

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 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.

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1. Name of Property

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historic name Bellevue Manufacturing Company

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Location

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street & number Nash Street and Eno Street not for publication N/A  
city or town Hillsborough vicinity N/A  
state North Carolina code NC county Orange code 135 zip code 27278

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3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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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.)

Jeffrey Crow SHPD  
Signature of certifying official

7/11/03  
Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau



6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Industry/processing/extraction Sub: Manufacturing Facility

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

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Commerce/trade Sub: Business

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

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Other (industrial slow burn  
construction)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick  
roof Rubber  
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 in prehistory or history.

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

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or 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)

Industry  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance c. 1909 - 1953

Significant Dates      1909  
                              1920  
                              1923

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Biberstein, Richard  
Sirrine, J. E.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) **See continuation sheet**

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 9. Major Bibliographical References  
 =====  
 (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: **North Carolina Archives and History**

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10. Geographical Data  
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Acreage of Property **4.5 acres**

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	670072	3993490	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

Verbal Boundary Description: That portion of parcel 4.34.E.21 bounded by South Nash Street, Eno Street, West King Street, and Bellevue Avenue, as indicated on the enclosed Orange County Tax map. The boundary of the nominated site extends westward from South Nash Street, passing between the Bellevue Mill complex and the modern warehouse to the south (not included in nomination); it then extends in a northwesterly direction in alignment with the property line west of Holt Street to the north, thereafter following the remainder of the property line (see enclosed tax map, scale 1:2400).

Boundary Justification: The boundary includes the historic mill complex, and excludes the large warehouse of recent construction to the south as well as vacant land to the west.

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11. Form Prepared By  
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name/title Michele Lamprakos, Edwin Belk

organization Belk Architecture date August 22, 2002

street & number 735 9<sup>th</sup> Street telephone 919-286-2575

city or town Durham state NC zip code 27705

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Additional Documentation  
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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)

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Property Owner  
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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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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.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1 Bellevue Manufacturing Company  
Orange County, NC

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**Introduction**

The Bellevue Manufacturing Company is located northwest of the intersection of Nash Street and Eno Street, one of several industrial/commercial sites in West Hillsborough built along the Norfolk and Southern Railroad corridor. To the north of the mill, across Margaret Lane, is the mill village built by the company including the mill supervisor's house on Nash Street. To the south of the complex is a retail area along Nash Street developed by the 1920's.

The Bellevue mill complex consists of the original two-story, side-gabled mill building, built circa 1909 with a one-story wing to the west. This block, along with the engine and boiler rooms on the south side, faced south toward the railroad tracks. A one-story weaving room with roof monitor was built in 1920 to the north of and parallel to the mill, with a small office at the east end. In 1923 the main mill building was expanded: a second story was added to the one-story wing and an addition built at the west end, continuing the style of the original building. The addition connected the original mill building and the weaving room to the north, creating a U-shaped complex with continuous facades along the south and west sides. In the same year a two-story cloth building was built along Nash Street. In the 1960's, after the period of the mill's significance, the center of the complex was filled in.

All of the buildings at Bellevue Manufacturing Company are typical of slow-burn construction, which had become industry standard by the turn of the century.<sup>1</sup> Walls are load-bearing, one-to-five common-bond masonry; heavy timber beams are supported by wood posts. Floors and roofs are constructed of wood planks.

Each section of the mill retains architectural integrity from its period of construction. The brick walls, roof construction, and most of the original wood sash windows of the main mill building of 1909 are intact, as are those of the 1923 addition to and extension of the mill. Within the mill the brick walls and wooden plank floors and ceilings are relatively intact and uncovered. On the first floor five inch steel pipe columns were substituted for or added between the wooden posts, presumably as reinforcing for heavy machinery that was installed on the second floor. The weaving room and attached office (1920) and the cloth room (1923) are also intact. The cast-in-place concrete vault in the office is an unusual feature for such residential-type construction, and suggests a constructive experiment by the architect or owner.

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<sup>1</sup> See section 8.

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**Main Mill, circa 1909**

The main mill building, built circa 1909, can be understood through use of the 1911 Sanborn map and drawings of the 1923 addition, which differentiate between the original structure and proposed changes.<sup>2</sup> The main portion of the building was two stories high, raised on a basement story. The plan is a three-aisle basilica type, with wood posts spaced approximately eight feet on center. A one-story wing extended approximately ninety feet to the west. This wing, which housed the weaving section, rose twelve feet above the ground and had a four foot high roof monitor.

The two-story block had continuous fenestration along the south, east, and north facades. The windows of the north facade, now filled in with masonry, can be viewed from the 1960's infill addition in the middle of the complex. The east facade of the building, facing Nash Street, is composed of eight bays; cargo doors occupy the three bays on the ground floor at the south end. The roof is slightly pitched in a shallow gable. The original windows, still in place, are ten feet high, fifteen over fifteen double hung wood sash, with segmental arched openings and fixed transoms above. Along the south and west facades, the basement has smaller windows with segmental arches.

**Boiler and Engine Rooms, circa 1909**

Attached to the south facade of the two-story block were boiler and engine rooms, separated from the main mill and from each other by fire walls. To the east of these was the beaming room. The facade of this room was preserved behind a 1923 addition, but must have been destroyed upon removal of that addition: the existing south wall sits several feet in front of the engine room facade. The original factory had a power train of belt-driven machinery, run by steam power; at the rear of the engine room, a belt-way penetrated the main area of the mill.

