

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Pilot Hosiery Mill

Pilot Mountain, Surry County, SR1494, Listed 8/24/2021

Nomination by Heather Fearnbach, Fearnbach History Services, Inc.

Photographs by Heather Fearnbach, November 2019



Northeast oblique



1944 building, first floor, looking south

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 an 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 Pilot Hosiery Mill

other names/site number Pilot Mountain Hosiery Mill

2. Location

street & number 224 East Main Street

N/A not for publication

city or town Pilot Mountain

N/A vicinity

stat North Carolina

code NC

county Surry

code 171

zip code 27041

e _____

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature], Deputy SHPO
Signature of certifying official/Title

7/12/2021
Date

North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
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 certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet

☐ determined eligible for the
National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet

☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.

☐ removed from the National
Register.

☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Pilot Hosiery Mill

Name of Property

Surry County, NC

County and State

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY: Manufacturing Facility

INDUSTRY: Industrial Storage

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Steel-framed, load-bearing-concrete-block-wall construction

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls CONCRETE

BRICK

roof SYNTHETICS: Rubber

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.)

Property is:

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

Architecture

Period of Significance

1944-1971

Significant Dates

1944

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☒ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository: Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill

Pilot Hosiery Mill

Name of Property

Surry County, NC

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.03 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

See Latitude/Longitude coordinates continuation sheet.

1
Zone Easting Northing
2

3
Zone Easting Northing
4

☒ See continuation sheet

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 Heather Fearnbach

organization Fearnbach History Services, Inc.

date 4/24/2021

street & number 3334 Nottingham Road

telephone 336-765-2661

city or town Winston-Salem

state NC

zip code 27104

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

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

name Travis Hayes, Lazy Layla LLC

street & number 129 Carson St. Suite C

telephone 336-345-1343

city or town Pilot Mountain

state NC

zip code 27041

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 listing. 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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Section 7. Description

The railroad corridor's alignment influenced road and building arrangement and spurred contiguous development as Pilot Mountain was platted. The street grid surrounding the plant is rotated approximately thirty degrees from true cardinal direction. However, this document is written as though South Academy and South Davis streets have true north-south orientation.

Setting

Pilot Hosiery Mill encompasses a one-story-on-basement 1944 factory with a two-story 1956 office addition at its north end and a one-story 1986 warehouse addition connected by a small concrete-block hyphen to the factory's west side. The complex is prominently situated on a 1.03-acre parcel at East Main and South Academy streets' southwest corner, one block east of Pilot Mountain's central business district and one-tenth of a mile north of the railroad corridor. The east lot line aligns with the long, rectangular building's east wall, which parallels South Academy Street. The east entrance steps and landing and the small loading dock to the south extend into the public right-of-way. The narrow parking area abutting the east elevation is asphalt-paved north of the loading dock and partly paved and partly gravel south of the loading dock. A large asphalt-paved parking lot fills the parcel's northwest section. South of the parking lot, a steep grass-covered embankment slopes down to the warehouse addition, ending at a grass culvert that contains catch basins to direct water away from the buildings. A large concrete loading dock extends from the warehouse's south entrance. South of the mill, a small gravel parking lot spans the area between the warehouse loading dock and South Academy Street. In the undeveloped south portion of the parcel, several large deciduous trees punctuate the grass lawn.

The remainder of the block bounded by South Davis, East Main, South Academy, and East Marion streets contains ten tax parcels. A 1937 frame dwelling and a circa 1900 frame dwelling front East Main Street just west of Pilot Hosiery Mill. Five mid- to late-twentieth-century commercial buildings and asphalt-paved parking lots occupy the block's western parcels. Late-nineteenth to late-twentieth-century commercial, industrial, and residential buildings fill the surrounding blocks.

Exterior

The flat-roofed, rectangular, steel-frame and masonry Pilot Hosiery Mill is three bays wide and fifteen bays long. The two-story north 1956 addition, which fronts East Main Street, has a brick-veneered facade, while the mill's side and rear walls are painted concrete block, a common cost-savings measure. The grade slopes down to the south, progressively exposing more of the foundation walls and allowing for basement windows. Window openings have slightly projecting header-course sills. Window lintels on the 1944 mill's east, south, and west walls comprise three brick stretcher courses. Most sash on those elevations were removed and the openings filled with unpainted particle board

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mounted on framing by the previous owner circa 2018. Between the upper windows and the parapet, four brick stretcher courses support the rafters. The north parapet is flat, but the east and west parapets are gradually stepped due to the elevation change. Aluminum coping caps the parapets.

The following description begins with the north elevation and moves clockwise around the building.

The 1956 addition's three-bay façade (north elevation) is executed in pressed red brick veneer laid in a variation of five-to-one common bond with five courses of stretchers followed by a course of alternating stretchers and headers. Four twelve-pane steel casement windows flank the central entrance. The door was removed and the opening filled with a metal-louver panel in the early 1960s in conjunction with municipal sidewalk improvements. The concrete sill remains.

Two second-story twelve-pane steel casement windows remain on the 1956 addition's two-bay east elevation. The larger first-story window opening contained a sixteen-pane steel casement window, but that sash has been removed and the opening filled with unpainted particle board. A single-leaf six-panel door was installed in the north bay to allow for the early 1960s north entrance enclosure.¹ Concrete steps with a slender steel railing provide access to the east entrance.

On the 1944 mill's east elevation, the sixteen-pane steel casement window in the seventh second-story bay from the south end is intact, albeit with painted sash and glass. A metal-louver vent was installed in the upper portion of the third first-story window opening from the wall's south end. Sliding metal doors secure the first-floor loading dock entrance in the 1944 mill's northernmost bay and the basement loading dock entrance in its southernmost bay. The frame loading dock that extends from the north entrance has a prefabricated corrugated-metal mid-1990s cover.

On the second story of the 1944 mill's south elevation, a sixteen-pane steel casement window remains in the central bay, a metal-louver vent fills the west window opening, and a fan is mounted in the east opening. A one-story, shed-roofed, concrete-block, single-bay boiler room covers the wall's lower half. The addition was likely erected in 1964 to house the existing boiler.² A double-leaf steel door secures the east entrance, while a replacement six-panel single-leaf door has been installed in the west entrance. A small one-over-one metal sash pierces the boiler room's south elevation. A square brick chimney rises from the northwest corner of its roof.

All window openings on the 1944 mill's west elevation are filled with particle board. The 1956 addition's west elevation is blind. "Pilot Hosiery Mills, Inc." signs on the upper west and east 1956 walls comprise large, black, individually-mounted letters.

