

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Athens Manufacturing Company
other names/site number Georgia Manufacturing Company, Thomas Textile Company

2. Location

street & number 585 White Circle
city, town Athens () **vicinity of**
county Clarke **code** 059
state Georgia **code** GA **zip code** 30605

() not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

Category of Property:

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

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

buildings	10	0
sites	0	0
structures	3	1
objects	1	0
total	14	1

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of previous listing: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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 meets the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Riverend Clowes
Signature of certifying official

11.17.02
Date

for W. Ray Luce
Historic Preservation Division Director
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

Elson R. Beall 12/31/02

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, explain:

see continuation sheet

Ray
Keeper of the National Register

Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

Industrial/Processing/Extraction: mill

Current Functions:

Domestic: multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

No style.

Materials:

foundation	Concrete
walls	Brick
roof	Asphalt
other	Stone

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Athens Factory is a textile mill complex set on the steep north bank of the North Oconee River in the small community of Whitehall. The Whitehall is located five miles south of Athens in Clarke County, Georgia. The terraced site features buildings constructed between 1854 and 1951 and the mill race that built in 1830. The complex is laid out in two tiers with the main mill and power plant and the adjacent cotton warehouse no. 1 between the river and the stone-lined mill race, which bisects the property. The mill race is the earliest resource, dating to the opening of the mill in 1830. The second tier of buildings, which is located higher on the site above the main mill, includes the cotton warehouse no. 2, a smaller mill building and power plant, a storage building, and the payroll office.

The Athens Manufacturing Company received final certification from the Technical Services Branch of the National Park Service on August 14, 2001. The mill complex was converted to loft apartments with 58 units occupying both mills and cotton warehouses and the payroll office. As part of the rehabilitation, many of the open interior spaces in the mills and warehouses were subdivided into apartments. Few changes were made to the exteriors of the buildings and the floor plans were laid out to preserve character-defining features. Historic materials and structural elements were retained in all of the rehabilitated buildings.

The two-story main mill was built in c.1893-1903 on the site of two earlier mill buildings (photos 1, 3-8, 10-12, and 18). It is nearly 300-foot long and is located between the mill race and the riverbank (photo 9). The mill is rectangular-shaped with a slightly pitched gable roof. The brick building is set on a stone rubble foundation and is lined with wood-and-steel sash windows. Some first-floor windows feature segmental arches. The mill was built with slow-burn construction that includes

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Section 7--Description

masonry walls, large windows, open floor plans, stronger roof framing, and "slow-burning" timber posts. As part of the rehabilitation, open interior spaces were divided into loft apartments (photos 16-17). Character-defining features, such as wood framing, wood and concrete floors, and window openings were retained. A covered passage joins the main mill with cotton warehouse no. 1.

The one-story brick power plant no.1 was built along with the main mill in 1893 (photos 12-13). Located on the west end of the mill's river front, the power plant supplied electricity to light the mill but the turbines continued to power the machinery. The power plant features two large bays and a brick-and-iron smokestack. Nearly all of the original equipment remains in situ, including two early 20th-century coal-fired boilers (photos 14-15). Power plant no. 1 was preserved as a historical exhibit as part of the rehabilitation.

Adjacent to the main mill is the cotton warehouse no. 1, which was built between 1854 and 1885, with c.1888 brick additions (photos 18-20). The large brick-and-stone warehouse is covered by a slightly pitched gable roof. The walls are lined with large factory windows. The one-story building has high ceilings with exposed wood and steel trusses (photo 21). As part of the rehabilitation, some windows and doors were added and a loft was created to make two stories from the one-story interior.

The stone-lined mill race, built in 1830 as part of the original mill complex, runs the length of the main mill and terminates at the poured-concrete flume (photos 1-2). The flume is located in the northwest corner of the main mill and contained the turbines (photos 4-7). The flume survives though it has been filled with soil. The length of mill race from the mill complex west to the river does not survive.

The small concrete-block office building, constructed before 1951, was built along the stairs between the upper and lower tiers of buildings. The gable-front office contained two interior rooms. The office has not been rehabilitated.

