National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name  Grey Hosiery Mill
other names/site number Water Department – City of Hendersonville: Hold Hosiery

2. Location

street & number  301 Fourth Avenue East  not for publication N/A
city or town  Hendersonville  vicinity N/A
state  North Carolina  code NC  county Henderson  code 089  zip code 28792

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.)

Signature of certifying official: ________________________________ Date: 8/30/90
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  
__ determined eligible for the National Register
__ removed from the National Register
__ other (explain): ________________________________

Signature of the Keeper: ________________________________ Date of Action: ________________________________
5. Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership of Property Property</th>
<th>Category of</th>
<th>Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)</th>
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<tr>
<td>(Check as many boxes as apply)</td>
<td>(Check only one box)</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ private</td>
<td>X building(s)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>X public-local</td>
<td>___ district</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ public-State</td>
<td>___ site</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ public-Federal</td>
<td>___ structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>___ object</td>
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Contributing   Noncontributing
1 buildings    Total

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

N/A

6. Function or Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Current Functions</th>
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<td>(Enter categories from instructions)</td>
<td>(Enter categories from instructions)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Government/Public Works</td>
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7. Description

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<td>Other: Industrial</td>
<td>foundation stone</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>roof asbestos</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>walls brick</td>
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<td>other</td>
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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 in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**
(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:
- **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.

**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**

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

Name of repository:
- Henderson County Library
10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property: 1.64 acres

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

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<tr>
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</table>

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: William A. Gray, Jr. and Amanda Blosser

organization: Preservation Society of Henderson County
date: May 11, 1999

street & number: PO Box 2136
telephone: (828) 891-7288

city or town: Hendersonville
state: NC
zip code: 28739

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
(To 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 of Hendersonville
street & number: 145 Fifth Ave East
telephone: __________

city or town: Hendersonville
state: North Carolina
zip code: 28792

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.
Narrative Description

The Grey Hosiery Mill, built in 1915 with additions in 1919 and 1947, is the only historic industrial building remaining in the city of Hendersonville. Located three blocks east of Hendersonville’s historic Main Street area, the mill occupies approximately one-half of the western side of the block bound by Fourth Avenue East to the south, Grove Street to the west, Fifth Avenue East to the north and Pine Street to the east. The mill is located in the downtown area of Hendersonville, but is removed from the Main Street Historic District (NR, 1989) by one block of modern, non-contributing structures.

The horizontally-massed, one-story mill building is typical of early twentieth century industrial architecture with its large multi-pane steel sash windows, plain brick exterior, and stepped gable roof with clerestory. Overall, the building is shaped like a backward J with the 1915 and 1947 portions positioned in a north-south orientation along Grove Street connected to the 1919 section—which is also positioned in a north-orientation—by a hyphen located at the south side of the parcel. To the east of the mill is a small parking lot and yard. The entire building rests on a coursed stone foundation. The interior consists of large open areas with exposed heavy timbers. Partition walls, which do not extend from the ceiling to floor, divide all of the open areas into temporary offices but do not detract from the overall scale of the original spaces.

Original Portion of Mill (1915)

Built in 1915, the original portion of the mill served as the knitting room. The façade of this long, rectangular building faces south towards Fourth Avenue East with its long side along Grove Street. A low hip roof portico supported by plain square columns marks the entrance to the building on Fourth Avenue. Concrete steps lead to a pair of glazed-over-single-panel doors, which are each topped by a six-light transom. Large multi-pane steel-sash windows with concrete sills flank the entrance and the facade rises to a stepped parapet that is peaked slightly in the center. The side elevation on Grove Street consists of the same large steel-sash windows running the length of the building. A double-leaf, nine-over-two-panel door located in the center of the elevation is accessed by a low wooden-deck ramp. A second entrance, which is fitted with a metal roll-up door, replaced the next to the northern most window bay on the Grove Street elevation. The northern most window bay has been partially enclosed around a seven-by-seven glass block window.

The interior of the original section has wood floors, beaded-board ceilings, and clerestory windows on both the east and west elevations that can be opened and closed with the original pulley system. The heavy timber posts supporting the roof beams and truss system are chamfered. The exposed ends of the timber beams project through the exterior walls and are carved to a rounded end. The interior plan is open except for the new partitions added by the City of Hendersonville upon occupying the mill.