¹ David L. Thomas, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, April 28, 2020.

² Ibid.

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The prefabricated, steel-frame, side-gable-roofed 1986 warehouse addition's walls and roof are clad with corrugated-metal panels. Five high square window openings covered with translucent panels pierce the north elevation. The south elevation has four matching windows. The east and west elevations are blind. A single-leaf steel door near the north elevation's west end and a large corrugated-metal roll-up loading dock door in the south elevation's east section provide access. A one-story, flat-roofed, concrete-block, 1986 hyphen facilitates egress between the warehouse and the 1944 mill's basement.

Interior

The 1944 mill's main floor housed knitting department, while its basement contained finishing equipment such as boarding machines, the dye house, and inventory storage. The north bay of the 1956 addition's first floor served as a reception area and workers operated sewing and turning machines in the larger south room.³ Company offices were on the second floor and the one-room basement served as a storage area.

Most of the interior remains open as it was historically. The exposed structural system comprises concrete-block exterior walls, steel I-beams and posts, and wood joists and rafters. Narrow hardwood first- and second-story and poured-concrete basement floors provided durable work surfaces. Linear fluorescent lights, plumbing and sprinkler system pipes, and HVAC ductwork hangs from the ceilings. Modern batt insulation has been added between rafters. Metal electrical conduit is mounted on walls and structural components.

The 1944 building's main level and basement are open with the exception of horizontal-board-sheathed two-restroom enclosures near the west wall's center on each floor. Narrow vertical-board doors at the enclosures' north and south ends provide toilet room access. Outside of the toilet rooms, a wall-mounted sink and a water fountain are located near the east wall's center. Near the building's northeast corner, wood steps with dimensional lumber railings facilitate basement access. On the main level's north elevation, originally an exterior wall, two window openings were lengthened to create tall, wide doorways into the 1956 addition. The central, original, single-leaf door opening is filled with horizontal boards and shelves.

The three-quarter-height frame wall that separates manufacturing and reception areas in the 1956 addition is sheathed with painted particle board on the manufacturing side and unpainted faux-wood sheet paneling on the reception side. The wall's canted south end terminates at the stair enclosure at the reception room's northwest corner. A straight flight of wood steps rises to an intermediary landing

³ Ibid. Turning machines reversed socks right-side-out following toe closure.

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and turns to continue to the second floor, where a low frame wall secures the stairwell. The second floor contains an open northwest office and file room, a southwest storage room, and two east offices. Simple finishes include painted plywood wall sheathing, Celotex ceiling tiles, flat-board door surrounds, and narrow wood crown and corner molding. The single-leaf three-panel wood door between the east offices and the single-leaf two-panel wood storage room door remain. The single-leaf doors on the offices' west walls have been removed.

In the basement, steel posts in a central row and within the concrete-block exterior walls support steel beams and the frame main-level floor system. At the center of the 1944 building's north wall, a single large door opening with a steel lintel provides egress to the 1956 basement's single room. The lower run of the stair between the main level and basement, an open flight of wood steps with dimensional lumber railings, terminates in the 1944 basement's northeast corner. A long trench in the elevated concrete floor in the southwest corner held a dye vat. The only enclosure other than the restrooms on the west elevation is a small frame storage room adjacent to the south elevation.

South of the restrooms, wide single-leaf steel doors secure the east and west ends of the short, narrow hyphen that extends to the 1986 warehouse. Insulation covers the warehouse ceiling and walls between steel posts and trusses. Painted particle board has been added to the lower two-thirds of each wall and an unpainted particle-board closet erected in the warehouse's southwest corner. The warehouse has a poured-concrete floor.

Integrity Statement

Pilot Hosiery Mill possesses high integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, design, materials, and workmanship. The exposed structural system—concrete-block exterior walls, steel I-beams and posts, wood joists and rafters, narrow hardwood first- and second-story and poured-concrete basement floors—is intact. Six twelve-pane steel casement windows remain in the 1956 addition, and two sixteen-pane 1944 steel casement windows survive in the original portion of the mill. Modifications include the early 1960s relocation of the primary entrance from the 1956 façade's center to the east elevation's north bay and the removal of most multipane steel sash in the 1944 building. The entrance opening on the 1956 façade remains clearly delineated, infilled with a metal vent that is easily removed. Likewise, wood framing and particle board installed in window openings as a temporary measure did not impact opening size, sills, or lintels. Manufacturing and storage areas retain open plans and the office configuration on the 1956 addition's second story is intact. The 1986 warehouse addition's location at a lower grade near the 1944 mill's south end, and its connection to the 1944 building's west elevation via a one-story, flat-roofed, concrete-block hyphen, minimizes its physical and visual impact on the original building. The hyphen obscures only a single basement-level bay.

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Section 8. Statement of Significance

Pilot Hosiery Mill possesses local significance under Criterion A for industry due to its role as one of three primary textile manufacturers driving Pilot Mountain's economy and Criterion C for architecture as one of the town's few intact mid-twentieth-century industrial buildings. Pilot Mountain Hosiery Mills, incorporated in June 1943 by Pilot Mountain resident Robah B. Davis and James S. Dix and T. C. Barber of Mount Airy, erected the factory at the southwest corner of the East Main and South Academy street intersection. The plant was operational within a year, but it ceased production by 1946. Pilot Hosiery Mills, Inc., established in September 1949 by High Point residents Charles E. Sowden and Walter B. Thomas Jr., leased the factory from Robah Davis to house a fine-gauge men's sock manufacturing operation. The concern twice expanded the plant and utilized it until closing in 2011. The company was one of Pilot Mountain's largest employers, tax payers, freight shippers, and power consumers. When the plant was operating three daily shifts at maximum capacity in the 1960s and early 1970s, approximately one hundred employees produced up to ten thousand dozen socks per week. The building epitomizes functional mid-twentieth-century industrial design. The exposed structural system comprises concrete-block exterior walls, steel I-beams and posts, wood joists and rafters, and narrow hardwood first- and second-story floors and poured-concrete basement floors. Large multipane steel-frame casement windows illuminated the interior. Manufacturing and storage areas retain open plans and the office configuration on the 1956 addition's second story is intact. The period of significance begins with the building's 1944 completion and continues until 1971. Pilot Hosiery Mill's function after 1971 is not of exceptional significance.

