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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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 West Point Rice Mill
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Lockwood Boulevard not for publication _____
city or town Charleston vicinity _____
state South Carolina code SC county Charleston code 019
zip code 29401

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 _____ statewide X locally.
(____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mary W. Edmonds 12/7/94
Signature of certifying official Date

Mary W. Edmonds, Deputy SHPO, S.C. Department of Archives & History, Columbia, S.C.
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 _____
- other (explain): _____

Edson R. Beall 1-20-95
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
			buildings
			sites
			structures
			objects
			Total

Name of related multiple property listing _____ Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0
 Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>INDUSTRY</u>	Sub: <u>Manufacturing Facility</u>
<u>TRANSPORTATION</u>	<u>Air-Related</u>
<u>DEFENSE</u>	<u>Coast Guard Facility</u>
<u>DEFENSE</u>	<u>Naval Facility</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>COMMERCE</u>	Sub: <u>Business</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)
NO STYLE

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)
 foundation Concrete
 roof Metal: Copper
 walls Brick
 other _____

Narrative Description

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

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 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 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- ARCHITECTURE
- INDUSTRY
- MILITARY
- SOCIAL HISTORY
- _____
- _____
- _____

Significant Dates

- 1861-1863
- 1937-1939
- 1941-1942

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Period of Significance

1861-1944

Architect/Builder

Delano and Aldrich
Works Progress Administration

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

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

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acree of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>17</u>	<u>598220</u>	<u>3627060</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	<u>See continuation sheet.</u>					

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 Sarah Fick and John Laurens
organization Preservation Consultants, Inc. date 20 March 1994
street & number P.O. Box 1112 telephone (803) 723-1746
city or town Charleston state SC zip code 29402

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 City Council of Charleston, c/o Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr.
street & number P.O. Box 652 telephone _____
city or town Charleston state SC zip code 29402

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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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

West Point Rice Mill
Charleston County, South Carolina

The West Point Rice Mill is located on the east bank of the Ashley River, just outside the boundary of the Charleston Old and Historic District (listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1966, geographically expanded in 1970 and 1978). In 1988 an addendum to the Charleston Old and Historic District was written to extend the period of significance up to 1941, but not to change the boundaries of the district.¹

After consideration of the boundaries of the existing Charleston Old and Historic District, it has been decided to nominate the West Point Rice Mill to the National Register individually rather than seeking to expand the district.

Narrative Description

The West Point Rice Mill is the only one of Charleston's three principal antebellum commercial rice mill buildings that remains. Constructed from 1861-63, it operated sporadically through the Civil War, and afterward until the early 1920s. Except for damage from the earthquake of 1886, and the early 1920s removal of milling equipment and other components valuable on the salvage market, the building was unaltered in 1926, when it was conveyed to the City of Charleston. This transaction effectively mothballed the structure, which stood vacant for a decade.²

Between 1937-1939 and again in 1941 the West Point Rice Mill building was extensively altered, by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the United States Navy respectively, with limited modifications to the exterior and large-scale remodeling of the interior.

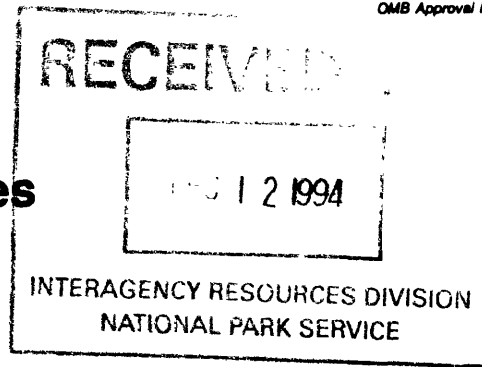
Beginning in 1937, the WPA converted the West Point Rice Mill for reuse as a passenger terminal and administrative center for a transAtlantic seaplane base. The U. S. flagship carrier, Pan American Airways, had become involved with the project, and the firm of Delano and Aldrich, Architects, of New York City designed rehabilitation plans for the Charleston Passenger Station. Delano and Aldrich were apparently selected because of their previous work for Pan American. The Charleston firm of Simons and Lapham was retained as the architects' local representatives.³