The facades of the boiler room and engine room are the most "designed" of the complex, and must have been intended as the entry to the mill. The engine room has a large segmental arch opening, the top of which is still visible behind a later wall. Above, to each side, is a smaller window set beneath a segmental arch; in 1923 the arches were filled in with masonry and the windows replaced with steel sash. The arch motif is repeated in the facade of the neighboring boiler room, which resembles a portico; this facade is intact, although hard to

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<sup>2</sup> See reconstruction sketch in the attached working file. The 1923 drawings are by J. E. Sirrine Engineers, Greenville (collection of Hillsborough Owners' Corporation).

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view because of the proximity of the neighboring warehouse which was later built to the south.

**1920 Additions: Weaving Room, Dye House, Picker Room**

In 1920, several additions were made to the mill. A one-story, thirty-four thousand square foot weaving room was built approximately seventy-five feet north of the original building, at a higher elevation. This building was designed by the noted mill designer, Richard Biberstein.<sup>3</sup> Like the original mill, the plan of the weaving building has three aisles, with steel pipe columns supporting the roof. A ten-foot high roof monitor extends the length of the building (now filled in). Steel hopper windows wrapped all four facades. A small two-story office that projects from the east end of this building has residential-type, four-over-four double hung wood sash windows with flat lintels. A room inside has a cast-in-place concrete vault.

At the same time, additions were made along the south facade of the main mill. The former beaming room was extended to the south, obscuring the original facade of the engine room. The door opening of the engine room was filled in with masonry, and the wood door reused in the new dye house facade; six existing wood sash windows were installed alongside it. This addition (since removed) became the new dye house, and constituted the front facade of the mill. A lapper room (picker room) was built next to the new dye house, at the southeast corner of the original mill. This room, still extant, was separated from the dye house by a parapeted firewall.

**1923 Additions**

In 1923 a design by J.E. Sirrine enlarged the main mill, adding a second floor to the one-story segment. It extended both floors to the west, continuing the roof line and fenestration of the original mill. Steel pipe columns were used in the new construction, and in some cases were used to replace or supplement timber posts in the original building. The windows in the addition are steel hopper windows set in openings designed to match the openings of the original wood sash windows; in place of an arched transom, the hopper windows have a wood panel.

Along the north wall, the exterior staircase was replaced with a masonry stair tower, conforming to slow burn construction standards. (The stair tower was removed during the 1960's infill.) Around this time the mill was converted to

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<sup>3</sup> See section 8.

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electric power; the beltway was removed and the passage between the engine room and the main mill filled in.<sup>4</sup>

A one-story link was added between the enlarged mill and the weaving room. This block is at the same elevation as the weaving room; an interior stair and small freight elevator connected it to the level of the main mill. The elevator shaft extends above the roofline, anchoring the northwest corner of the main mill and articulating the joint between the main mill and the one-story portion. The main mill building extends above the one-story block; here there are half-height steel hopper windows set in arched openings. The west facade of the one-story block continues the fenestration of the main mill, with a cargo door at ground level. Like the original mill and its western extension the one-story block is raised on a basement, with smaller segmental arched windows spaced at half the interval of the windows above.

The juncture between the original mill and the 1923 work is clearly visible on the first and second floors of the south facade, where a darker brick was used in the new construction.<sup>5</sup> It is also visible inside the mill on the first floor: the sills and heads of the new window openings are flush with the wall, rather than recessed as in the original factory. Six original wood sash windows were used in the new second story; they are now filled in with concrete block. Five windows at the east end of the original mill building, on the second floor, were replaced with steel hopper windows and the sill and transoms areas filled in with brick flush to the wall.

The result of the 1923 additions was the creation of a U-shaped building, with a continuous facade along the south and west sides. The additions to the main mill were intended to integrate with the original mill building. For example, while steel hopper windows were used in most new areas, the arched openings were maintained even though they did not have transoms. Unlike the original mill, however, the sills and coping in new areas are concrete.

#### 1960's Additions

In the 1960's, the open space in the center of the U-shaped complex was enclosed to attain additional storage capacity. A roof supported by open web steel trusses was built across the space, spanning from the north wall of the main mill to the south wall of the weaving building. At the east a new wall

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<sup>4</sup> Drawings by J. E. Sirrine Architects, 1923. In 1919 the mill was running partially on electric power, and by 1926 had been entirely converted (*Clark's Directory of Southern Cotton Mills*, Charlotte: Clark Publishing Co., 1919, 1926).

<sup>5</sup> See captioned photographs in the working file.

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was built to enclose the space. At an undetermined point, the space in between the boiler room and the mill was enclosed with frame walls and a corrugated roof, to house a new boiler.

**Cloth Building, 1923 (Contributing Building)**

In 1923, a two-story cloth building was built along Nash Street, on the site of the former cotton storage sheds. The gabled roofline of this building is the same pitch as the main mill building, anchored by an elevator tower at the northeast corner. It has continuous fenestration with steel hopper windows (15 pane windows on the first floor, 35 panes on the second floor). Unlike the windows of the main mill and addition, the sills are concrete and the lintels are flat rather than arched. The short north and south facades have double-wide service doors at both levels.