Historical Background and Industrial Context

The abundant water supply, natural resources, and fertile soil of the northwestern Piedmont proved attractive to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English, Scots-Irish, and German immigrants. Surry County's topography is gently rolling with the exception of Pilot Mountain, where rugged cliffs rise 1,400 feet above the valley floor to Big Pinnacle, a distinctive rock knob that has long served as a navigational landmark. The Ararat, Fisher, and Mitchell rivers and their tributaries powered grist, roller, and sawmills, although the water courses were too shallow to facilitate large-scale movement of people and goods. Despite the region's increasing settlement during the mid-eighteenth century, Surry County, constituted in 1770 from Rowan County, remained predominantly rural through the late-nineteenth century. Given that many land grants and property acquisitions encompassed sizable tracts, residents typically lived at great distances from each other, meeting at churches and in crossroads communities and small towns to socialize, purchase goods, and conduct business. The vast majority of the county's occupants operated subsistence farms. Some entrepreneurs were able to sell or trade surplus crops and agricultural products for locally made and imported commodities in Dobson (the county seat), Elkin, Mount Airy, and other local markets. Others engaged in manufacturing endeavors

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to generate supplementary income, processing raw materials such as corn, wheat, and logs to produce meal, flour, and lumber.⁴

Surry County's development accelerated in the mid-nineteenth century with the construction of improved roads through the region. Sizable industrial concerns included Elkin Manufacturing Company, established in 1847, and Chatham Manufacturing Company, formed in 1877, both textile mills.⁵ By the mid-nineteenth century, tobacco had become another driving economic force through its cultivation, sale, and manufacturing. W. M. Banner and Prather and Banner opened plug tobacco factories in Mount Airy by 1867. Other entrepreneurs soon followed, erecting frame and brick factories and warehouses near the town's commercial center. As Mount Airy became a regional tobacco trading hub, buyers and sellers frequenting businesses during seasonal auctions stimulated development. Local tradition holds that Frank Graves built the town's first warehouse dedicated to leaf sales in 1873.⁶

Transportation improvements and burgeoning trade fueled Surry County's late-nineteenth century economic expansion and population growth. Mount Airy, the county's largest community, grew from approximately five hundred residents in 1880 to 1,798 in 1890. The town's 1885 incorporation and the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railroad's 1888 extension to Mount Airy facilitated economic progress. An intersecting Norfolk and Western Railroad spur line further increased transportation options in 1890. That year, Mount Airy's industrial sector included fourteen tobacco-related concerns, three cotton and two woolen mills, two saw and planing mills, two grist mills, three wagon factories, four blacksmith shops, and a foundry and machine shop.⁷

The extension of the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railroad also spurred the rapid late-nineteenth-century growth of Pilot Mountain, a crossroads community located southeast of Mount Airy and the landscape feature after which the town was named. Pilot Mountain, incorporated in 1889, served as a

⁴ Pilot Mountain State Park, "History Highlights," <https://www.ncparks.gov/pilot-mountain-state-park/history> (accessed April 2020); David Leroy Corbitt, *The Formation of the North Carolina Counties, 1663-1943* (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1987), 199; Laura A. W. Phillips, *Simple Treasures: The Architectural Legacy of Surry County* (Winston-Salem, N.C.: Winston Printing Company, 1987), 1-6.

⁵ Pam Green, "First Industry Was Cotton Mill," North Carolina Collection Clipping File through 1975, Reel 28, pp. 454-455, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill; Phillips, *Simple Treasures*, 34, 91, 104; The Town of Elkin Joint Committee for the Collection of Historical Information, *Elkin, 1889-1989: A Centennial History* (Elkin: Town of Elkin, 1989), 6-7.

⁶ Levi Branson, *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory for 1867-68* (Raleigh: Branson and Jones, 1867), 103; Levi Branson, *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory for 1869* (Raleigh: J. A. Jones, 1869), 148; "History of Mt. Airy Tobacco Market and Its Advancement," *Mount Airy Times*, September 24, 1937, p. 1.

⁷ "Mount Airy," *The State Chronicle* (Raleigh), April 26, 1890, p. 1; Levi Branson, *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory 1890* (Raleigh: Levi Branson, 1889), 612-613; William R. Merriam, director, *Twelfth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1900, Population, Part I* (Washington, D. C.: United States Census Office, 1901), 466.

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trading and social center for proximate farmers.⁸ The following year, eleven general stores, two plug and twist tobacco factories, a plant nursery, a steam sawmill, and a hotel employed many of Pilot Mountain's seventy-five inhabitants. Commercial, industrial, and residential buildings flanked Main, Depot, and Stephens streets. In 1896, industrial concerns included a flour mill, a wagon and buggy factory, two brick makers, two plug and twist tobacco factories, two leaf tobacco sales warehouses, nine tobacco factories, and four steam-powered sawmills. Pilot Mountain's robust commercial and industrial growth stimulated a dramatic population increase to 710 residents in 1900.⁹

The dawn of the twentieth century heralded the beginning of an era of sweeping social and economic change. In the industrial sector, North Carolina production of spun yarn, woven textiles, and knit goods including hosiery, fabric, underwear, and outerwear burgeoned during the century's first decades. Pilot Mountain Cotton Mills, incorporated in 1907, commenced spinning yarn and weaving fabric at a newly erected plant in November of that year, but ceased operation in June 1909. The building and its contents were sold at auction on March 31, 1910.¹⁰ That year, Pilot Mountain had 825 inhabitants, 75 of whom were African American.¹¹

By 1914, seventy-four North Carolina hosiery mills employed approximately eight thousand workers who knit, dyed, and finished almost nine million dollars-worth of stockings. Full-fashioned and seamless hosiery was distributed to retailers, merchant wholesalers, or other manufacturers. Most hosiery mills were located in central North Carolina cities with strong textile manufacturing traditions such as Burlington, High Point, Asheboro, Winston-Salem, and Hickory.¹²

⁸ The railroad line ran through a crossroads community known as Toms Creek (after a stream of that name) that exemplified Surry County's rural settlement patterns. Pilot Mountain's federal post office opened in August 1868. Richard F. Winter, "Surry County," postmark catalog, North Carolina Postal History Society, August 19, 2016, p. 55.

⁹ In 1896, the town's approximately eighty-five residents, local farmers, and travelers frequented businesses including nine general stores, two grocers, a drug store, a hardware store, a hat shop, a boarding house, two hotels, and two liverys. White residents organized five Baptist, a Primitive Baptist, and two Methodist congregations, as well as Trinity Academy, a private school for white students. African American residents established a Presbyterian church. Branson, *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory 1890*, 609-614; Levi Branson, *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory 1896* (Raleigh: Levi Branson, 1896), 579-584; Merriam, *Twelfth Census of the United States*, 466.

