United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 13). 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, dates, 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: Highland Park Manufacturing Company Mill No. 3
   other names/site number:

2. Location
   street & number: 2901 N. Davidson Street
   city, town: Charlotte
   state: North Carolina
   code: NC
   county: Mecklenburg
   code: 119
   zip code: 28205

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 buildings
   -
   Noncontributing sites
   -
   Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

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 [x] 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] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.
   Signature of certifying official:
   [Signature]
   State Historic Preservation Officer
   [Position]
   Date: 8-17-88

   In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.
   Signature of commenting or other official:
   [Signature]
   Date: [ ]

   Other, (explain):

5. National Park Service Certification
   [x] entered in the National Register
   [ ] See continuation sheet.
   [ ] determined eligible for the National Register [ ] See continuation sheet.
   [ ] determined not eligible for the National Register
   [ ] removed from the National Register

   Signature of the Keeper: [Signature]
   Date: [ ]

[Form 10-900a]
Site
The site slopes gently down from north to south, and is bounded by North Davidson (formerly Caldwell) Street, Mallory Street, a mainline track of the Norfolk Southern Railroad, and Thirty-Second Street. To the east and south are the nearly intact houses of the adjacent mill village.

The site contains the following buildings and structures, as shown on the accompanying map: The original mill building (nos. 1-4, 1903-4) and the major weaving room addition (nos. 10 and 11, c.1946); Gate House (no. 5, c.1904 & 1920); Dye House (no. 6, c.1925) Water Tower (no. 7, c.1946); Boiler House (no. 8, 1903-4); and Waste House (no. 9, 1903-4).

Neither the mill nor its outbuildings have been substantially altered from their original construction, and thus the site provides an exceptionally well-preserved example of turn-of-the-century textile mill construction in Charlotte. Some windows have been bricked in and sash replaced on others, and additions were made (as noted below), but the original integrity of the buildings are nearly intact.

Original Mill Building. (Nos. 1-4, 1903-4) Contributing.
Designed by the widely influential Stuart Cramer who used it as a model, the original mill is an "L"-shaped building that was constructed of brick made on the site that was laid in common bond. It has a very low pitch gable roof with no eaves that runs the length of each leg of the "L". The original wood and glass clerestories on the ridgelines are no longer extant except in one small area next to the main tower (No. 2). Many of the segmental arch brick windows on the first floor have been bricked in, and the remainder have been bricked in at the top to eliminate the arch, and the wood sash replaced with metal industrial sash windows.

Around the exterior were placed a number of towers of varying size and function. The smallest were windowless elevator shafts, and the next larger were for the stairs, at the top of which were water tanks. Waterclosets for men and women were in the largest towers, which have extant fixtures. The most decorative brickwork on the building appears on the two largest type of towers; they have corbelled brick cornices and round "bullseye" windows (right above round arch windows that have been bricked in.)

See continuation sheet
The main tower is the most decorative part of the building. Four stories high, it has tall round and segmental arch windows on the first three floors, bullseye windows on the fourth, and is capped by fancy corbelling and crenelated parapets. Originally it served as the mill entrance, which is why it was the largest and most elaborate of the towers, and still has its original tongue-and-groove wood stairway. Some original 4/4 wood sash widows are extant.

Typical wood post-and-beam construction is seen in the interior structural scheme of the mill, which uses round wood columns with cast-iron capitals spaced eight feet by twenty-five feet apart. Some of the original wood posts have been replaced by metal ones. Referring to the accompanying map, originally No. 1 was the Carding Room on the first floor, and Spinning Room on the second. No. 2 had the the Picking Room on the first floor, and Warping on the second, and No. 3 was the Dye House. No. 4 had a Beaming and Quilling Room at basement level, and Weaving Room on the upper level. ¹ Fire walls with typical steel fire doors separated the different sections of the mill. The new Weave Room (Nos. 10 and 11) was added about 1946, as were small additions on the West side.²

Outbuildings
There are four outbuildings and one structure extant.

The Gate House (No. 5, c.1904 & 1920) Contributing.
The Gate House is a one-story wood frame structure with wood siding that appears to have been built in parts. It has two high hip roofs and covered entryways, and was partly built before 1911 and partly before 1929.³ The windows are modern 2/2 double-hung wood sash, and the front and side entrances have modern doors. The interior has been completely covered with modern paneling.

The Dye House (No. 6, c. 1925) Contributing.
The one-story brick Dye House with monitor roof was built between 1911 and 1929.⁴ An addition was built at the southeast corner between 1929 and 1954 to hold dye vats, and sometime after 1954 a brick passageway was put in to connect the mill and dye house.⁵ The brick is laid in running bond, and the roof is a low pitch gable with small eaves supported by simple brackets. All the windows are metal sash - those on the monitor roof are 4/4, and others are of varying sizes. Many on the ground level have been bricked in.