**Other Structures**

The additions of 1920 and 1923 expanded the production and storage areas of the mill and allowed for a greater segregation of activities. The processes of opening and cleaning were assigned to distinct areas. The 1924 Sanborn map shows a separate opening room located to the southeast of the mill and additional small warehouses scattered to the south of the main mill. These buildings are no longer extant.

The original water tower was erected before 1945, with a pipeline from the pond. The existing tower is more than likely a later replacement: a cylindrical drum on steel supports, it is located to the southeast of the mill. A cylindrical fuel storage tank to the west of the weaving room is of recent construction. Both structures are non-contributing resources.

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Bellevue Manufacturing Company  
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**Statement of Significance**

Bellevue Manufacturing Company, built circa 1909 on the tracks of the Southern Railway just west of Hillsborough, North Carolina, was the second textile mill in town. Along with the Eno Cotton Mill, built in 1896 and still extant, the mills and worker housing formed an area that came to be known as West Hillsborough, and led to an industrial boom in this county seat town. Founded by local entrepreneur Shepperd Strudwick, the two-story brick, side-gabled building is typical of slow-burn mill construction and may have been designed by Strudwick's brother-in-law, Ralph Adams Cram. Noted Greenville, North Carolina mill designer J. E. Sirrine extended the main mill to the west in 1923 following the original design; he also constructed a two-story cloth building to the east. Bellevue Mill operated under various owners until the 1990's. Bellevue Manufacturing Company meets National Register Criterion A for its industrial significance as one of two historic textile mills in Hillsborough. In contrast to the Eno Cotton Mill, which has undergone significant changes, Bellevue retains the architectural integrity from its period of significance, 1909-1953. During this period the mill remained important to the economy of Hillsborough. The post-1953 period is not of exceptional significance and therefore the fifty-year date for Criterion A is appropriate as the end of the period of significance.

**Historical Background**

Bellevue Manufacturing Company was founded during the period when North Carolina came to supercede Massachusetts as the leader in textile production. The story of the factory illustrates the general trends in the Piedmont, which became the center of textile manufacturing.

Numerous mills had been built around Hillsborough in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on tributaries around Hillsborough, but most of these were gristmills. The textile industry, already established elsewhere in the Piedmont by the mid-nineteenth century, appeared in 1896 with the establishment of Eno Cotton Mill one-quarter mile south of the railroad depot. Bellevue Manufacturing Company was established a decade later, closer to town, just north of the depot at the intersection of Hillsboro (now Nash) Street and Dimmock's Mill Road. The establishment of these two mills, along with mill villages for workers, led to the growth of what came to be known as West

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Hillsborough.<sup>1</sup>

Shepperd Strudwick (1868-1961), founder of Bellevue Manufacturing Company and its president for twenty-five years, was from an illustrious family that traced its roots to the colonial era.<sup>2</sup> As a man who made a fortune in industry, he seems to have been an anomaly in an old landed family that produced public servants and artists. Strudwick's grandfather, Dr. Edmund Strudwick, was a pioneer of medicine, establishing the North Carolina Medical Association with Dr. James Webb, also of Hillsborough.<sup>3</sup> The most prominent of the artists in the family was Shepperd Strudwick's son, a well-known Broadway and film actor. Strudwick Sr. was never completely content in his role in the Bellevue Cotton Mill, and devoted significant time to other activities. He served as postmaster of Hillsborough for many years, and was a leader of the local Presbyterian church. He was also a gifted woodcarver; many of his works are exhibited throughout the state.<sup>4</sup>

Writing in 1906, the historian Holland Thompson noted that the dramatic expansion of the textile industry in North Carolina was made possible by two factors: numerous small investors who dedicated capital to the industry; and the mass migration of rural people to towns from the state's suffering agricultural sector.<sup>5</sup> These factors - local capital and local labor - were not

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<sup>1</sup> Located outside the National Register Historic District, only isolated buildings in this area have been included in the architectural survey conducted by the Town of Hillsborough; Bellevue Mill and the mill village were surveyed during the 1994-5 Hillsborough Survey Update (Hillsborough Historic District Architectural Survey, 1996, p. 7).

<sup>2</sup> According to family papers, the first Strudwick came to America in 1764 and occupied large holdings at Haw Field, near the present town of Mebane. The family was apparently Jewish: the only son of the this man, William Strudwick (d. 1830), who served as an officer in the Revolutionary War under George Washington, was a Jew, according to Shepperd Strudwick's son (*Durham Morning Herald*, September 26, 1973).

<sup>3</sup> Edmund Strudwick also worked with Dorothea Dix to develop humane methods for the care and treatment of the insane (*Durham Morning Herald*, March 26, 1950). The Strudwick and Webb families had close ties since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and several of their members intermarried. Another James Webb, possibly the son of the doctor, was one of the founders of Eno Cotton Mill. Norfleet Webb was one of the founding members of Bellevue Manufacturing Co., and its secretary and treasurer for many years (see below).

<sup>4</sup> *Durham Morning Herald*, March 26, 1950; interview with Clarence Jones, Hillsborough Historical Society Newsletter, vol. XXXI, no. 2, April 1992; "Strudwick family", Mary Claire Engstrom papers, box #2. The actor was Shepperd Strudwick Jr. (d. 1958).