¹⁰ Mount Airy businessman J. A. Hadley purchased the building and its contents, relocating the equipment to Hadley-Peoples Manufacturing Company's Siler City cotton mill. "Pilot Mt. Cotton Mill Chartered," *Raleigh Times*, March 26, 1907, p. 2; "Danbury Reporter," *Union Republican*, October 31, 1907, p. 7; "Receivers Appointed," *News and Observer*, January 14, 1910, p. 4; "Receiver's Sale," *Mount Airy News*, March 31, 1910, p. 8; "Pilot Mountain Cotton Mill Changes Hands," *News and Observer*, June 16, 1910, p. 4; "Our Cotton Factory," *Siler City Grit*, August 10, 1910, p. 2;

¹¹ Merriam, *Twelfth Census of the United States*, 466; News and Observer, *The North Carolina Yearbook and Business Directory* (Raleigh: News and Observer, 1913), 396.

¹² Brent D. Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1992), 44.

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The hosiery industry continued to flourish in the 1920s. In 1927, with 117 plants in 35 counties employing approximately 15,500 workers and producing hosiery valued at almost \$53 million, North Carolina was second only to Pennsylvania in the number of operating hosiery mills. Alamance County contained the largest number of hosiery mills (26), followed by Guilford County (15), Catawba County (10), Burke and Durham counties (8 each), and Forsyth and Randolph counties (5 each).¹³ Burlington, with 32 hosiery mills, was North Carolina's hosiery manufacturing center in 1931, followed by High Point, with 16 hosiery plants.¹⁴

Surry County's first knitting mills were in Mount Airy. Mount Airy Knitting Company (later Spencer's, Inc.), established in 1916, manufactured children's undergarments. At Renfro Hosiery Mills Company, incorporated in 1921, two hundred workers produced children's socks in 1925. Other Mount Airy enterprises included Argonne Hosiery Mills (1927); Piedmont Manufacturing Company (1930), which supplied seamless grey (unfinished) hosiery to Argonne Hosiery Mills; Pine State Knitwear (1930), which generated men, women, and children's athletic wear, bathing suits, cardigans, and sweaters; and Duke Knitting Mills (1933), which produced light-weight fabric and men and women's underwear.¹⁵

In the early 1930s, the textile industry faced challenges exacerbated by the Great Depression's onset. More efficient equipment and mechanization that transformed manufacturing operations led to employee layoffs. Job loss, decreased pay, and poor working conditions made unions more appealing and set the stage for demonstrations across the South. In July 1932, approximately 360 workers from High Point's sixteen hosiery mills fought wage reductions by organizing a walk-out. Their protest inspired almost 15,000 North Carolina cotton, furniture, and hosiery mill laborers to do the same within a week. Demonstrators were quickly pacified, but other strikes followed. Two years later, around 65,000 North Carolinians were among approximately 400,000 laborers who forced plant closures throughout the southern United States during the three-week General Textile Strike of September 1934. Many mill owners fired known union members and sympathizers. Union efforts

¹³ Marvin Shirley, "Of 672 Mills In County, State Has 117, Is Second to Pennsylvania With 277," *The Charlotte Observer*, November 23, 1930; Robert Menzies, "Stockings Miss North Carolina Buys From Chicago Probably Made at Home," *News and Observer* (Raleigh; hereafter abbreviated *NO*), October 24, 1937; "Migration," *NO*, January 29, 1939; C. H. McGregor, *The Hosiery Manufacturing Industry in North Carolina and Its Marketing Problems*, Research Paper 15, Graduate School of Business Administration, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, June 1965, 6-7.

¹⁴ Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, James Leloudis, Robert Korstad, Mary Murphy, Lu Ann Jones and Christopher B. Daly, *Like a Family: The Making of the Southern Cotton Mill World* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1987), 255.

¹⁵ Davison's *Textile Blue Book*, 1925, 744; Davison's *Textile Blue Book*, 1930, 689; Davison's *Textile Blue Book*, 1935, 546.

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were not in vain, however, as the Roosevelt administration's social and economic reform programs eventually resulted in the institution of a forty-hour work week and increased worker pay.¹⁶

Most sizable North Carolina hosiery manufacturers weathered the strikes and economic downturn during the Great Depression, maintaining and in some cases increasing production. In 1936, the state's 187 hosiery mills (of the South's 239) encompassed 2,028 full-fashioned hosiery machines. By the late 1930s, more new hosiery mills than any other type of industrial plant were being established in North Carolina. In 1938, entrepreneurs erected 44 new plants and expanded 38 existing hosiery mills, resulting in a total of 249 hosiery mills (75 full-fashioned and 174 seamless) by 1939. North Carolina manufactured approximately 26 percent of the nation's hosiery that year, almost doubling the state's 1929 product.¹⁷

Industrialists embarked upon myriad Surry County business ventures as the economy stabilized. Pilot Mountain benefited from the hosiery industry boom when Robert T. Amos, president of Amos Hosiery Mills in High Point, partnered with Herman H. Smith in 1938 to create Amos and Smith Hosiery Company. In 1939, the concern, managed from Amos Hosiery Mills' High Point office, commenced manufacturing ladies seamless stockings at a Pilot Mountain plant, the town's first knitting mill. Robert Amos, widely recognized for his business acumen, served as a director and officer of the Southern Hosiery Manufacturers Association and the National Hosiery Manufacturers Association.¹⁸

As North Carolinians rose to the challenges of World War II in the early 1940s, approximately 4,663 Surry County residents served in the military.¹⁹ Those left behind were occupied with the war effort in a variety of ways, from rationing and participating in bond and salvage drives to filling vacant positions at mills and factories that accelerated production to meet the needs of servicemen and women. Worker demographics changed as industrial jobs rose by seventy-five percent in the South

¹⁶ Hall, et al., *Like a Family*, 202-208, 217; Margaret Crawford, *Building the Workingman's Paradise: The Design of American Company Towns* (London and New York: Verso, 1995), 194-195; "Hosiery Mills to Open Today," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, July 28, 1932, p. 2.