Although the Seaplane Base never became a reality, and the WPA completed only the exterior and two lower interior levels, the impact of Delano and Aldrich's plans and their partial execution between 1937-39 was substantial. Two massive brick external chimneys were removed from either side of the tower at the east elevation, new windows installed at the projection, and a new entry built. The entire ground level was rebuilt, on a new reinforced concrete slab with cement finish. Cast-stone sills were added at all first level windows, which were raised 2'6" above the level of the new flooring, and sash installed to match the existing at the fourth level.

The pedimented center projection at the west (Ashley River) elevation and the side gable ends were rebuilt in brick, and new demilune windows installed. These areas had been sided with roofing material after having been badly damaged by the 1886 earthquake and the series of hurricanes in the late 19th-early 20th century. Oculus window were installed at existing window openings along the third level of the gable projection. The openings were

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West Point Rice Mill
Charleston County, South Carolina
Narrative Description, continued

infilled with poorly-matched brick, but the sills were retained. This unsuccessfully-executed element of the 1937 plan was returned to original conditions in 1993.

The twentieth century alterations were significant architecturally and historically; however, in plan, mass, design and structural materials, the building has not been essentially changed since 1863. The nineteenth century architect of the West Point Rice Mill has not been documented, but architect Samuel Lapham, Jr., analyzed it in relation to the two other mills remaining in Charleston in 1924 (both now gone). He described West Point as the "last and largest of the great mills," comparing its principal block of 142' by 42' to the 1830 Chisolm's Mill (90' by 70'), and 1844 Bennett's Mill (90' by 65'). The style of West Point, lacking the ornamental detailing of Charleston's other large rice mills, was described as a precursor of later nineteenth century industrial architecture.⁴

The West Point Rice Mill is an industrial building constructed of brick laid in Flemish bond, which stands three and one-half stories above the ground floor level. The building is Palladian in its mid-19th century form, with monumental stuccoed pilasters of the Doric order defining the west elevation's main portico and the slightly projecting pavilions at both end bays of the principal west and east facades. The pilasters are paired at the secondary north and south elevations. The east elevation has a projecting tower at its center bay, with flat brick parapet above the roof level. Two story wings (26' wide X 36' deep) with flat parapets project from the outer bays of the east elevation of the principal block.

Earthquake bolts, anchoring tie rods installed in 1886, are visible at all elevations of the main building and wings. The earthquake shattered brickwork and brought down gables, but repairs did not alter the size, footprint or essential height of the building. As a result of the earthquake and several hurricanes, the entire roof (with the exception of the original king post and trusses) had been replaced at least once before Lapham's 1924 assessment. Following Hurricane Hugo in 1989 all roofing was replaced with standing seam copper.⁵

The principal west facade is eleven bays wide, with three bays projecting slightly forward to form a central pediment under a gable roof. At the center of the pediment is the 1937 demilune window (8/8 double hung wood sash flanked by small fixed sash).

The ground floor contains a mix of doors and windows, as per the 1937 design. The Delano and Aldrich plan included an iron balcony above the first level at the center projection. After 1946 a one-story wood-and-glass lobby room with roof deck was added at the first level, and the central portion of the iron rail relocated on the roof. The addition was severely damaged by fire in 1989, and the ground level of the west elevation, with three rounded-arched openings, has been returned to its 1937-39 configuration, but without the balcony railing.

West elevation windows are typical of all elevations of the main building. These nineteenth century openings are well documented in early twentieth century views of the

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**West Point Rice Mill
Charleston County, South Carolina
Narrative Description, continued**

building. These nineteenth century openings are well documented in early twentieth century views of the building. Wood casement sash are set within segmental arched openings with sandstone sills. Window openings at the second and third levels have transoms above and below the casements, and are correspondingly taller than the fourth level openings. Shed dormers were added to the west roof above the second, third, ninth and tenth bays in 1993.