The payroll office was built between c.1918 and 1926 and is a small brick building with a central chimney and flared hip roof (photo 23 and 25, background). The T-shaped building is banked into the steeply sloping site so that there is an entrance to the main level on White Circle and a rear entrance to the lower level. The interior includes the walk-in safe used for payroll (photo 24). The payroll office was rehabilitated into a loft apartment.

The early 19th-century brick pump house is located along White Circle. It is missing its roof and the floor is severely damaged but the common-bond brick walls and arched doorway are in excellent condition. The pump house is maintained as a ruin.

The one-story brick cotton warehouse no. 2 was built between 1919 and 1926 (photos 27-29). Because it was built into the steep slope it has a rear lower level. The brick building is covered with a flat roof that included exposed rafter ends. Large steel-sash factory windows were added when the warehouse was later used for embroidery and cutting work. The open interior was divided into loft

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Section 7--Description

apartments as part of the rehabilitation (photo 30).

The one- and two-story mill no. 2 was built in c.1930 (photos 32-33 and 35). Like the adjacent cotton warehouse no. 2, it is a large brick building with large steel-framed factory windows. Pilasters define each bay and the flat roof features exposed rafters. The interior was divided into loft apartments as part of the rehabilitation (photo 34).

The nearby power plant no. 2 was built in c.1930 to provide power to mill no. 2 (photo 36). It is a small brick building banked into the hillside. Its brick smokestack rises above the power plant and the adjacent storage building.

The one-story storage building, built between 1938 and 1944, is located at the east end of the complex (photos 35-36). Clad in corrugated sheet metal, the storage building is framed with wood. A large center bay in the front gable end allowed automobiles to be stored in the building. The storage building has not been rehabilitated.

The site also includes a water tower on the hill between the main mill and cotton warehouse no. 2. The water tower, which is completely obscured by trees, was built in the 1940s.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

Architecture
Industry

Period of Significance:

1830-1952

Significant Dates:

1830 – Athens Manufacturing Company begins operations.
1839 – Mill incorporated as the Georgia Manufacturing Company
1848 – John White becomes the first of three generations of Whites to own the mill.
1854 – First mill replaced with a turbine mill.
1892 – Second mill destroyed by fire.
c.1893 – Third mill constructed on the same site.
1929 – Mill declared bankruptcy.
1930 – Thomas Textile Company purchased mill, which they operated until 1988.

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Not known

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

Statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Athens Manufacturing Company is a textile mill complex set on the steep north bank of the North Oconee River in the small community of Whitehall, which is located five miles south of Athens. The steeply sloped bank is terraced with the mill buildings located in two tiers. The earliest buildings were constructed down along the river with later buildings constructed higher on the site. As a historic district, the Athens Manufacturing Company is significant because the complex includes large mill buildings and warehouses, storage buildings, power plants and smaller offices in an intact historic setting that includes paved sidewalks and retaining walls and the critical visual connection between and mill and the North Oconee River.

The Athens Manufacturing Company is significant in the area of industry because it represents the rise of the textile industry in the Georgia during the New South-era of industrial development and because textile production was a leading industry in the Athens Area. Textiles remained a major component of the state's economy for over a century. The Athens Manufacturing Company is an excellent example of a Georgia Piedmont cotton mill that continually evolved as it adapted new technology to the process of making textiles from raw cotton. The complex includes two mills and the two power plants and cotton warehouses that supported them. The mill also includes offices and a water tower, which were also necessary for the mill to operate. The district also includes structural remnants of one of the earliest textile mills in Athens and the state, the mill race that dates from 1830 when the mill began operations. The water was used to power the mill first with a wheel and later with turbines. The mill complex, which developed from 1830 to the middle of the 20th century, provides an understanding of all aspects of mill operations in Georgia, including how it generated power, stored cotton, processed cotton, and produced textiles.