¹⁷ Guilford County Incorporation Book N, p. 70; *E.S.C. Quarterly*, Winter-Spring 1953, 17; Marvin Shirley, "Of 672 Mills In County, State Has 117, Is Second to Pennsylvania With 277," *The Charlotte Observer*, November 23, 1930; Robert Menzies, "Stockings Miss North Carolina Buys From Chicago Probably Made at Home," *NO*, October 24, 1937; "Migration," *NO*, January 29, 1939; McGregor, *The Hosiery Manufacturing Industry in North Carolina*, 6-7; Melrose Hosiery Mills, Inc., "From a tiny plant to full bloom – this is the Melrose Story," circa 1962 company history, High Point Historical Museum.

¹⁸ Hill Directory Company, *Hill's High Point (Guilford County, NC) City Directories* (Richmond, Va.: Hill Directory Co., 1938); Carolyn Boyles, *Early Days of Pilot Mountain, North Carolina: A History and Genealogy* (Pilot Mountain, N.C.: Carolyn Boyles, 2012), 180.

¹⁹ Spencer B. King Jr., *Selective Service in North Carolina in World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1949), 322.

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over the course of World War II, with traditionally underemployed groups such as women, African Americans, and the elderly receiving invaluable education, training, and experience.²⁰

Although World War II silk importation and nylon rationing presented stocking production challenges, North Carolina hosiery mills adapted, utilizing more cotton, wool, and synthetic fibers for items produced for retail and military markets. Military orders fueled production at North Carolina hosiery mills through the mid-1940s, perhaps inspiring Pilot Mountain resident Robah B. Davis and James S. Dix and T. C. Barber of Mount Airy to incorporate Pilot Mountain Hosiery Mills in June 1943.²¹ The factory at the southwest corner of the East Main and South Academy street intersection was operational within a year. In 1944, approximately 30 workers utilized 22 knitting, 13 looping, 11 ribbing, and 6 sewing machines to produce undyed women and children's socks sold by Heathcote Hosiery Company in New York. At Amos and Smith Hosiery Company, Pilot Mountain's only other textile mill at that time, around one hundred workers manufactured full-fashioned stockings on 22 knitting, 17 looping, and 18 sewing machines.²²

Pilot Mountain Hosiery Mills ceased operation by 1946. However two newly organized knitting mills, Armtex, Inc. and Archbrook Hosiery Mills, began operating in existing Pilot Mountain buildings in 1946. Davidson College graduate Edward Marion Armfield established Armtex after working for High Point-headquartered Adams-Millis Corporation, a hosiery manufacturer, and Burlington-based Burlington Mills Corporation, a fabric producer. Armtex commenced knitting outerwear fabrics in the former tobacco warehouse at 305 South Depot Street that year. Richard Hunter Archer and his wife Clara Owen Archer of Randleman and W. H. Holderness of Greenboro were the primary investors in Archbrook Hosiery Mills, a full-fashioned hosiery manufacturer.²³ Guilford College alum R. H. Archer had worked at Randleman Hosiery Mills prior to serving in the U. S. Army during World War II. Archbrook Hosiery Mills initially occupied the former Pilot Mountain Hosiery Mills factory at 224 East Main Street, which it leased from Robah Davis, but relocated by 1949.²⁴ Pilot Mountain's hosiery mills were the town's largest employers, tax payers, freight shippers, and power consumers. The companies' success epitomizes statewide trends in the industry.

²⁰ Marilyn M. Harper, et. al. *World War II and the American Home Front* (Washington, D. C.: The National Historic Landmarks Program, October 2007), 3, 13-16.

²¹ "Two Firms Are Chartered," *Charlotte News*, June 12, 1943, p. 5.

²² The larger number of workers operating roughly the same number of machines at Amos and Smith Hosiery Company suggests that the plant ran multiple shifts. *Davison's Textile Blue Book*, 1944, 499; North Carolina Department of Labor, North Carolina Directory of Manufacturing Firms (Raleigh: Division of Statistics, North Carolina Department of Labor, 1944), 134.

²³ "New Corporations," *NO*, July 24, 1946, p. 2; Amy Joyner, "Armtex Founder Dies in California," *Greensboro News and Record*, July 16, 1999; "Armtex, Inc." business filings, North Carolina Secretary of State, https://www.sosnc.gov/online_services/search/Business_Registration_Results (accessed April 2020); Boyles, *Early Days of Pilot Mountain*, 180; World War II draft registration card, 1940; World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1938-1946;

²⁴ "David Thomas, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, April 26, 2021.

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North Carolina's industrial production initially surged immediately after the end of World War II, but the economy slowed in spring 1947, resulting in less product demand and widespread workforce reductions. North Carolina manufacturers laid off approximately three thousand laborers at thirty-two textile and thirteen furniture plants. As the industrial sector rebounded in the late 1940s, Pilot Hosiery Mills, incorporated in September 1949 by High Point residents Charles E. Sowden (known as Guy), as president, and Walter B. Thomas Jr. (called Brad), as secretary-treasurer, leased the Pilot Mountain Hosiery Mills factory from Robah Davis to serve as a fine-gauge men's sock manufacturing plant. The men had garnered experience working for a comparable High Point business, men's socks manufacturer Thomas Mills, Inc., established in 1928 by Walter B. Thomas Sr. (Brad's father) and brothers Robert R. Ragan and Amos H. Ragan, all experienced industrialists. Guy Sowden had supervised the Thomas Mills plant and was thus well-prepared to head Pilot Hosiery Mill's sock production. The men and their families moved to Pilot Mountain in fall 1949 and the plant was operational by 1950, but statistics regarding equipment and employee quantities are unavailable for that year. Pilot Mountain also gained another hosiery business in 1950, when Pilot Mountain residents Richard H. Archer, Clara O. Archer, and Richard E. Brannon established Skyline Hosiery Mills, likely a reorganization of Archbrook Hosiery Mills. The location of the Skyline Hosiery Mills factory has not been determined.²⁵

North Carolina's 434 knitting mills (256 seamless and 121 full-fashioned hosiery mills; 57 fabric and apparel mills) employed 60,288 workers in 1952. The state's hosiery mills generated approximately forty percent of the nation's hosiery. Surry County's 19 knitting mills had approximately 3,300 employees, with an aggregate 2,200-person labor force at 13 hosiery mills and 835 workers who manufactured other knit products at six additional plants. Most industrial concerns were located in Mount Airy.²⁶

Pilot Mountain's four knitting plants probably increased production in the early 1950s, when many companies benefited from sizable defense contracts during the Korean War. Many mill owners expanded their operations and facilities during that period, maintaining North Carolina's standing as one of the industry's largest centers. Pilot Hosiery Mills erected a two-story office addition at the factory's north end in 1956. The previous year, 75 workers utilized 67 knitting, 20 looping, and one sewing machine to produce seamless socks. The concern added 10 employees and 20 knitting

²⁵ "City Leads in State Hosiery Manufacturing," *HPE*, March 23, 1947; "Pilot Hosiery Mills, Inc.," business filings, North Carolina Secretary of State, https://www.sosnc.gov/online_services/search/Business_Registration_Results (accessed April 2020); Thad Eure, *Biennial Reports of the Secretary of State of North Carolina, 1942-1948* (Raleigh: Secretary of State, 1948), 369; Hill Directory Company, *Hill's High Point (Guilford County, NC) City Directories* (Richmond, Va.: Hill Directory Co., 1949), 351; *Davison's Textile Blue Book*, 1935, 545; *Davison's Textile Blue Book*, 1955, 538; "New Corporations," *News and Observer*, May 24, 1950, p. 24.