<sup>5</sup> From *Cotton Field to Cotton Mill*, cited in B.D.Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History*, Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1993, p. 30.

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new: the South had engaged in industrial experiments, particularly in textiles, since the antebellum period. In this earlier period, however, industry had been viewed as subservient to agriculture. Now there was a new determination to diversify the economy and in particular, to focus on industrialization. In this effort, The cotton mill was viewed as "dynamo" of this process: beginning around 1885, some two hundred cotton mills were built in the span of two decades.<sup>6</sup> The notion of progress, which infused public and private discourse throughout the state, was very much in evidence in Hillsborough. A 1907 article entitled "Progressive Hillsborough" cited the town's "up-to-date" architecture, new macadam roads, and burgeoning textile industry as evidence of the town's forward march.<sup>7</sup>

Like many southern capitalists, Strudwick saw himself as an entrepreneur with a civic duty to help build the "New South."<sup>8</sup> He had acquired a decade of business experience in Virginia, where he had operated a cotton brokerage, and in Tennessee, where he had invested in phosphate mines. In 1902 he sold these interests and returned to Hillsborough to contribute to the town's development.<sup>9</sup> Several months before the incorporation of Bellevue Manufacturing Company, Strudwick helped to found the Bank of Orange, the first bank in Hillsborough since the antebellum period. Established with an initial capitalization of \$5000,<sup>10</sup> the bank illustrates the clear link between local financing and industry.

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<sup>6</sup> B.D.Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina*, pp. 30-1.

<sup>7</sup> "Progressive Hillsboro", *Durham Recorder*, July 9, 1907. The article mentions a single "large cotton and knitting mill... [which] has caused a town to be built around the depot, called West Hillsboro." This probably refers to the Eno Cotton mill, which had operated since 1896. The mill houses built by Bellevue, while close to the depot, were not built until the mid-1920's. This provides further evidence for a post-1907 construction date for the mill (see below).

<sup>8</sup> Hall, et. al., *Like a Family: the Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987, p. 24.

<sup>9</sup> Strudwick attended the Nash and Collock School in Hillsboro and the Military Academy in Oxford, and then moved to Norfolk, Va. to work with a fertilizer firm. In the 1890's he opened a cotton brokerage in Richmond. He went to Tennessee around 1897, where he made a fortune in phosphate mines (Shepperd Strudwick Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC-Chapel Hill; *Hillsborough Historical Society Newsletter*).

<sup>10</sup> H. Lefler and P. Wager, eds., *Orange County - 1752-1952*, Chapel Hill, 1953, p. 274.

Strudwick was also president of president of the Hillsboro Clay Manufacturing Company (*Orange County Observer*, February 11, 1909).

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**The Bellevue Mill, circa 1909**

The Bellevue Manufacturing Company was incorporated on October 13, 1904 with capital of \$125,000. Like many mills of the time, it was financed through the sale of shares, called a subscription plan. A total of 1250 shares were offered at \$100 each; 350 of these were "subscribed" at the time of incorporation and represented the amount with which the company would begin business.<sup>11</sup> The company immediately began to acquire the land on which the mill and mill village would be built; two tracts were purchased in 1905 from P. C. Collins and A. Ruffin, who were shareholders in the company.<sup>12</sup> The same year, the noted mill designer Richard C. Biberstein was hired to produce a machinery layout; his drawings for this work span the years 1905-7.<sup>13</sup>

It appears to have been several years, possibly 1909, before the mill was built and in operation.<sup>14</sup> By 1912 it was operating with 5000 spindles and 200 narrow looms, which produced dress ginghams in twenty-seven and thirty-two inch lengths; four years later it was also producing cheviot, a rough woolen cloth. The company's selling agents were based in New York and New Jersey.<sup>15</sup> The mill must have gotten off to a slow start, because in 1919 its declared value had

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<sup>11</sup> 175 shares were purchased by Strudwick, president of the company; 120 by Norfleet Webb, secretary and treasurer; the rest of the 350 shares were divided among five others, including two other Webbs (Record of Special Proceedings and Incorporations, vol. 1, Office of the Clerk of the Court, Orange County). One of the Webbs ("J. Webb") may have been the other owner of the Eno Cotton Mill; see fn. (Lefler and Wager, eds., *Orange County - 1752-1952*, p. 275).

<sup>12</sup> P. C. Collins acted as agent of Bellevue Mill and purchased the southern portion of the site from J. W. Hooker in late September 1904. This predated the incorporation of the company; Collins' status as agent for Bellevue was added to the transfer of title by a later hand. The northern portion of the site was acquired from A. Ruffin, a founder and owner of the Eno Cotton Mill; he bought ten shares in Bellevue (deeds dated 9/28/04, 4/13/05, and 10/2/05, and plat 33, book 2, dated January 1932, Orange County Register of Deeds).

<sup>13</sup> Biberstein, Bowles, Meachem, & Reed, Incorporated Records (1895-1960), Special Collections, Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

<sup>14</sup> See attached Sanborn insurance map of 1911 and sketch roof plan of original mill in the working file of this submission.

So many issues of Hillsborough's *Durham Recorder* (formerly *Hillsborough Recorder*) are missing that it is difficult to establish a precise date for the factory's opening. An ad was run by "Bellevue Knitting Mills" for several months during the second half of 1907, advertising for "100 to 200 cords of good wood." Since the factory was designed to operate on steam power, this wood was probably intended for construction of the mill building. A 1907 article suggests that there was only one cotton mill in operation (see also footnote \_\_\_ above).