The Athens Manufacturing Company was among numerous mills established in the Athens area in the 1830s and 1840s. In 1833, the same investors who established the Athens Manufacturing Company in the Whitehall community also built a mill called the Athens Factory (listed 7/31/80) on the North Oconee River in the city of Athens. The nearby Princeton Factory was established after 1833. During the post-bellum period from 1866 to 1895, there were nearly 40 water-powered mills operating on tributaries of the Oconee River in Clarke County. In the first decades of the 20th century, the number of Clarke County mills had increased with the availability of hydroelectric power. Mills, like the Athens Manufacturing Company, continued to rely on water-powered turbines and used hydroelectric power for lighting and to increase the power of the turbines. By 1940, most of the areas mills, especially the smaller operations, had closed. After the Mitchell Bridge and Tallassee Shoals Hydroelectric plants closed in 1963, no hydroelectric powered mills operated in Clarke County.

The Athens Manufacturing Company is significant in the area of architecture because the design and construction of the mill buildings are representative of mill architecture built throughout Georgia and the South at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. These mills were built with slow-burn construction that includes masonry walls, large windows, open floor plans, stronger roof framing, and "slow-burning" timber posts, beams, and thick plank floors. Rectangular floor plans and

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

floor-to-ceiling windows maximized the amount of light and air that reached the interior. The interiors were usually large open spaces to allow for greater flexibility in the placement of textile machinery. In addition, mills during this period had sophisticated fire prevention systems in which thousands of gallons of water were pumped into reservoirs or towers for use in emergencies.

Smaller buildings in the complex, such as the storage building and the offices, are characteristic of industrial buildings constructed in first half of the 20th century. Built with concrete block and corrugated sheet metal, these buildings represent aspects of mill operations that are not conveyed by the larger mill buildings. The smaller buildings, for example, provide an understanding of how the company managed the mill, how raw materials were moved and stored on the site, and how power was supplied to the mills. In addition, the layout of the complex in two tiers explains the development of the mill complex over time. The geographical relationship among the buildings, especially in proximity to the mill buildings, explains their role in the process of textile production with offices, usually located at the perimeter of the complex and buildings, such as power plants or cotton warehouses, located adjacent to the mills. The location of the mill along a waterway establishes that the mill was developed before hydroelectric power was widely available.

National Register Criteria

A— The mill is significant in the area of industry because it represents the rise of the textile industry in Georgia during the New South-era of industrial development and because textile production was a leading industry in the Athens area.

C— The mill is significant in the area of architecture because the design and construction of the mill buildings are representative of mill architecture built throughout Georgia and the South at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

N/A

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance begins with opening of the Athens Manufacturing Company in 1830 and ends in 1952 at the fifty-year end date because the mill continued to produce textile products during the last quarter of the 20th century.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

Contributing resources to the historic district represent the themes of architecture and industry and retain a high level of historic integrity. The following buildings contribute to the significance of the historic district:

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

Main mill (c.1893-1903)
Power plant no. 1 (c.1893)
Pump house (late 19th century)
Cotton warehouse no. 1 (1854-1885, with brick additions in c.1888)
Cotton warehouse no. 2 (1919-1926)
Payroll office (c.1918-1926)
Mill no. 2 (c.1930)
Power Plant no. 2 (c.1930)
Storage building (1938-1944)
Office (c.1950)

The following structures contribute to the significance of the historic district:

Mill race (1830)
Water tower (c.1940)
Landscape features, such as paved walks and retaining walls, are counted as one structure (c.1893-1952).

One object contributes to the significance of the historic district:

steam boilers located in power plant no. 1.

The only noncontributing resource in the historic district is the parking lot located on the east side of the main mill. The parking lot, which was paved in the late 1990s as part of the certified rehabilitation, is counted as one noncontributing structure.

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

In 1829, a group of Athens investors, William Dearing, John Nesbit, Abraham Walker, and Augustin Clayton, all from Athens, and Massachusetts native John Johnson, established the Athens Manufacturing Company. They built a four-and-one-half story mill in Whitehall that began operations in 1830. The water-powered textile mill contained 30 looms and 1,000 spindles for spinning cotton yarn. In 1833, the same investors who established the Athens Manufacturing Company mill in the Whitehall community also built a mill called the Athens Factory on the North Oconee River in the city of Athens. In 1839, the Whitehall mill was incorporated as the Georgia Manufacturing Company with the purpose of producing cotton and woolen products.