Gable ends at the north and south elevations show evidence of the 1937-39 brick repairs, with demilune windows matching the west elevation, and two rows of windows at the second, third and fourth levels.

The east facade, today the principal elevation of the building, has window and pilaster detailing to match the west facade. The parapet at the central projection has two rows of brick corbeling above a stuccoed corbelled cornice continuous with the cornice of the main body. The principal entry, which features double doors with transom beneath a cantilevered concrete flat awning, has a corbeled brick surround in a segmented arched opening. The Palladian window at the second and third levels has double-hung 9/9 sash and an oversized fanlight in a heavy stuccoed surround. This window appears in nineteenth century views of the mill.⁶ The octagonal brick external chimneys that originally flanked the projection were removed in 1937-39. At the first and second levels of the bays they had covered, new casement windows with transoms to match the existing casements were installed; new multi-light fixed-sash oculus windows were installed at the third level.

Just south of the parapet projection at the east elevation, a small gabled vent marks the 1960s elevator shaft. A brick furnace flue that pierced the north end of the roofline was removed in 1993. The 1937 plans showed such chimneys being added at either end of the building, but by 1944 only one existed, and it may be that the southern furnace was not built. Regardless, the flue was a minor element in the overall 1937 plan, and its removal as a result of hurricane damage has no significant adverse impact.

The interior of the Passenger Station of the James F. Byrnes Seaplane Base was redesigned as several large spaces simply partitioned from each other. The WPA completed the first two levels (plastered, floored and finished for occupancy) by mid-1939, and within a few months the spaces were occupied by the Charleston district offices of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). When Charleston's Naval Reserve Unit was called to active duty, the James F. Byrnes Seaplane Base was turned over to the U. S. Navy Department, which commissioned the West Point Rice Mill as the section base of the Charleston Area Inshore Patrol, Sixth Naval District. By early 1942 the third and fourth floor interiors were in service for administrative operations, radio rooms and an officers' mess.⁷

Slight alterations and modifications have continued. In 1946 the West Point Rice Mill was converted into a naval minecraft base. In 1961 interior renovations were undertaken for the Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District Office. At that time, an elevator was installed at the south side of the eastern lobby (rising from the location of the 1937 Customs Office); a low gabled vent at the roofline marks its location. In 1966 the Charleston Trident Chamber of Commerce moved its offices to the West Point Rice Mill, and

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West Point Rice Mill
Charleston County, South Carolina
Narrative Description, continued

a few spaces were rented for general commercial use. The Chamber has since moved, and the building has been leased by the City of Charleston to the Bennett-Hofford Company.

In early September 1989 existing interior finishes - plaster walls with recent paneling, plaster and acoustical tile ceilings, carpeted and wood strip flooring - were substantially destroyed by fire and water. Before repairs had begun, Hurricane Hugo removed most of the roof and damaged window casements. Over three years of deferred repairs resulted in additional deterioration.

The West Point Rice Mill has recently been rehabilitated for general office use. The most significant area of the 1937 design remains the lounge at the second floor above the main lobby. Lighted by the Palladian window, the lounge was placed within the loadbearing brick walls of the central tower, and raised above the other second floor areas in order to provide for a one-and-one-half story entry lobby. A modified king-post truss system is exposed at the attic level.

Principal interior spaces today are characterized by the lobby and elevator core flanked by office areas to the north and south. These areas have large windows, high ceilings, and a north-south row of wood columns on center with each gable end. Two utilitarian metal and concrete stairs rise from either side of the main (east) lobby core.