The Water Tower (No. 7, c. 1946) Noncontributing.
The 100,000 gallon water tower was put up between 1929 and 1954, probably about 1946.⁶ The bottom of the tank stands one
hundred feet above ground level. It is no longer in use, and will probably be demolished as uneconomical to maintain.

Boiler House (No. 8, 1903-4) Contributing.
The Boiler House was one of the original outbuildings, and the brick one-story building laid in common bond with tall smokestack was tucked in between the main mill building and rail siding, which accounts for the trapezoidal shape. The segmental arched doors and widows have been bricked in, but the corbelled cornice is still visible. Parapet walls enclose a low pitch flat roof. It is heavily insulated with asbestos, and will likely have to be demolished.

Waste House (No. 9, 1903-4) Contributing.
The other remaining original outbuilding is the two-story Waste House, which was also located along a no-longer-extant rail siding. Built of the same common bond brick with segmental arched windows as the rest of the mill, it has three parapet walls enclosing a low pitch flat roof. Along with the main tower on the mill building, it has the only extant arched wood 4/4 window sashes.

Notes
4. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Sanborn Map, cited above, 1905, p. 36.
8. Ibid.
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)

[☐] A  [☐] B  [☐] C  [☐] D  [☐] E  [☐] F  [☐] G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Industry

Architecture

Period of Significance

1903-1938

Significant Dates

1903-1904

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Cramer, Stuart Warren

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Summary

The Highland Park Manufacturing Company Mill #3 was built in 1903-4, and was by far the largest in the county. It is of local significance because of its architecture and the part it played in the industrial history of Charlotte-Hecklenburg County, which resulted in Charlotte becoming the largest city in the Carolinas by 1930, and the most important banking and distribution center in the state. It also has the potential for multi-state regional significance because of its association with the designer, Stuart W. Cramer, but research data not presently available would be needed for such a determination. Cramer planned and furnished hundreds of mills in the South in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and used Highland Park #3 as a model for his mill designs. He included the plans, elevations and specifications for the mill in his well-known book on mill construction. It was also one of the state’s first mills designed to be operated by electric power.

Historical Context

When Charlotte made the transition from being primarily a cotton trading center to a cotton manufacturing and distribution center in the period from the late 1880s to the early 1900s, a New South industrialization movement spearheaded by Daniel Augustus Tompkins (1852-1914), the Highland Park Mill #3 was an important part of that progression. The city's first mill was the Charlotte Cotton Mills, which started up in 1884 under the direction of R. M. Oates, a cotton broker.1 A year later, D. A. Tompkins, a South Carolina native who was educated and trained in manufacturing in the North, came to the city as a representative of the Westinghouse Company. He quickly became aware of the potential for building cotton mills in the area, and so in 1884 he set up his own design, contracting and machine shop business, the D. A. Tompkins Co. Over a thirty-two year period, Tompkins built over one hundred
cotton mills, fertilizer works, electric light plants and ginneries. He also changed the region's cotton oil, from a waste product into a major industry through the building of about two hundred processing plants and organizing one of his own, the Southern Cotton Oil Company.²

Tompkins' efforts started to appear in rapid succession in Charlotte when his company built the Alpha, Ada and Victor mills in 1889, the city's second, third and fourth mills.³ On June 15, 1894, at the first stockholder's meeting of the new "Gingham Mill," which was to be the city's fifth, a board of directors was elected. At the meeting of January 11, 1892, a committee of D. A. Tompkins and two others suggested the name Highland Park Manufacturing Co., which was adopted. The company's Mill No. 1 was brought into operation on N. Brevard Street at Twelfth later that year. R. H. Jordan, who owned the drugstore at the southeast corner of Trade and Tryon Street at the center of town, was elected the company's first president. He was followed by Vinton Liddell in 1893 and W. E. Holt in 1895.⁴

Accepting the offer of J. S. Spencer, president of the Commercial National Bank and secretary of Highland Park Manufacturing, Charles Worth Johnston (1861-1941) also joined the company in 1892, and was elected treasurer and secretary of the board of directors in 1895. Johnston was a native of Cabarrus County, attended Davidson College, and had been superintendent of the Cornelius Mills, his first place of employment.⁵

After expanding the original mill in 1895 and 1896, Highland Park branched out by buying Standard Mills in Rock Hill, S.C. at a public sale in 1898, which became Mill No. 2.⁶ At a board meeting in January, 1903, it was decided to expand the capital stock from the original $125,000 to $700,000 par value to finance the construction of a newer and much larger mill.⁷ The site chosen for Highland Park No. 3 was the location of the municipal water works at the far edge of the Wadsworth farm, located about one mile north of Mill No. 1 (known as the "Gingham Mills") and just over two miles from the Square. Construction on the half-million dollar plant began on March 2, 1903, for which a brickmaking plant was set up at the site.