²⁶ *E.S.C. Quarterly*, Winter-Spring 1953, 3-5, 14, 43.

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machines by 1959. Amos and Smith Hosiery Company's 250 employees operated 36 seamless, 30 full-fashioned, and 20 looping machines in 1955. By 1959, the company had reduced its workforce to 150 people after updating equipment, which then comprised 36 seamless, 20 full-fashioned, 35 looping machines, and 190 circular knitting machines. According to local residents, Armtex was the largest knitting operation in town, with between five and six hundred workers. The plant housed 96 circular knitting machines in 1955. Skyline Hosiery Mills produced full-fashioned hosiery with one sewing, four knitting, and two looping machines in 1955. The concern ceased production by 1959.²⁷ Pilot Mountain's population increased as businesses recruited workers, growing from 1,092 at the decade's beginning to 1,310 in 1960.²⁸

Women's fashion shifts in the late 1950s dramatically impacted hosiery production. As full-fashioned hosiery declined in popularity, the associated job of sewing seams became obsolete and concerns laid off many of their full-fashioned knitters. State-wide statistics reflect this trend. Although almost half (49.4 percent) of the nation's hosiery mills were located in North Carolina in 1958, the state's full-fashioned hosiery mills decreased 61 percent, from 414 to 159 plants, by 1963.²⁹ Pilot Hosiery Mills' production remained stable, however, as the concern continued to manufacture men's dress socks. One hundred employees worked three shifts, operating 30 circular knitting, 35 rib knitting, 60 link and link, 10 looping, 5 sewing, and 5 dyeing machines, in 1965. That year, Amos and Smith Hosiery Company's 175 workers used 12 full-fashioned, 10 seamless, 55 looping, and 248 circular knitting machines. Armtex's workforce and equipment numbers are unknown. In 1965, the concern established a subsidiary Pilot Mountain company, Surry Industries, to spin yarn and knit fabrics that were dyed and finished by Armtex.³⁰

Fashion trends influenced the hosiery industry again in the late 1960s as more women began wearing pants and therefore purchased short stockings, which were much less labor-intensive to produce than pantyhose, or dispensed with hosiery altogether. Amos and Smith Hosiery Company persevered, however, and had 250 employees in 1970. The sock market remained strong, which benefited Pilot Hosiery Mills. Upon Guy Sowden's late 1960s retirement, Brad Thomas bought his partner's shares of the business. In November 1969, the company purchased the property it occupied from Robah B.

²⁷ With automated equipment, which increased product uniformity and reduced production, warehousing, and labor costs, fewer employees were needed to operate machines. In 1958, only nine North Carolina hosiery mills employed more than five hundred workers. Small-scale production predominated. The majority (39) of hosiery mills had less than 20 employees, 27 had between 20 and 49 employees, and 21 had 50-99 employees. McGregor, *The Hosiery Manufacturing Industry in North Carolina*, 18; Davison's *Textile Blue Book*, 1955, 538, and 1959, 455; David Thomas, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, April 28, 2020.

²⁸ U. S. Bureau of the Census, *U. S. Census of Population: 1960, Volume I, Characteristics of the Population, Part A, Number of Inhabitants* (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1961), 35-19.

²⁹ McGregor, *The Hosiery Manufacturing Industry in North Carolina*, 7, 23.

³⁰ Davison's *Textile Blue Book*, 1965, p. 15-89.

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Davis's estate. Brad Thomas and plant supervisor J. Aubrey Almond managed the mill at that time. Employee and equipment levels remained stable, with the exception of removal of ten link-and-link knitting machines and the addition of two extractors. Brad's son David L. Thomas joined the company after graduating from Greensboro College in 1970 and quickly gained experience in all aspects of the business. He remembers that when the plant operated three daily shifts, production capacity was ten thousand dozen socks per week. By the late 1970s, in response to declining demand, the factory ran only two shifts. Armtex Inc. remained Pilot Mountain's largest knitting operation during the 1970s, generating knit fabrics for outerwear, swimwear, underwear, and foundation garments.³¹

Pilot Hosiery Mills leased a warehouse off Highway 268 until 1986, when the concern greatly expanded its on-site storage capacity. James R. Marion Construction Company erected a steel warehouse and a short connecting hyphen west of the factory in late November of that year. The structure, designed by Winter Haven, Florida-headquartered SteelFrame Building Inc., was the first to be fabricated at its Charlotte plant.³²

Brad Thomas was actively involved in the company's management until October 1995. Following his death two months later, his son David assumed Pilot Hosiery Mills' leadership. The late 1990s were a challenging period for the American textile industry, as foreign manufacturers flooded the market with less expensive products. Nevertheless, Pilot Hosiery Mills supported local organizations such as the East Surry Little League, youth basketball programs, and the United Fund of Pilot Mountain, for which David Thomas served as a campaign chair.³³

Despite beginning to export socks to Saudi Arabia in the early 2000s, Pilot Hosiery Mills failed to overcome intense competition within the domestic hosiery industry and adapt to rapidly changing technology and the globalization that negatively impacted the market for American textiles. David Thomas thus elected to close the plant in summer 2011, by which time production had decreased to fewer than three thousand dozen socks per week. Only between fifteen and twenty employees remained, including secretary Frances Pratt Fulk, who began working for the company in 1955. Other long-term employees such as head fixer Jack Joyce and his wife Dorothy Sue, a looper, both of whom had more than thirty-year tenures at the plant, had previously retired.³⁴

³¹ Armtex's workforce and equipment numbers are unknown. *Davison's Textile Blue Book*, 1970, 289; Surry County Deed Book 285, p. 651; David L. Thomas, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, April 28, 2020.