In the 1830s and 1840s, the company built a mill village along Whitehall Road adjacent to the mill. The village included houses for mill workers, a company-owned store, a post office, and nearby schools and churches. In 1891, the mill village was incorporated as the town of Whitehall. A mayor and four councilmen governed the town through the 1930s. In 1953, the mill village was subdivided into individual parcels and sold to the resident employees. In 1967, after a long period of inactivity, the town charter was repealed.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

In 1833, Irish immigrant John White was hired to oversee mill operations. Between 1839 and 1848, White had purchased all of the factory's stock and became the sole owner of the mill. In 1854, he replaced the original mill building with a three-story turbine-powered brick mill that housed 1,704 spindles and 20 looms operated by 70 workers. By 1879, White owned 2,438 acres in the Whitehall vicinity. White owned and operated the mill until his death in 1881. His estate, which was valued at between \$500,000 and one millions dollars, was passed to his son John R. White.

In 1892, the main mill was destroyed by fire. A new mill building was underway the following year. The new mill, the third mill building on the site, is a two-story brick building that measures 287 feet by 62 feet. Two steam boilers provided electricity to operate electric lights but the mill equipment continued to be powered by two turbines. As the company prospered in the early 20th century, it expanded it operations further up the bank at White Circle. Between c.1918 and 1926, the company built a brick payroll office and a second brick cotton warehouse. Large steel-sash factory windows were added when the warehouse was later used for embroidery and cutting work.

In 1918, John R. White died, leaving his holdings to his two sons Hugh and Robert. The Whites declared bankruptcy in 1929 and a year later the Oconee Textile Company purchased the property. Later in that year, Thomas Textiles, which was owned by New Jersey brothers Thomas and Herb Swarz, purchased a small portion of the mill property and built a brick mill (mill no. 2). Between 1945 and 1946, Thomas Textiles purchased the entire mill property, which they used to manufacture cloth diapers and children's clothing. Thomas Textiles operated at the site until December 1988.

The mill remained vacant for most of a decade before Miller-Gallman Developers undertook the rehabilitation of the mill complex. The project, which received final certification from the Technical Services Branch of the National Park Service on August 14, 2001, converted the mill to loft apartments with units occupying both mills and cotton warehouses and the payroll office. The complex is especially popular among graduate students and professors because of its riparian setting and its close proximity to the University of Georgia campus.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Aerial photographs. Map and Geography Reading Room, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia. 1938-1980.

De Vorse, Louis A. Jr., "Georgia Factory and Whitehall: A Vade Mecum." Paper presented at the joint meeting of the Georgia Historical Society and the Athens Historical Society. Athens, Ga., 1977.

Hull, Augustus Longstreet. Annals of Athens. Danielsville, Ga.: Heritage Papers, 1978.

Lupold, John. "Spindles & Shuttles, Stones & Sifters, Saws & Stills: Industrial Development in the Empire State of the South, to 1940: An Industrial Context Statement for Georgia." Columbus College, Columbus, Ga., 1994.

Malone, Connie and Lisa Vogel. National Register Historic District Information Form. The Athens Factory. On file at the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division, Atlanta, Georgia, 1991.

Manufacturers of Georgia. Prepared for the Agricultural and Industrial Development Board of Georgia by the Georgia School of Technology, University of Georgia, Athens, Ga., 1945.

"Obituary of John White." Athens Banner. May 3, 1881.

Reap, James K. Athens: A Pictorial History. Norfolk, Va.: Donning Company, 1985.

Rowe, H. J. History of Athens of Clarke County. Athens, Ga.: McGregor Company, 1923.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1885-1926.

Stratton, Charles Morton. Map of Clarke County, Georgia. 1893.