<sup>15</sup> *Clark's Directory of Southern Cotton Mills, 1912; Dockham's American Trade Reports: Textile Manufacture and Dry Goods Trade, 1911-2, p. 251.*

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not increased from the initial capitalization of \$125,000.<sup>16</sup>

The decision to establish a cotton mill must have been influenced by Strudwick's experience as a cotton broker. His hometown would have been an attractive location since it was serviced by a railroad.<sup>17</sup> The use of steam power, which was used by over half of North Carolina's mills by 1900, meant that mills no longer had to be near rivers. They could thus take advantage of locations close to town, and, like Bellevue mill, almost all were built on railroad sidings.<sup>18</sup> Strudwick also must have taken into account the production of the nearby Eno Cotton Mill. The site for the Bellevue mill was slightly to the northeast of the Eno Cotton Mill. The latter had begun as a yarn factory in 1896, but like many other mills during this period soon added weaving facilities; after an expansion in 1909 it began to produce gingham, which would become Bellevue mill's main product. Some of those involved in the Eno Mill assisted in the creation of Bellevue, suggesting that there were shared interests and perhaps a joint production strategy.<sup>19</sup>

Bellevue mill resembles other mills built in the Piedmont during the period. Criteria for mill construction were determined largely by northern manufacturers who supplied the machinery, and by insurance companies based in the north.<sup>20</sup> The design of the Bellevue mill conformed to the standards of "slow burn construction" as set out in a classic manual written by a Charlotte-based engineer in 1906. These standards included brick exterior and fire walls, heavy timber columns and beams with cast iron fittings; the isolation of staircases, belt-way, engine room, and "picker room" through the use of brick fire walls; and automatic fire doors.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The value of the Eno Mill, in comparison, had increased from \$217,000 to \$315,700 between 1912 and 1917 (Clark's Directory of Southern Cotton Mills, 1912, 1919. Charlotte: Clark Publishing Co., 1912, 1919.)

<sup>17</sup> The first east-west railroad line in North Carolina was routed through Hillsborough in 1856 (Hillsborough Historic District Architectural Survey, 1996, p. 6).

<sup>18</sup> B.D. Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina*, p. 32.

<sup>19</sup> For example, A. Ruffin, one of the two founders of the Eno Cotton Mill, sold his land to Bellevue and purchased shares in the company (Record of Special Proceedings and Incorporations, vol. 1, Office of the Clerk of the Court, Orange County). The Eno Mill initially wove plaid cloth and chambray, but added gingham after an expansion in 1909. It continued to sell a portion of its production as yarn rather than woven into cloth until the first world war (Lefler and Wager, eds., *Orange County*, pp. 275-6).

<sup>20</sup> B.D. Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina*, p. 38.

<sup>21</sup> Stuart W. Cramer, *Useful Information for Cotton Manufacturers*, vol. III, Charlotte, 1906, pp. 1170-1198.

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While the architect of the original mill is unknown, it seems likely that the design of the mill involved noted individuals. The company's interest in state-of-the-art mill design is attested by its choice of Biberstein for the machinery layout. Trained in Massachusetts and based in Charlotte, Biberstein designed mills in the Carolina Piedmont. The Biberstein archive contains no architectural drawings for the main mill, but fifteen years later he was hired by Bellevue Manufacturing Company to design a new weaving room.<sup>22</sup> Strudwick was personally interested in architectural design, and is likely to have sought design advice for the mill. His brother-in-law, the noted architect Ralph Adams Cram, designed a house for Strudwick in 1904;<sup>23</sup> he also designed another house in Hillsborough that Strudwick built.<sup>24</sup> Cram often sketched ideas for clients, which were then turned over to local builders without formal drawings. Given the close family relationship and the recent architectural collaboration between Cram and Strudwick, it is possible that Cram was involved in the design of the mill.<sup>25</sup> The elegant facade of the original mill suggests the influence of a thoughtful designer. An imposing engine room, with a large arched doorway,<sup>26</sup> formed the entrance to the mill; the motif is repeated and tripled in the facade of the neighboring boiler room, with arches evoking a colonnade. The classicizing facades seem to celebrate the steam-powered system that ran the mill.

Bellevue mill was conceived as an integrated mill for spinning, weaving, and dyeing of cloth. The various stages of cotton processing - the separation, straightening, and twisting of fibers - were assigned to different rooms, as indicated on the 1911 Sanborn map.<sup>27</sup> A small "opener room" (no longer extant) is shown to the east of the mill, next to Nash (formerly Hillboro) Street. Here workers opened bales of cotton and picked through the fibers, removing dirt and

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<sup>22</sup> Plan, elevation, and machinery layout for the weaving room, Biberstein, Bowles, Meachem, & Reed, Incorporated Records (1895-1960).

<sup>23</sup> The house still stands at Churton and \_\_\_\_\_ Streets.

<sup>24</sup> The house is called "Tamarind" (<http://www.netcom.duke.edu/~joe/hb/tamarind.html>).

<sup>25</sup> Although noted for the Gothic, particularly churches, more than half of Cram's work was in the classical style. Many of his private clients were also industrialists, and Cram is known to have designed several mills (Ethan Anthony, AIA, principal of Hoyle, Doran & Berry, Boston (successor firm to Cram, Wentworth & Goodhue), personal conversation).