The site was extensively altered beginning in 1933, with the building and its land entry being clearly set apart from the surrounding Municipal Yacht Basin. The early causeway to the mill had been lost during the early 1930s when the Municipal Yacht Basin was enlarged, and any remaining ancillary structures to the rice mill were removed. The present grounds retain integrity to 1941, when the James F. Byrnes Seaplane Base was leased to the United States Navy, although there are no vestiges of the 1938 seaplane hangar or the 1941 barracks, mess halls, warehouses, and recreation buildings.⁸

A photograph of 1944 shows the site of the West Point Rice Mill much as it looks today, with a curved drive to the east facade, around a short teardrop-shaped lawn. Oak trees and magnolias that were planted in the 1940s now shade the east facade and wings, and are complemented by the brick walkways and planting beds from the 1970s. At some point the flagpole was relocated from its 1944 position atop the parapet to a center position in the lawn.⁹

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West Point Rice Mill
Charleston County, South Carolina
Narrative Description, continued

Notes

¹ "Charleston Old and Historic District Addendum, Extension of Period of Significance," National Register nomination, State Historic Preservation Office, 1988.

² Telephone interview, Research Center, Henry Ford Museum, Greenfield Village, Dearborn, Michigan, March 1994. Deed Book Z33, p. 434, 435, Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyance.

³ "Two Safe-Cracking Historians..." News and Courier, 4 June 1937. "Do You Know Your Charleston? Municipal Yacht Basin," N&C, 6 June 1938. "West Point Rice Mill a Monument to Area's History," N&C, 24 January 1983. City of Charleston Yearbook, 1937 (Charleston: Walker, Evans and Cogswell, 1938), p. 12; Historical Commission of the City of Charleston, "West Point Rice Mill," appendix to 1937 Yearbook, p. 211-217. Delano and Aldrich, Architects, "Passenger Station, Airport, Charleston, South Carolina" (New York: Delano and Aldrich, Architects, blueprints, rev. November 1937). John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, The South Carolina Architects, 1885-1935 (Richmond, VA: New South Architectural Press, 1992), p. 39-40.

⁴ Samuel Lapham, Jr., "The Architectural Significance of the Rice Mills of Charleston, S. C.," in Architectural Record, July-December 1924, p. 178-184.

⁵ Ibid. Robert P. Stockton, The Great Shock: The Effects of the 1886 Earthquake on the Built Environment of Charleston, South Carolina (Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, Inc., 1986), p. 47. Sanborn Company Insurance Maps, Charleston, South Carolina, 1884, 1888 and 1902 (microfilm).

⁶ C. Drie, "Bird's Eye View of the City of Charleston, South Carolina" (C. Drie, Lithographer, 1872, reproduction).

⁷ "Two Safe-Cracking Historians." "Do You Know Your Charleston? Municipal Yacht Basin." "West Point Mill Transformed into Terminus for Ocean-Flying Airplanes," N&C, 9 June 1939. "Local Naval Reserve Unit Mobilized to Form Coastal Defense Arm," and "Largest Defense Center in South," in "Power and Defense Edition," N&C, 2 December 1941. Year Book, 1941, City of Charleston, South Carolina, (Charleston: Walker, Evans and Cogswell, 1942), p. 15. Historical Commission, p. 217.

⁸ City of Charleston Yearbook, 1932-1935 (Charleston: Walker, Evans and Cogswell, 1936), p. 16.

⁹ Photo in Year Book, 1944, City of Charleston, South Carolina, (Charleston: Walker, Evans and Cogswell, 1947), p. 17.

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 6West Point Rice Mill
Charleston County, South Carolina
Statement of Significance

The West Point Rice Mill is the only one of three antebellum commercial rice mills remaining on the Charleston peninsula. It is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A, for its significance in the areas of Military and Social History. It is also eligible under Criterion C, for its significance in the areas of Architecture and Industry. The West Point Rice Mill illustrates several distinct periods of history in the City of Charleston: antebellum agricultural processing/distribution; post-World War I civic improvements; New Deal programs; and the military presence before and during World War II. The building retains much of its original configuration, along with elements that remain from successive New Deal and military remodelings.