³² David L. Thomas, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, April 28, 2020; "Let the Sparks Fly," *Charlotte Observer*, November 30, 1986, p. 8D.

³³ David L. Thomas, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, April 28, 2020.

³⁴ Loopers sewed sock toes closed. Records other than legal documents were discarded when the company closed. David L. Thomas, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, April 28, 2020.

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Amos and Smith Hosiery Mills enlarged and updated its plant in 1984, but soon scaled back manufacturing operations as new competitors emerged and the industry continued to change. In 1988, the business merged with Amos Hosiery Mills of High Point, which had a 175-person workforce when purchased in that year by MIG 90, an investment group led by James H. Millis Jr. of Adams-Millis Corporation, High Point's largest hosiery manufacturer. Following Sara Lee Corporation's 1988 acquisition of Adams-Millis Corporation, Amos Hosiery Mills operated two High Point plants and the Pilot Mountain facility as an independent subsidiary until 1990, when unfavorable market conditions forced closures. The Pilot Mountain plant ceased production in late May 1990, resulting in the loss of 130 jobs. Only 150 employees remained in High Point at the time of Millis Corporation's January 1991 bankruptcy announcement.³⁵ The Pilot Mountain plant was rehabilitated after the Town of Pilot Mountain purchased the property in 2008. Grants from the Golden Leaf Foundation and other entities facilitated the building's renovation to serve as Pilot Center, one of two Surry Community College CLEAR (Center for Learning, Education, and Retraining) sites, as well as the processing and distribution center of agricultural co-operative Pilot Mountain Pride.³⁶

Armtex, Inc. announced the closure of its Pilot Mountain dye and finishing plant on August 31, 1998, due to reduced demand for double-knit fabrics, resulting in severance of 151 employees. The company and its subsidiary Surry Industries maintained corporate offices and yarn spinning and knitting plants in Pilot Mountain, a Gastonia dye and finishing plant, and a New York sales office until ceasing production in November 2000. Armtex, Inc. was dissolved in 2005. Most of the Pilot Mountain knitting plant was demolished after suffering extensive damage during a January 2016 fire.³⁷

As the Amos and Smith Hosiery Mills factory has been extensively renovated to serve as Pilot Center and most of the Armtex knitting plant is no longer extant, Pilot Hosiery Mill is the most intact building associated with mid-twentieth-century industrial production in Pilot Mountain. The plant serves as a visual reminder of the importance of the hosiery industry as an engine of economic and physical growth in North Carolina from the late-nineteenth century through the late-twentieth century.

³⁵ Wes Cashwell, "Amos Hosiery Announces Purchase by Investment Group," *HPE*, August 29, 1988, pp. 1 and 2A; "The Carolinas," *Charlotte Observer*, April 5, 1990, p. 9B; Kathryn Hopper, "Millis Hosiery Files for Bankruptcy," *Greensboro News and Record*, January 2, 1991.

³⁶ Surry County property record card; Boyles, *Early Days of Pilot Mountain*, 181; Surry Community College, "Pilot Center," <https://surry.edu/visit-us#pilot> (accessed April 2020).

³⁷ "Surry Industries, Inc.," business filings, North Carolina Secretary of State, https://www.sosnc.gov/online_services/search/Business_Registration_Results (accessed April 2020); "Armtex Announces Plan to Close Finishing Plant in Pilot Mountain," *Greensboro News and Record*, July 2, 1998; Sharon E. White, "Armtex to lay off about 125 Gaston employees," *Charlotte Observer*, November 11, 2000, pp. 1L and 8L; Adrienne DiPiazza and Michael Hennessey, "Fire continues to burn at Pilot Mountain tire plant," Fox 8 News, January 12, 2016.

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Industrial Architecture Context

Mills and factories are typically designed in manner that minimizes construction and maintenance cost, allows for flexible interior use, and reduces the propensity for extensive damage or destruction by fire. During the late-nineteenth century, “slow-burn” masonry construction, with load-bearing brick walls, exposed heavy-timber framing, thick wood floors, gabled roofs, large operable windows and transoms, and sliding metal fire doors predominated.³⁸ Most industrial buildings were simply and quickly erected by local craftsmen based upon owner specifications rather than professionally-rendered plans. However, standards imposed by insurance companies also dictated best practices. For example, in order to minimize fire risk, brick interior walls and galvanized-sheet-metal-clad, solid-core-wood doors, known as kalamein doors, separated areas where fires might start or spread rapidly.³⁹ These heavy doors would automatically close in the case of a fire, as the heat would melt a soft metal link in the door’s counterweight assembly and the door would slide shut on the sloped metal track.

Although structural systems for some late-nineteenth-century buildings included cast-iron or wrought-iron columns or steel posts and beams, high cost greatly limited the materials’ use until the early twentieth century. During that period, new building materials, technology, and forms manifested efficiency, modernity, and economic progress. Industrial building designers began to specify steel and reinforced-concrete columns and beams in conjunction with brick, concrete, terra cotta block, or tile curtain walls that provided structural bracing but did not carry any weight. Large steel-frame multipane windows, roof monitors, and skylights provided workers with abundant light and ventilation. Steel trusses spanned open interiors, allowing for sizable equipment installation.⁴⁰

The ability to withstand weight and vibrations without failing contributed to the popularity of structural-steel construction, as did the ease of fabricating framing systems from standard factory-generated parts. Typical elements include I-, T-, H-, and box-shaped columns and beams; round posts; and reinforcing plates, angles, and webs. Steel components could be riveted together, creating strong connections, and tended to be smaller and lighter than heavy-timber or iron framing members. This allowed for wider and taller buildings with more square footage for equipment. The popularity of flat roofs and sizable roof monitors also resulted in structural-steel framing prevalence. In order to reduce oxidation and achieve fire resistance, steel members were coated with intumescent paint; sprayed with a thin mixture of cement, sand, and water called gunite; or encased in concrete.⁴¹

³⁸ Sara E. Wermiel, “Heavy Timber Framing in Late-Nineteenth-Century Commercial and Industrial Buildings,” *APT Bulletin: Journal of Preservation Technology*, Volume 35, No. 1, 2004, 56.

³⁹ Betsy Hunter Bradley, *The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 15-21; Brent D. Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1992), 38.