1919 Addition to Mill

In 1919, the building was enlarged with a roughly rectangular-shaped brick addition extending to the east along Fourth Avenue and then north within the block. This addition created an overall backward J configuration with a courtyard separating the two north-south oriented sections of the building. The one-story-
on-basement brick wing along Fourth Avenue that connects the two parallel sections of the mill was used for shipping and storage and is similar in detail to the original portion of the building although it lacks a clerestory. A portico that mimics the detail of the main entrance shelters a pair of separate entrance doors that face Fourth Avenue. A simple loading dock stands on the east side of the portico. The windows on the Fourth Street side of the addition have been replaced with pairs of six-over-six, double-hung wooden sash windows and enclosed above. On the courtyard elevation facing west similar modern six-over-six windows have replaced the lower half of the original steel sash. A stepped parapet with a slight peak in the center dominates the unadorned brick east end of the addition. The portion of the wing extending north into the block contained rooms for finishing, boarding, and drying. At the rear of the wing and projecting from the mill to the east stands a four-bay, shed-roof shop, which is constructed of corrugated metal siding on all elevations and a brick foundation. The shop is accessed through four metal roll-up doors.

1947 Addition to the Mill

Another brick addition, constructed in 1947, extends from the north side of the original mill building and completes the block face along Grove Street. This portion of the mill is utilitarian design with only small square louvered vents punctuating the west elevation. Four pairs of double-hung windows and a recessed doorway mark the north end or Fifth Avenue elevation of the addition. This section of the mill has concrete floors, steel roof beams, and no clerestory and is open in plan.
Summary
The Grey Hosiery Mill is significant as the only historic industrial building remaining in the city of Hendersonville. Grey Hosiery Mill survives as an intact example of early twentieth century industrial architecture that is eligible under National Register Criterion C. Founded in 1915 by Captain James P. Grey, the original mill structure was expanded in 1919 and 1947, but has retained its brick and heavy timber construction, large steel-sash windows, and clerestory roof. Grey Hosiery Mill is also eligible under Criterion A in the area of industry. Located three blocks from Main Street in downtown Hendersonville, the Grey Hosiery Mill was an integral part of the developing and diversifying economy of the town in the early twentieth century, providing stable manufacturing jobs and garnering recognition for Hendersonville through the national distribution of hosiery produced at the mill. The Grey family operated the mill until 1965 when Holt Hosiery Mills, Inc. of Burlington purchased the operation. Holt Hosiery halted production at the plant in 1967.

Historical Background
Henderson County is situated at the southeast edge of Blue Ridge Mountains in North Carolina. The central section of the county is a relatively level plateau, one of the broadest valleys in the mountainous western part of the state. Hendersonville, the county seat, is located in this intermontane valley, near the geographic center of the county, at approximately 2,200 feet above sea level.1

The town of Hendersonville, while in existence since as early as 1841, did not reach its peak of development until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As elsewhere in western North Carolina, the railroad was slow in arriving in the area (a line from Spartanburg, South Carolina, reached Hendersonville in 1879), but once it did, the boom began.2 Commercial development expanded tremendously, both in the downtown area and the area around the depot. Tourists began arriving daily all summer by the trainload, which spurred the construction of resort hotels and boarding houses. As the community prospered, fine residential homes were built.3

The rapid growth of Hendersonville broadened the gap between the rural and town populations. Most rural residents remained oriented to their local communities, which developed at a much slower rate. The arrival of the railroad provided a larger market for county farmers, and many growers took advantage of the railroad to ship their produce. Consequently, the area of Hendersonville centered on the depot developed quickly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.4

Building and development continued into the first quarter of the twentieth century, but unlike Asheville in adjacent Buncombe County, which had a dispersed business district, Hendersonville was essentially a one-
street town laid out on a simple grid centered on Main Street. One block removed from Main Street, the
commercial district begins to thin out. In this sense Hendersonville was a typical western North Carolina
county seat and market town. Between 1902 and 1906, the population of Hendersonville increased from 1,200
to 3,000. A new courthouse was erected in 1905, and in 1910, Main Street became the first street in town to be
paved. Commercial development continued steadily, but slower to come, however, was industrial development
ushered in by the railroad.