Historical background:

The first West Point Rice Mill was a four-story brick building erected on the present site in 1840 by Jonathan Lucas III, of the well-known family of rice mill engineers. "One of the best Rice Mills in the State," it was purchased from the Lucas estate in early 1860 by the West Point Rice Mill Company, whose principals included such rice planters as William Aiken and Robert F. W. Allston. Fire was a constant danger at all nineteenth century steam mills (Chisolm's Mill substantially burned in 1859), and the West Point Mill burned on 14 November 1860. Despite the onset of Civil War, the company quickly rebuilt and resumed operation as a storage and shipping mill. During 1862, new wood pumps and blocks and a used boiler were purchased. With construction finally complete, threshing equipment was installed (in late 1863 the company paid for ten kegs of nails and "200 split bricks, 13 loads of sand and brickwork done to boilers") and the mill began full operation in late 1863, as often as schooners could get rough rice through blockaded Charleston Harbor.¹

Charleston's Confederate defenders evacuated the city in February 1865, but the mayor and a few prominent citizens remained to assist the transition to a government of military occupiers. One of the first moves by the Union army was to appoint local men to supervise distribution of rice and other foodstuffs confiscated by the Federal government. Until its supplies ran out, West Point Rice Mill was an important food distribution center.²

During the decades of the 1870s and 1880s Lowcountry rice planters resumed production, hiring former slaves as wage laborers, and production gradually increased. Charleston's three commercial mills produced 72,565 barrels of rice in 1889, and 97,240 the following year. Despite the increase, Lowcountry rice production was beginning its final decline. New competition from western producers combined with a series of hurricanes to reduce rice-growing capacity, and the profitability of rice mills. One solution was consolidation: in 1888 the West Point Mill Company bought a share of Chisolm's Mill, and in 1894 West Point and Bennett's Mills combined, bought control of Chisolm's, and closed it.³

West Point Rice Mill operated with dwindling production into the twentieth century and was effectively out of business by 1920. In that year the West Point Mill Company's stock was liquidated, and the assets conveyed to a new corporation, but management was largely unchanged (Samuel G. Stoney, president since 1903, retained that position; J. M. Jervay, superintendent of the rice mill, remained as resident caretaker of the property). Receipts and correspondence during the early 1920s show that the corporation's principal income was

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West Point Rice Mill
Charleston County, South Carolina
Statement of Significance, continued

derived from sale of salvage goods and rental of wharves and appurtenant buildings; by 1922 there was a clear desire to sell the property. In late 1925 a steam pump was sold to "Mr. H. H. Heath, laundry man at North Charleston," and sometime between 1925-26 the mill engine itself was sold to Henry Ford for his museum at Dearborn, Michigan.⁴

During the 1920s as Charleston's manufacturing base declined, the city's leaders paid new attention to residential development and increased tourism as sources of income. In 1924, Mayor Thomas P. Stoney pushed for "Reclamation of Mud Flats in the Western Section of this City... Making this Spot a Residential Area." Stoney hoped to extend the Murray Boulevard reclamation project around the west side of the peninsula, creating a "large area of land beautifully located and admirably adapted... residential section with parks, and a sufficient space for commercial purposes."⁵

The 43-3/4 acre site of the West Point Rice Mill was an integral part of Stoney's plan. The company's stockholders conveyed it to a trustee, giving him approval to extend a purchase option for the property to the City Council of Charleston, at a price of \$75,000. The transaction was completed in April 1926. Council reappointed the trustee, instructing him to improve and develop the land; to subdivide it; and to sell or rent the property and lots, the proceeds going to the City Council of Charleston.⁶

