V. Langan  
*Director*

Tel: (804) 367-2323  
Fax: (804) 367-2391  
[www.dhr.virginia.gov](http://www.dhr.virginia.gov)

January 3, 2017

Mr. Paul Loether  
Chief, National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks Programs  
National Park Service 2280  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 I ("Eye") Street, N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20005

**Re: Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1, City of Lynchburg, Virginia**

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **Lynchburg Hosiery Mill #1** to the National Register of Historic Places. Submitted for your review, the nomination has been considered, and approved, by the State Review Board and the Virginia SHPO has recommended it for listing. Any letters of comment or objection have been copied at the end of the nomination material, along with any FPO notification letters.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. My direct phone line is 804-482-6439.

Sincerely,

Lena Sweeten McDonald  
National/State Register Historian

Enclosures

Western Region Office  
962 Kime Lane  
Salem, VA 24153  
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Stephens City, VA 22655  
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