<sup>26</sup> Indicated by the remains of a segmental arch above.

<sup>27</sup> See copy in working file. The major stages of cotton processing are described in Hall, et. al., *Like a Family: the Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987, pp. 49-51.

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short stems. The cotton was then brought to the picker room at the east end of the main mill, where workers further cleaned the cotton and organized it into sheets. Since the work done in the picker room produced flammable material, it was isolated from the adjacent carding area by a fire wall. In the carding room, workers fed the sheets into carding machines which tore apart the cotton and reconstituted it into a coiled mass. They then fed it onto a drawing frame, which "drew out" and straightened the fibers into a thinner strand. On the second floor of the mill, the strands were twisted or "roved" and finally spun into threads of tightly bound fibers. The thread was then spooled onto bobbins and delivered to the beaming room, on the ground floor, where dyed warps were transferred to warper beams before sizing.<sup>28</sup> Weaving facilities were originally on the ground floor in the single-story wing, lit by a roof monitor. The finished cloth was dyed in a dye-house to the southwest of the mill, and prepared for shipment in two large cloth rooms along Nash Street; the original dye-house and cloth rooms are no longer extant.

### Expansion and the Mill Village

It appears, however, that production was not significant until after additions were made to the mill in the early 1920's, which more than doubled the number of spindles and looms.<sup>29</sup> In 1920 a separate building for weaving was built to the north of the main mill, along with an office, a warehouse, and a larger opening room; the dye-house was expanded and a lapper room added on its east side.<sup>30</sup> Several years later the noted mill designer J.E. Sirrinc of Greenville, North Carolina expanded the original mill building.<sup>31</sup> The result was a U-shaped complex with a continuous facade along the south and west sides.

The expansion of the mill in the 1920's coincided with the post-war boom in the

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<sup>28</sup> Stuart W. Cramer, *Useful Information for Cotton Manufacturers*, vol.I, Charlotte, 1906, pp. 218-9.

<sup>29</sup> 10,740 spindles, 592 looms. By 1926, Bellevue's capital stock totalled \$500,000 (*Clark's Directory of Southern Cotton Mills*, 1926). See section 7 for a detailed description of the physical evolution of the mill.

<sup>30</sup> Survey of Neuss, Hesslein, and Co., Inc., dated 1945 with construction dates indicated (collection of Hillsborough Owners' Corporation). Biberstein's archives contain drawings for the weaving room, and he also may have designed the warehouse; see section 7.

<sup>31</sup> Among J. E. Sirrinc's important mills was Textile Hall (1917), which housed the Southern Textile Exposition that helped make Greenville the national cotton mill center; later demolished, it had been listed on the National Register (J. Bainbridge, *GreenvilleOnline*, 6/4/02, <http://greenvilleonline.com/citypeople/2002/06/04/2002060424248.htm>).

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textile industry. The boom was accompanied by the conversion of existing mills to electric power;<sup>32</sup> Bellevue mill was fully converted to electric power by 1923, as evidenced by the removal of the belt-way.<sup>33</sup> With steam-driven belts, a break down in one machine stopped the whole line; now individual motors powered the machines, resulting in greater output and a more demanding pace of work.

The acquisition of A. Ruffin's tract in 1905 suggests that the company envisioned a mill village at the outset. An architecturally distinctive house for the mill supervisor, still extant, was built circa 1910 at the southwest corner of Nash and Webb Streets.<sup>34</sup> The single-family and duplex houses, which would have been included on any insurance survey of the company's property, do not appear until the 1924 Sanborn map; they were probably built in the building campaign of the early 1920's. The mill supervisor's house was probably built at the same date. Mill villages in the south usually had single-family and duplex houses to attract entire families to the mill. Although boarding houses for unmarried workers were uncommon in the south,<sup>35</sup> one boarding house was built at Bellevue.<sup>36</sup> We might speculate that Strudwick's liberal views led him to take a somewhat progressive attitude toward labor issues. During Bellevue's first decades textile managers throughout the Piedmont were taking an increasingly hard line on production and labor issues, and were met by resistance, often violent, from workers. This may explain Strudwick's unhappiness in his role as president and ultimate resignation in 1929.

#### The Later Years

Strudwick's ambivalence may also explain the poor financial showing of the Bellevue Manufacturing Company. In 1929, the year that Strudwick resigned as president of the company and the year of the Stock Market Crash, Bellevue's stock had declined from \$500,000 to \$419,600; it declined steadily thereafter.

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<sup>32</sup> The growth of electric power was promoted by the same interests that invested in the textile industry, especially James B. Duke's Southern Power Co. (Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina*, pp. 57-8).

<sup>33</sup> According to the 1919 edition of Clark's Directory of Southern Cotton Mills, Bellevue was running partially on electric power; by 1926 it had been fully converted.

<sup>34</sup> Hillsborough Historic District Architectural Survey, 1996.

<sup>35</sup> Unlike their northern counterparts, southern mill owners attempted to recruit entire families as laborers, perhaps because of the agricultural areas from which they came (Hall, et. al., *Like a Family*, p. 58).

<sup>36</sup> Still extent at 307 Knight Street (Hillsborough Historic District Architectural Survey, 1996).