Vogel, Lisa Diane. "Southern Textile Mills and the National Register of Historic Places: A Framework for Evaluation." MHP Thesis. University of Georgia, Athens, Ga., 1993.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (x) N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested**
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued**
date issued:
- 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 #**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 9—Major Bibliographic References

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office**
- Other State Agency**
- Federal agency**
- Local government**
- University**
- Other, Specify Repository:**

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 9.4 acres

UTM References

A) Zone 17 282000 Easting Northing 3754000

Verbal Boundary Description

The historic district boundary is indicated by a heavy black line on the attached map, which is drawn to scale.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all of the resources historically associated with the Athens Manufacturing Company mill complex. The small mill village north of the mill is not included in the historic district because of owner objection to listing in the National Register.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Steven H. Moffson, Architectural Historian
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
mailing address 156 Trinity Avenue, S.W., Suite 101
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** November 15, 2002
e-mail steven_moffson@dnr.state.ga.us

Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable) (x) not applicable

name/title
organization
mailing address
city or town state zip code
telephone
e-mail

- property owner**
- consultant**
- regional development center preservation planner**
- other:**

Property Owner or Contact Information

name (property owner or contact person) Jerrold L. Miller
organization (if applicable) Miller-Gallman Developers
mailing address 236 Forsyth Street, S.W.
city or town Atlanta **state** GA **zip code** 30303
e-mail (optional) N/A

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Name of Property: Athens Manufacturing Company
City or Vicinity: Whitehall community
County: Clarke
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: August 2002

Description of Photograph(s):

Number of photographs: 37

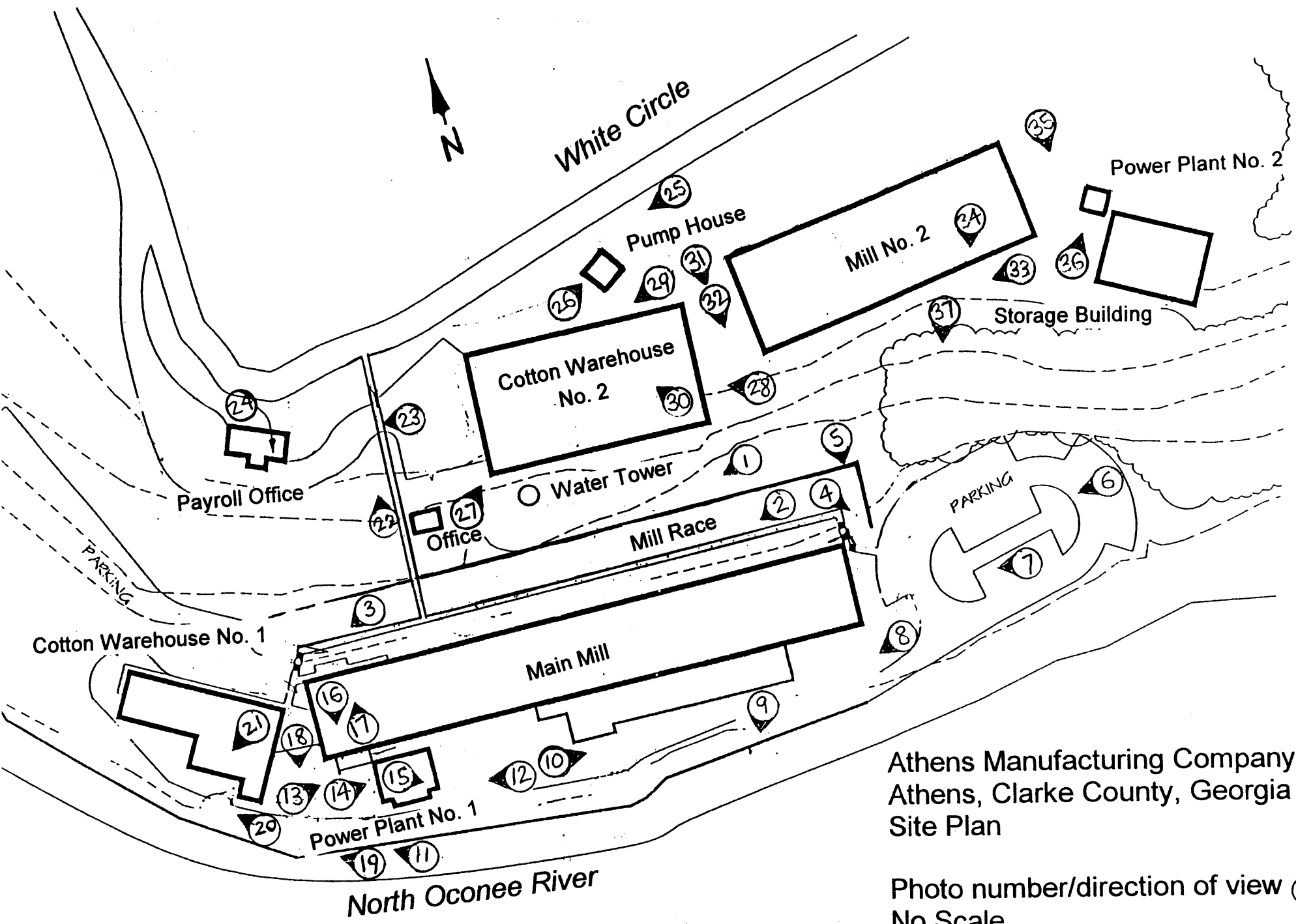
1. Main mill and mill race (foreground), photographer facing southwest.
2. Mill race, photographer facing southwest.
3. Main mill with cotton warehouse no. 1 (background), photographer facing southwest.
4. Flume, photographer facing south.
5. Flume, construction detail, photographer facing south.
6. Main mill and flume (right), photographer facing west.
7. Main mill and flume (right), photographer facing west.
8. Main mill with North Oconee River (left), photographer facing southwest.
9. North Oconee River from main mill, photographer facing south.
10. Main mill, photographer facing east.
11. Main mill (right) with cotton warehouse no. 2 (background), photographer facing west.
12. Main mill with power plant (center left), photographer facing west.
13. Power plant, photographer facing northeast.
14. Power plant, detail of entrance and equipment, photographer facing northeast.
15. Power plant, detail of steam boilers, photographer facing southeast.
16. Main mill, interior, photographer facing south.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Photographs