The mill was designed by Stuart Warren Cramer, whose engineering firm is reported to have designed and/or equipped nearly one-third of the new cotton mills in the South between the years 1895 and 1915.⁸ A good part of Cramer's influential book on mills, Useful Information for Cotton Manufacturers, Volume 3 (1906), shows the plans, elevations, equipment layout, detail drawings and specifications for the Highland Park No. 3 as an example of state-of-the-art mill design.⁹ Among other up-to-date features were its
Both the new mill and its adjacent support outbuildings, a $100,000 power generating plant was built on nearby Sugar Creek to run both the Gingham Mill (Mill No. 1) and the new Mill No. 3 (see Figure 1). The 2000-horsepower plant made the two factories among the first electrically driven mills in North Carolina. 10

When it was completed in November, 1904, the Highland Park No. 3 had 30,000 spindles, 1,000 looms and over 800 employees, which made it fifty percent larger than the city's second-largest Louise Mill, and it also made the Highland Park Manufacturing the city's largest textile company. Originally, eighty mill houses were built as part of an entire mill village, as shown on the mill's plan in Cramer's book (Figure 1). A quarter of a mile to the northeast, another mill was put up in 1904, the Mecklenburg (later Mercury), and eventually a third (Johnston Manufacturing Co., 1913) was built between the first two, both of which also had their own areas of mill houses. This created the North Charlotte community, which thrived for many years, complete with hotel, mercantile center and trolley line out from the city center. 11

In 1906, C. W. Johnston became president of Highland Park Manufacturing, and not long afterward began an aggressive program of expansion by acquisition and consolidation to build what was known as the Johnston chain. Beginning with the acquisition of Anchor Mills, eventually there were thirteen Carolinas mills under Johnston ownership, including the newly-built Johnston Manufacturing Company mill of 1913. As a visible monument to the success of the textile enterprise, in 1924 the Johnston Building was built on South Tryon Street in Charlotte to house the corporate headquarters and other offices. 12

When C. W. Johnston stepped down as president in 1938, he was succeeded by his son, R. Horace Johnston, who led the firm until his own death in the early Fifties. The last president of the company, David R. Johnston (C. W. Johnston's grandson), headed Highland Park until its dissolution in June, 1969, when all textile manufacturing ceased at Highland Park No. 3. When the Johnston Manufacturing Co. plant also closed in 1975, there was a distinct passing from one time into another for the mill community. 13
Architectural Context

The Highland Park Mill No. 3 is one of the few remaining nearly intact mill structures in Charlotte, and is also the largest and most decorated. From 1881, when the first mill, the Charlotte Cotton Mills, was built, to 1913, when the neighboring Johnston Manufacturing Co. Mill, the last, was constructed, fifteen cotton mills were built in and near the city. (Subsequently all have been taken into the city limits.) Following the Charlotte Cotton Mills, the next five, including Highland Park No. 1, as partially noted above, were designed and built by engineer D. A. Tompkins between 1889 and 1893. Five more were built between 1897 and 1904 by textile men from New England, who apparently used plans from mills in that area that had been worked out over the years in concert with fire insurance companies. Highland Park No. 3 was the city’s twelfth mill, and is the only one known to be designed by Stuart Cramer.

Compared to other mills in Charlotte, Highland Park No. 3 is greater in scale, has more outbuildings, and has the largest and most decorated tower of the extant mills. Only the Hoskins Mill is so nearly intact as an original mill structure, and only two other surviving mills have outbuildings: the Hoskins and the Alpha have one each, an office and a cotton warehouse, respectively. Only one other mill in Charlotte has a decorated tower with crenelated parapets, the Alpha, which is three stories tall and is only decorative with no practical purpose. The Highland Park No. 3 main tower is four stories high, encloses a stairwell that goes to both floors and the roof, and is topped by a water tank.

Of the fifteen original mills in Charlotte, four have been demolished, four have only portions extant, five have been altered, and two, the Hoskins and the Highland Park No. 3, are the most nearly intact in original construction.

The Highland Park No. 3 mill was one of two cotton mills (the other was the Alpha) in Mecklenburg County that were surveyed in the North Carolina Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites in 1975, and in Charlotte’s neighborhood survey in 1986.