The reclamation and development plans for the east side of the Ashley River were never implemented. Economic slowdown of the second half of the 1920s was an important factor, but a more compelling reason was suburban competition. Even as Stoney pursued peninsular development, subdivisions were planned in areas west of the Ashley River, anticipating the opening of the Memorial Bridge (1926). Wappoo Heights was laid out in 1924, Edgewater Park in 1925, and Windermere in 1926. Developer C. Bissell Jenkins, who had been largely responsible for the success of the Murray Boulevard residential area, moved on to develop Riverland Terrace as construction (1926) of the Wappoo Bridge to James Island expanded residential development further out. By 1929, when the Stono River Bridge linked Johns Island to James Island and the John P. Grace Memorial Bridge opened over the Cooper River, the City of Charleston was the owner of an abandoned 43-acre tract.⁷

Following the enthusiastic suggestions of Senator James F. Byrnes and Thomas R. Waring, editor of the Charleston Evening Post, in 1930 the U.S. Post Office announced its intention to establish a seaplane base for mail service at the West Point site. From this time until 1939, the idea of an amphibious aircraft terminal remained strong, and helped to preserve the large rice mill building at the water's edge.⁸

Most of the New Deal work-relief agencies that began in 1933 - programs such as FERA, PWA and WPA - funded projects on publicly-owned property, and several of them affected the West Point Rice Mill site. One of its first projects of the Civil Works Administration in Charleston was the new Municipal Yacht Basin, where work began in December 1933. From April 1934 to July 1935, SCERA, through its Emergency Work Relief Program, also worked on the Yacht Basin. Improvements to harbor and wharves were instrumental to the city's 1933 success in leasing the mill to the American Bagging Company as a depot and storage place for imported jute used at Charleston Bagging and Manufacturing plant on Meeting Street.⁹

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West Point Rice Mill
Charleston County, South Carolina
Statement of Significance, continued

The bagging company lease was set to expire in 1936, and by early 1935 the City of Charleston had begun new negotiations for refitting the West Point Rice Mill property as an airmail and passenger station. In April 1936, Germany's air ministry announced plans for transAtlantic flights to a U. S. terminus Charleston. WPA-financed work to convert the mill into the Terminal Building of the James F. Byrnes trans-Atlantic air base began in January 1937. Pan American Airways soon became involved with the project, and brought in the New York City architectural firm of Delano and Aldrich to design the Charleston Passenger Station rehabilitation.¹⁰

In late 1939, the first two levels of the interior were ready for occupancy. By that time, it was obvious that "due to the European War, early transAtlantic service out of Charleston can't be hoped for." Charleston was unsuccessfully promoted to the House Naval Affairs Commission as a naval seaplane base (Jacksonville was selected) and the idea of an amphibious aircraft landing base on the Ashley River was finally put to rest. The offices that had been built in the West Point Rice Mill were occupied instead by the Charleston District office of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). America's buildup for World War II began while the New Deal programs were still active, and the goals of military preparedness and work-relief overlapped in Charleston. The Navy soon required the property, and the CCC moved out. In April 1941, the West Point Rice Mill became the administration building of the section base of the Charleston Area Inshore Patrol, Sixth Naval District.¹¹

In 1946 the West Point Rice Mill property was redesignated the Sixth Naval District Mine Craft Base. The Department of the Navy used the site through the 1950s, after which it was leased to the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. In 1966 the building became headquarters of the Charleston Trident Chamber of Commerce, which occupied it for twenty years. Vacant since early 1989, it has been leased to the Bennett-Hofford Company and rehabilitated as office space, and remains a landmark on the western shore of the Charleston peninsula.

Notes

¹ Historical Commission of the City of Charleston, "West Point Rice Mill," appendix to City of Charleston Yearbook, 1937 (Charleston: Walker, Evans and Cogswell, 1938), p. 211-215. Samuel Lapham, Jr., "The Architectural Significance of the Rice Mills of Charleston, S. C.," in Architectural Record, July-December 1924, p. 178-184. West Point Mills, Receipt Book 1860-1864 (MS, South Carolina Historical Society).

² Historical Commission, p. 215. Walter J. Fraser, Jr., Charleston! Charleston! The History of a Southern City (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), p. 269-270.