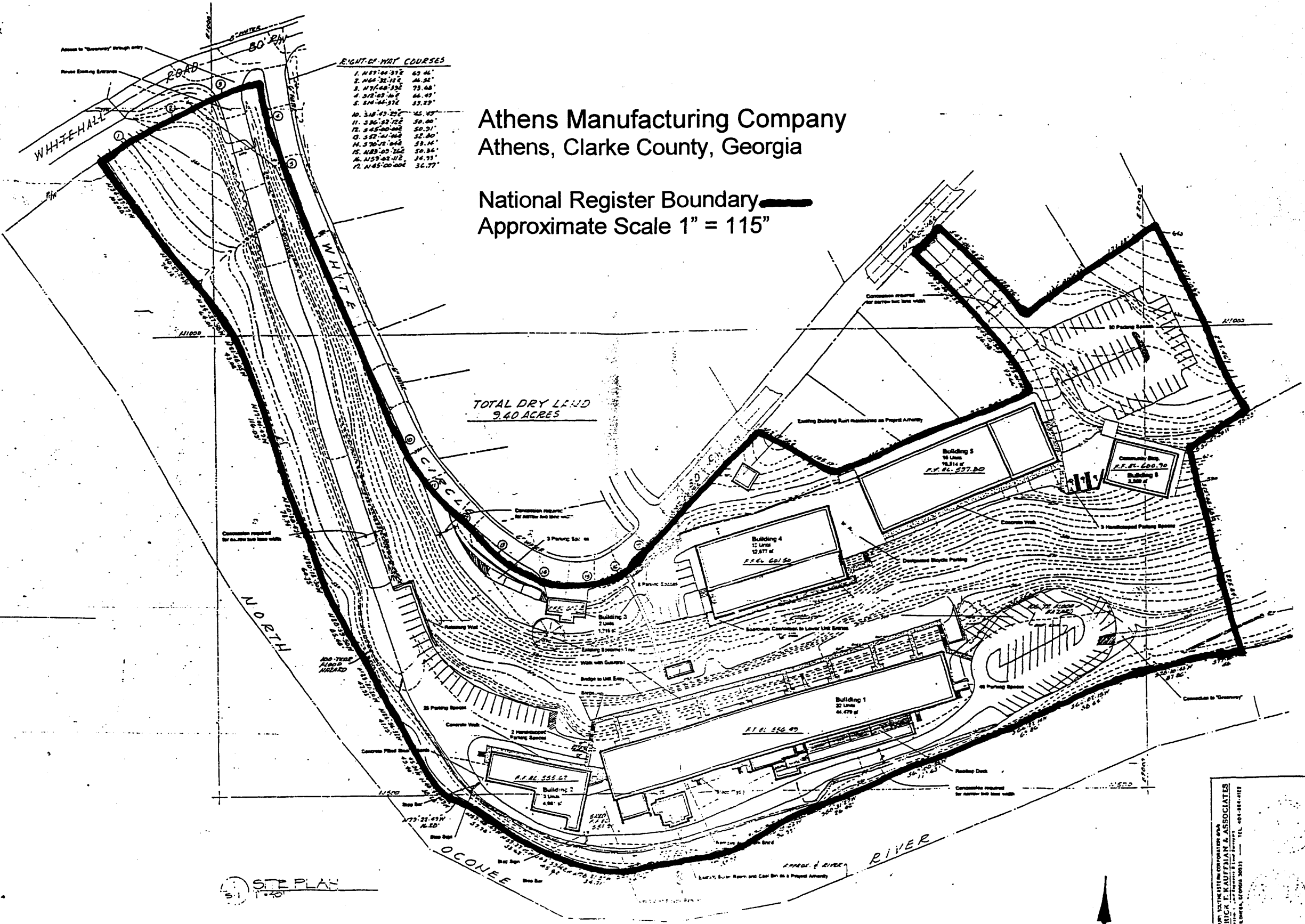
17. Main mill, interior, photographer facing north.
18. View toward river with main mill (left) and cotton warehouse no. 1 (right) photographer facing south.
19. Cotton warehouse no. 1 with main mill (right), photographer facing west.
20. Cotton warehouse no. 1, photographer facing northwest.
21. Cotton warehouse no. 1, photographer facing southwest.
22. Stairs from White Circle to main mill, photographer facing north.
23. Payroll Office, photographer facing west.
24. Payroll office with walk-in safe (center right), photographer facing southwest.
25. Pump house with payroll office (right), photographer facing southwest.
26. Pump house, photographer facing east.
27. Retaining wall and cotton warehouse no. 2, photographer facing northeast.
28. Cotton warehouse no. 2, photographer facing northwest.
29. Cotton warehouse no. 2, photographer facing southwest.
30. Cotton warehouse no. 2, interior, photographer facing northwest.
31. Mill no. 2 (obscured at left) and cotton warehouse no. 2 (right), photographer facing south.
32. Mill no. 2 (left) and cotton warehouse no. 2 (right), photographer facing south.
33. Mill no. 2, photographer facing southwest.
34. Mill no. 2, interior, photographer facing southwest.
35. Storage building (left) and mill no. 2 (right), photographer facing south.
36. Power plant no. 2 (center) and storage building (right) photographer facing northwest.
37. View of man mill from mill no. 2, photographer facing southwest.