Historical Background

On 17 February 1903, the Highland Park Manufacturing Company bought 102.56 acres of land for its new mill, which was located next to the Southern Railroad tracks about two miles to the northeast of the center of Charlotte. Construction on the 103,125 square-foot mill began on Monday, March 2, 1903, and was estimated to cost $500,000. A two-thousand-horsepower electric power plant for the
mill (and Highland Park No. 1, a mile to the southwest) was started at the same time about 1000 feet away on Sugar Creek, which was to be built for about $100,000.\textsuperscript{20} By March of the following year, construction on Highland Park No. 3 and the neighboring Mecklenburg Mill was proceeding rapidly. A number of mill houses and a new forty-room hotel were in place, and the trolley line and a "macadamized" road were extended out to the settlement.\textsuperscript{21} By November, 1904, the electric power plant was finished and the mill started operations.\textsuperscript{22} Although the mill ceased operation in 1969, the period of significance closes in 1938, the last year in which the mill met the fifty-year eligibility requirement.

Notes

7. Mecklenburg County Record of Corporations, Book 1, p. 337.
14. Morrill, cited in note 4. They are the Alpha (1889), Ada (1889), Victor (1889), Highland Park #1 (1892), and Atherton (1893).
15. Ibid.; Huffman, cited in note 2; by the same author, "A Historical Sketch of the Hoskins Mill," Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1987. They are the Louise (1897), Magnolia (c.1899), Chadwick (1901), Elizabeth (1901), and Hoskins, (1904).
16. Morrill, cited in note 4; Cramer, note 9. The last mills were the Mecklenburg (1904), Savona (1908), and Johnston (1913).
22. Ibid., November 19, 1904, p. 4.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9    Page 1

------------------. "A Historical Sketch of the Hoskins Mill."
Mecklenburg County, N.C. Deed Books.
------------------. Record of Corporations.
Morrill, Dan L. "A Survey of Cotton Mills in Charlotte."
Young, Marjorie, ed. Textile Leaders of the South. (Columbia,
    S.C.: James R. Young, 1963)
Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- [X] 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 #
  - Record #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering
  - Record #

Primary location of additional data:
- [X] State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property: 9.283 acres

UTM References:

A Zone 117 Easting 5117 Northing 3140
C Zone Easting Northing

B Zone Easting Northing

D Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description:

See continuation sheet

Original mill site bounded by the Southern Railroad tracks, Mallory, N. Davidson and East 33rd Streets.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. William H. Huffman
organization Consultant
street & number 5045 Beckford Drive
city or town Charlotte
date 25 March 1988
telephone 704-364-8237
state NC
zip code 28226
Beginning at an iron located at the point of intersection of the easterly line of Mallory Street with the northerly line of North Caldwell [now Davidson] Street and running thence in and along said easterly line of Mallory Street, N 65-47-30 W 543.83 feet to a point; thence, continuing with said course N 65-47-30 W 113.19 feet to an iron in the centerline of the right-of-way of Norfolk Southern Railroad; thence in and along that said centerline in two courses and distances as follows: (1) N 56-10-05 E (crossing a spur track of Southern Railroad at 153.32 feet) for a total distance of 594.51 feet to a point; (2) thence with the arc of a circular curve having a radius of 1,378.228 feet to the right of an arc distance of 315.60 feet to an iron in the westerly line of a 35-foot unnamed street [E. 33rd Street]; thence in and along that said line, S 33-18-00 E 523.47 feet to an iron in the northerly line of N. Caldwell [now Davidson] Street; thence in and along that said line, S 56-24-40 W 554.69 feet to the point or place of the Beginning, and containing 9.283 acres. [From deed recorded in Mecklenburg County, N.C. Deed Book 5223, page 325, dated 15 May 1986, by which the present owners acquired the property.]

The property is shown in the accompanying Mecklenburg County Tax Map, Book 83, page 7, Parcel # 083-078-01.
There are many things about mill engineering that can best be illustrated by a set of mill plans. It has therefore seemed desirable and convenient to wind up this section by reductions from a set of working drawings of a mill actually built.

I have selected for this illustration the new No. 3 Mill and power plant of the Highland Park Manufacturing Company, which has just been erected at Charlotte, N. C., and for which

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Key to Plot Shown Above.


Only a hundred or more tenement houses are shown on the plot, the remainder being located along the brow of the hill to the Eastward. The open space left in front of the weave room is for future extensions to the plant.

None of the levels shown on the original plot are here given for lack

FIGURE 1
Highland Park Manufacturing Co. Mill No. 3
2901 N. Davidson Street
Charlotte, N.C. Mecklenburg Co.