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L. E. Beard succeeded Strudwick and Webb as president and treasurer. According to two local historians writing in 1953, local ownership of Bellevue ceased in 1945 when it was bought by Hesslein and Company, a German textile manufacturer.<sup>37</sup> Hesslein invested half a million dollars in improvements, including new opening, picking, and carding machines, new drawing and spinning frames, a new boiler plant, and a new lighting system. In 1953 the company was contemplating further upgrades, including new equipment for spooling, warping, and dyeing. Indoor plumbing had been installed in the houses of the mill village, which were still owned by the company. At that time 355 workers were employed, running two shifts.

This report maintained that, despite its "ups and downs...most of the time [Bellevue] has provided steady employment to an increasing number of workers and a fair margin of profits to owners."<sup>38</sup> Yet the figures were bleak: in 1955, still listed under the name of Bellevue, the company's stock was worth only \$219,600. This record can be explained in part by the general decline of the textile industry during the years before and during the Depression.<sup>39</sup> The company changed hands in the 1960's and again in the 1970's, bought by investors in the northeast.<sup>40</sup> The mill is currently not in use.

Bellevue Manufacturing Company illustrates the history of textile manufacturing in the Piedmont. It represented the goals of a generation that hoped to create a different future for the town of Hillsborough and the wider region. Founded by a civic leader from a progressive family, we might speculate that Bellevue was conceived with social as well as economic ideals.

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<sup>37</sup> Lefler and Wager, eds., *Orange County*, p. 275. Hesslein and Company was a predecessor of Sahco-Hesslein, a major international textile company. The Hesslein family immigrated to the U.S. after W. W. II (Anita Schmidt, Assistant to the MD, SAHCO Hesslein GmbH & Co. KG, personal correspondence).

<sup>38</sup> Lefler and Wager, eds., *Orange County*, p. 275.

<sup>39</sup> By this date the number of spindles had increased to 14,712 and the number of looms had decreased to 499. Bellevue's record contrasts unfavorably with that of the Eno Cotton Mill, which suffered losses during the Depression but remained viable; in 1952 it was bought by Cone Mills, Inc. of Greensboro.

<sup>40</sup> Names listed in trade directories were Hillsboro Mills in the 1960's and Falk, Fibers, and Fabrics in the 1970's. The latter had a subsidiary at the same location devoted to dyeing and finishing. Most recently, the company was known as Stokes County Yarn Company-Hillsborough Industries (*Clark's Directory of Southern Cotton Mills, 1963-1977*; Hillsborough Historic District Architectural Survey, 1996).