(HPD WORD form version 11-03-01)



Athens Manufacturing Company
 Athens, Clarke County, Georgia
 Site Plan

Photo number/direction of view 
 No Scale



RIGHT-OF-WAY COURSES

1. N 89° 04' 37" E	63.46'
2. N 64° 25' 11" E	44.52'
3. N 74° 00' 10" E	78.68'
4. S 12° 03' 46" E	64.43'
5. S 14° 44' 31" E	83.23'
6. S 18° 43' 20" E	42.43'
7. S 36° 22' 22" E	50.00'
8. S 45° 00' 00" E	50.71'
9. S 52° 51' 04" E	52.00'
10. S 70° 17' 04" E	53.14'
11. N 23° 05' 22" E	50.34'
12. N 55° 02' 42" E	34.93'
13. N 65° 00' 00" E	56.77'

Athens Manufacturing Company
Athens, Clarke County, Georgia

National Register Boundary
Approximate Scale 1" = 115'

TOTAL DRY LAND
9.40 ACRES

RECEIVED

OCT 12 2000

OFFICE OF
HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION

51 SITE PLAN
1:750



CENTRAL SOUTH WESTERN CORPORATION
CSC/FREDERICK J. KAUFFMAN & ASSOCIATES
1000 W. Peachtree Street, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30303
404-524-1111
404-524-1112