³ Historical Commission, p. 216. News and Courier, 1 September 1890.

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West Point Rice Mill
Charleston County, South Carolina
Statement of Significance, continued

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⁵ Lapham. Fraser, p. 370-371. Charleston City Directories. Yearbook, City of Charleston, 1924 (Charleston: Walker, Evans and Cogswell, 1926), p. lviii. Year Book, 1925, City of Charleston, South Carolina (Charleston: Southern Printing and Publishing, 1927), p. xxi-xxiii.

⁶ Deed Book P30, p. 58, Deed Book D33, p. 698, Deed Book Z33, p. 434, 435, Charleston County RMC. Year Book, 1925, p. xxi-xxiii.

⁷ Fraser, p. 370. Year Book, 1925, p. xxi-xxiii. Plat Book E, p. 34, 51, Charleston County RMC. C. Bissell Jenkins and Sons, "A Charming Spot for Your New Home, Amid Romantic Settings, on Historic James Island. Greater Charleston's Master Development, Riverland Terrace," (Charleston, 1926). Robert N. Rosen, A Short History of Charleston (San Francisco: 1982), p. 144.

⁸ Historical Commission, p. 217. News and Courier, 4 September 1989.

⁹ "Do You Know Your Charleston? Municipal Yacht Basin," News and Courier, 6 June 1938. "Old Bagging Mill Property is Sold," N&C, 11 December 1942. "Do You Know Your Charleston? Chicco Apartments," N&C, 7 August 1944. City of Charleston Yearbook, 1932-1935 (Charleston: Walker, Evans and Cogswell, 1936), p. 17-18. Jack Irby Hayes, Jr., South Carolina and the New Deal, 1932-1938 (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of South Carolina; Ann Arbor: University Microfilm Publications, 1972), p. 74, 179-184, 188; Anthony J. Badger, The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933-40 (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1989), p. 198.

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¹¹ "Largest Defense Center in South" and "Local Naval Reserve Unit Mobilized to Form Coastal Defense Arm," in "Power and Defense Edition," News and Courier, 2 December 1941. "Mayor Lockwood's Address," in Yearbook, 1939, City of Charleston (Charleston: Walker, Evans and Cogswell, 1941), p. 13-14. Year Book, 1941, City of Charleston, South Carolina, (Charleston: Walker, Evans and Cogswell, 1942), p. 15. Year Book, 1942, City of Charleston, South Carolina, (Charleston: Walker, Evans and Cogswell, 1943), p. 13, 177.

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Verbal boundary description

The nominated property is shown as a black line on the accompanying Charleston County Tax Map, #460-14-0, Parcel #12, with an approximate scale of 1 inch to 100 feet.

Boundary justification

The nominated property consists of the 30,000 square foot parcel containing the West Point Rice Mill and its east lawn.

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Photographs
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West Point Rice Mill
Charleston County, South Carolina

The following information is the same for each photograph:

Name of Property:	West Point Rice Mill
Location:	Charleston, Charleston County, South Carolina
Name of Photographer:	John Laurens Preservation Consultants, Inc.
Date of Photographs:	October 1994
Location of Original Negatives:	State Historic Preservation Office South Carolina Department of Archives and History

1. Principal west facade and south elevation, camera facing northeast.
2. North elevation, camera facing south.
3. East facade, south wing, camera facing west.
4. East facade, center bay, first level, camera facing west.
5. East facade, palladian window, camera facing west.
6. Interior ground floor lobby area, camera facing west.
7. Interior ground floor, column line, camera facing north.
8. Interior second level, raised lounge, camera facing east.
9. Interior second level, typical view of office spaces, camera facing north.
10. Interior second level, west elevation window, camera facing west.
11. Interior third level, east elevation oculus window, camera facing east.
12. Interior stairhall, earthquake tie bolt, camera facing south.
13. Interior attic level, camera facing south.