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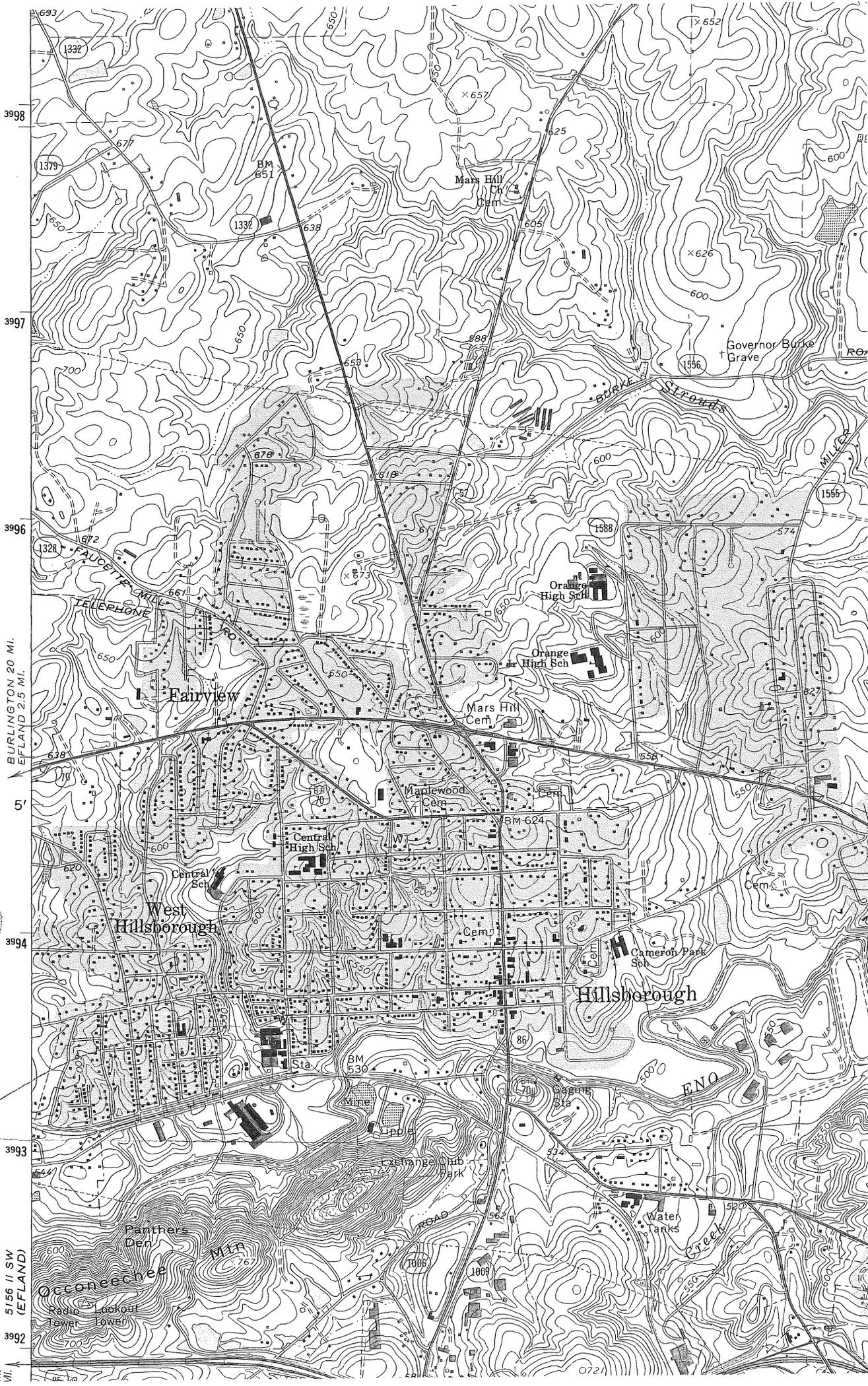
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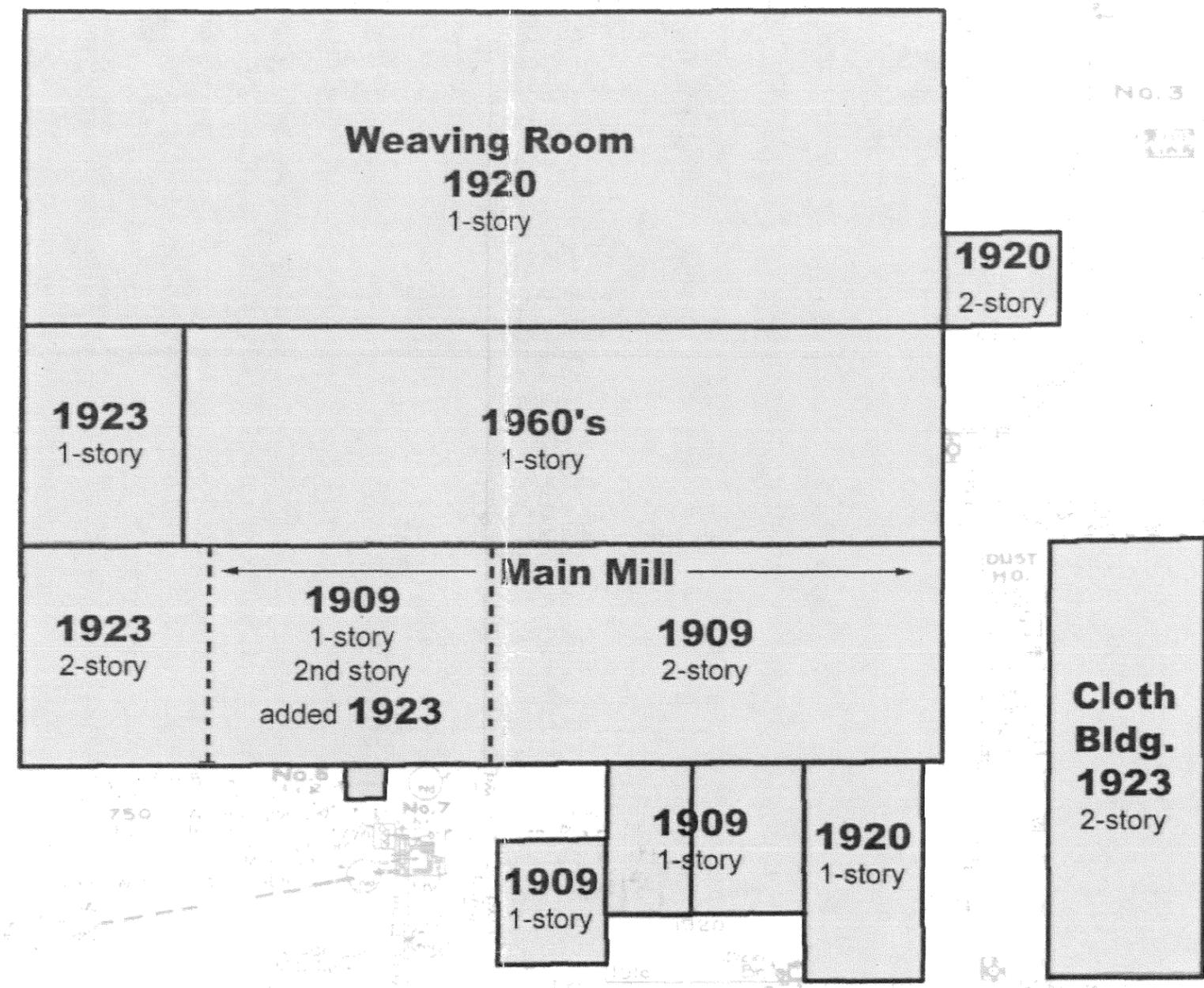


Bellvue  
Manufacturing  
Company

Hillsborough,  
Orange County  
NC

UTM Refs:  
17/670072 E  
3993490 N

1" = 50'



Bellevue Manufacturing Company  
Hillsborough, North Carolina  
Schematic diagram showing historical evolution