By the 1920s, real estate speculation in town and the scenic mountainous countryside reached unrealistic
proportions. The stock market crash put an end to many grandiose resort schemes, and the influx of tourists
decayed precipitously. The local economy remained stagnant for several decades until tourism and the town’s
reputation as a retirement community helped revitalize the area.5

Grey Hosiery Mill was established in February 1915, at the request of the citizens of Hendersonville in
order to bring industrial development to Hendersonville. The citizens contributed the sum of six hundred dollars
($600) to Captain James P. Grey and his son, James P. Grey Jr.6 Captain Grey, a native North Carolinian and
Davidson College alumnus, began his career as a teacher, and after investing wisely in a Louisville, Kentucky
timber company, he retired early. Captain Grey grew bored with retirement and learned the textile business
through a large operation in Johnson City, Tennessee. He later moved to Hendersonville and established the
mill.7 Capt. Grey’s brother, Charles L. Grey, joined the company in 1919. James P. Grey Jr., who had attended
Davidson College for a short time, was previously employed at Freeze-Bacon Hosiery Mills in Henderson
County.8 Captain Grey later left the business and relocated to Bristol, Tennessee, where he started another mill.
James Grey Jr. and Charles Grey remained in Hendersonville to supervise operations.9

The mill operations first began in a small brick building and a small frame structure in 1915 at the
corner of Fourth Avenue and Grove Street.10 The mill originally produced knee-length ribbed stockings for
children, manufactured on thirty-two knitting machines. At this time, the mill employed approximately twenty-
five people. With the invention of nylon around the time of the second World War, production was changed to
women’s seamless hosiery. Grey Hosiery produced 66,000 pair of hosiery weekly and employed 250 people at

9 Finch interview.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3 Grey Hosiery Mill, Henderson County, NC

its peak. The city of Hendersonville gained recognition through the distribution of Grey Hosiery Products, and James Grey Jr. held several exclusive patents.\textsuperscript{11} The company distributed its products through sales agents and into department stores under their well-known brand names. Grey Hosiery also distributed stockings under its own brand names (e.g. “Betty Grey”, “Dolly Grey”, “Grey Moor”, “Flamingo”, and “Sarita”). James Grey’s wife also ran a mail order business that sold the “Flamingo” brand.\textsuperscript{12} In 1965 Grey Hosiery mill was sold to Holt Hosiery Mills Inc. of Burlington, North Carolina. Holt Hosiery operated on this site for only two years and halted production in 1967.\textsuperscript{13}

During the fifty-year period that the mill operated under the management of the Grey family, Grey Hosiery was a key employer in Hendersonville and Henderson County, and the expansion of the company coincided with the expansion of the town. The mill also employed personnel residing in neighboring counties. The Grey family was highly regarded by the employees of the mill for their progressive management. Although the company did not provide housing for its workers, the mill provided insurance for its employees, a nurse on duty, and childcare. The mill also sponsored a number of sports teams. Upon the sale of the mill to Holt Hosiery, and after fifty years in the business, James Grey Jr. expressed his appreciation for all the past and present employees of the mill. “If there is any pleasure to be had in operating a hosiery mill the greatest pleasure to me has been my association with a very fine group of Henderson and Polk County people who have worked with me for so many years.”\textsuperscript{14}

Since 1967 the building has served for a number of uses including a craft store and temporary home for the Henderson County Library. At the present time the building is owned by the City of Hendersonville and houses the Water and Sewer Department.

Architectural and Industrial Context

Historically three types of manufacturing predominated in North Carolina during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: furniture, tobacco, and textiles. Of these, only textile manufacturing grew to prominence in Henderson County.\textsuperscript{15} Textile manufacturing first appeared in western North Carolina with the Elkin Manufacturing Company in Surry County, established in 1848 by the Gwyn family for making cotton cloth. By 1884, Elkin Manufacturing Company employed thirty-five and produced five hundred yards of sheeting and five hundred pounds of yarn daily.\textsuperscript{16} Other textile operations began appearing further west in Buncombe and Rutherford counties by the late 1860s.

\textsuperscript{11} Finch interview.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} The Times-News (Hendersonville, NC), 31 May 1945.
\textsuperscript{14} “Grey Hosiery Mills Is Sold to Holt Hosiery Mills Inc.,” The Times-News (31 May 1965), and Finch interview.
Textile mills of the late nineteenth century looked quite different than those built near the river in the earlier part of the century. The old mill stream was losing ground to Main Street as a geographic center for industry. In many communities the mills were located close to the railroad instead of the river, conformed to design standards imposed by New England machinery manufacturers, and more important, to New England factory insurance mutuals that had developed standards for what they called “slow burning construction.” The new mills, much like Grey Hosiery Mill in Hendersonville, were always brick rather than wood, unlike their predecessors, usually two story structures, had flat roofs and large windows, and heavy interior timbers. Brick fire walls separated the main mill room from other sections in which fires were likely to occur and other fire safety features were installed such as sprinkler systems. The introduction of electric lighting eliminated the use of lanterns and indoor fires. The increased safety and decrease in annual insurance rates were a justification for the lack of architectural detail.

Only in the elaborate cornice design or diverse roof details was there evidence of architectural detail. The brickwork around the cornice or windows of the mill might be corbeled, or the design might call for a contrasting treatment around the windows. Many mills with weaving departments used “saw-tooth” roof construction to improve lighting. In general, however, the exterior of the mills did not reflect the spirit of residential architecture of the time. In the interior the mill was standardized to follow the flow of the textile process. Since most mills were expected to grow, mill builders provided for future expansion.

The furniture and hosiery industries grew out of the textile industry. Furniture manufacturers supplied wooden parts including spindles, bobbins, and shuttles to the textile mills and inexpensive furniture to the company stores in the mill villages. Hosiery production started in Durham and then spread to Burlington, High Point, and other cities. By 1914, North Carolina ranked fourth nationwide in hosiery production with seventy-four plants employing nearly 8,000 workers.

There were a relatively small number of industrial facilities with 50 or more workers which operated in Henderson County in the late 19th and early 20th century. The accompanying table (see page 6) outlines the development of industrial facilities with fifty or more employees within a year of formation. Earlier smaller operations such as saw mills, grist mills, and iron foundries, although important to the history of the county, have been excluded from the chart. Of the mills noted in the following chart, Grey Hosiery Mill is the only one remaining which is intact.

The first industry with 50 or more employees in Henderson County was Hart Manufacturing, established in 1894, in Flat Rock. Hart Manufacturing was actually located on the rock from which the town derives its


There is little evidence of the wooden frame Hart Manufacturing building today.

Asheville Brick Company, Green River Mills and Skyland Hosiery were established in 1907. Asheville Brick Company operated in Fletcher, but only scattered bricks remain today. Skyland Hosiery was built in what is now East Flat Rock, on land owned by Mr. P. H. Walker. In a period of ten years the size and capacity of the mill more than doubled. Skyland Hosiery later became Chipman-La Cross Hosiery and operated until 1968.\footnote{Louise Bailey and Jody Barber, Hendersonville and Henderson County: A Pictorial History (Norfolk, VA: The Donning Company, 1988), p. 152.}

Green River Mills, a cotton textile operation founded and managed by Mr. F. O. Bell, was constructed in Tuxedo at a cost of $250,000. The main building is a one-story brick structure with glass blocks on two sides and covers approximately 26,000 square feet under a “saw tooth” roof. The homes surrounding the mill were originally under the same ownership as the mill, but have since been sold to individual owners. The area is no longer recognizable as a “mill village”.\footnote{Ibid.}

A woodworking business, the Hendersonville Column Company, began operations in 1910. The company manufactured porch columns and employed about fifty people. The Freeze-Bacon Hosiery Mill began operation in 1912, and existed until 1928. The Michaelian Kohlberg Company opened in 1913 and manufactured custom rugs. All of these buildings are no longer intact.

Nearly a decade later, in 1923, the Christian Life Calendar Company opened in Naples, in a single story brick building. The company only survived a few years and closed in 1930.\footnote{Fain, p. 391.} In the same building, the Diamond Brand Canvas Company, which remains active today, set up operations in 1939. In 1924, Captain Ellison Adger Smythe began construction of Balfour Mill. International Cellucotton subsequently purchased this mill. Many new additions have been made to the Balfour Mill, but a portion of the original brick building is visible and remains in use today.\footnote{Bailey and Barber, p. 153.}
A chronology of industrial development in Henderson County is show on the table below. 25

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<tr>
<th>Company Name</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Opened</th>
<th>Closed</th>
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<td>1904</td>
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<td>Brick</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>Textile Fabric</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>300+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chipman-La Cross</td>
<td>Hosiery</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>350</td>
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<td>Hendersonville Columns</td>
<td>Woodworking</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>1918</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>Freeze-Bacon Hosiery</td>
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<td>1923</td>
<td>1930</td>
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<td>Wood-tapestry</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>500+</td>
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<td>1939</td>
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<td>Ada Co.</td>
<td>Apparel</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>1965</td>
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Major Bibliographical References


Jones, George A., Ph.D., Hendersonville, NC, Interview with author, 3 July 1998.


Sanborn Insurance Map, 1926.


Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is parcel number 5655, sheet 9568.08, section 88 of the Henderson County tax map.

Boundary Justification

The National Register boundary includes the entire 1.64 acre parcel historically associated with the former Grey Hosiery Mill. The property contains the mill building, a small yard, and a parking lot. The property is a clearly defined and fenced urban lot.