⁴⁰ Bradley, *The Works*, 144-147.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

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Modernist architectural principles such as simplicity, efficiency, affordability, and intrinsic material expression were inherently applicable to industrial buildings. Industrial architecture continued to reflect these tenets as the twentieth century progressed. Building materials and labor were in short supply during World War II, but when construction resumed after the war's end, steel and reinforced-concrete industrial edifices with masonry (brick, tile, or concrete) curtain walls predominated. Fire-resistant corrugated metal and asbestos panels were often used as warehouse sheathing. Windows decreased in size and number as central air conditioning became prevalent in the 1960s.

Pilot Mountain's Industrial Architecture

A cursory survey undertaken by Heather Fearnbach in November 2019 indicates that only a few buildings associated with Pilot Mountain's mid-twentieth-century industrial heritage survive. All are durable and fire-resistant brick, concrete, and steel structures located in proximity to the railroad line, which runs east-west south of Main Street. None were included in architectural historian Laura A. W. Phillips' comprehensive Surry County architectural survey, completed in 1982, as most have been enlarged, altered, or were not yet fifty years old at that time. Pilot Hosiery Mill is the most intact of the four-building sample. Two of the other plants housed the knitting operations of Amos and Smith Hosiery and Armtex, Inc. The third building, which had myriad functions, was included in the sample as it manifests typical industrial construction.

The one-story flat-roofed brick Amos and Smith Hosiery plant at 612 East Main Street appears to be the only architect-designed, purpose-built, mid-twentieth-century mill in Pilot Mountain. Herman Von Biberstein of the prolific Charlotte architectural firm Biberstein and Bowles rendered drawings for the original central portion of the mill erected in 1938. The firm subsequently provided plans for a 1949 addition.⁴² The complex, which was expanded in phases to 42,212 square feet, was last modified by the company in 1984. Hosiery production ceased in 1990, but the building was rehabilitated after the Town of Pilot Mountain purchased the property in 2008. The mid-twentieth-century sections have five-to-one common-bond redbrick walls punctuated by tall window openings with cast-stone sills and flat steel lintels. A soldier course spans the distance between the top of each window opening. A header course and terra-cotta coping cap the flat parapets. The Art Moderne-style projecting brick surround framing a door near the north elevation's center is topped with a cast-stone band incised with the word "entrance." All windows have been replaced. The large, flat, metal canopy that shelters the primary entrance on a western section of the north elevation and the handicapped ramp that provide

⁴² The 1938 drawings are labeled "Pilot Hosiery Mills" or "Hosiery Mill for Pilot Mountain." "Pilot Hosiery Mills," 1938, AD Cabinet 1, Tube 13, Box 49, Folder 37, and Box 50, Folders 1-3; "Amos and Smith Hosiery Mill," 1949, AD Cabinet 17, Folder 5, Biberstein, Bowles, Meacham, and Reed Records, MS0148, J. Murrey Atkins Library, Special Collections, UNC-Charlotte.

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access to the landing were added after 2008. The building's westernmost five-to-one common-bond redbrick section, likely the last hosiery-company addition, has only a few high, horizontal, steel-frame windows on the west and south elevations.⁴³

The industrial complex at 304 South Depot Street, which began serving as Armtex, Inc.'s production facility in 1946, grew to its current configuration fillings most of the block bounded by the railroad corridor to the south and South Depot, East Pine, and South Davis streets between 1925 and 1968. The original south section, a one-story-on-basement 1925 building that initially functioned as a tobacco cooperative warehouse, is the most architecturally distinctive, featuring rusticated concrete-block main-level walls above a formed-concrete foundation. The east and west elevations rise to five-stage stepped parapets. All window openings are filled with smooth concrete block, vents, fans, or plywood. The one-story, smooth-face concrete-block additions to the north and west are executed in horizontal-stack bond with flat terra-cotta-coping-capped parapets. Two silos rise from the roof of the one-story central addition fronting South Davis Street. On the windowless west elevation of the one-bay deep addition that spans the 1925 building's west end, a flat, aluminum-trimmed Moderne canopy shelters two single-leaf entrances. Construction dates for the additions are unknown, but Surry County property records indicate that the last significant modifications were made in 1968.⁴⁴

During much of the late-twentieth century, general contractor Fulk and Needham, Inc. utilized the one-story-on-basement, concrete-block, rectangular, 1946 building at 305 South Depot Street (opposite the aforementioned Armtex complex), which has also been modified. Surry County property records state that the building was updated in 1973, likely with the variegated-brick-veneer east facade. Two wide full-height sections of the façade are filled with vinyl siding, wood siding that emulates logs, and roll-up garage doors. Eight-pane steel sash with four-pane hoppers remain on the south and west elevations. Concrete block fills some window openings on the north and west elevation, and metal panels cover others. The north and south walls have slightly-stepped terra-cotta-coping-capped parapets, reflecting the grade slope down to the west. The one-story-on-basement, concrete-block,

⁴³ Surry County property record card; Boyles, *Early Days of Pilot Mountain*, 181; Surry Community College, "Pilot Center," <https://surry.edu/visit-us#pilot> (accessed April 2020).

⁴⁴ Building dates based upon architectural evidence, the Sanborn Map Company's January 1925 "Pilot Mountain, North Carolina" map, and the Surry County property record card. Armtex used the South Depot Street complex solely for dying and finishing operations after erecting an expansive knitting plant a few blocks northeast at 312 East Highway 52 Bypass. The company closed the dye and finishing plant in August 1998 and the knitting plant in November 2000. K & G Associates of Pilot Mountain, a building materials and salvage company, utilizes the building at 304 South Depot Street as a warehouse. New River Tire Recycling now owns the former knitting plant at 312 East Highway 52 Bypass which comprises two tax parcels encompassing 14.42 acres. Adrienne DiPiazza and Michael Hennessey, "Fire continues to burn at Pilot Mountain tire plant," Fox 8 News, January 12, 2016; David L. Thomas, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, May 1, 2020.

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square, 1960 addition that extends from the south elevation's west section is executed in the same manner as the 1946 building.⁴⁵

Pilot Hosiery Mill exemplifies cost-effective small-scale mid-twentieth-century industrial design as it exhibits a functionalist aesthetic in its form, massing, expressed structure, materials, and open plan with fenestration dictated by interior use. The building, likely constructed by local contractors based upon owner specifications rather than professionally-rendered plans, was easily enlarged and modified to accommodate changing needs. The exposed structural system comprises concrete-block exterior walls, steel I-beams and posts, and wood joists and rafters. Narrow hardwood first- and second-story and poured-concrete basement floors provided durable work surfaces. Six twelve-pane steel casement windows remain in the 1956 addition, and two sixteen-pane 1944 steel casement windows survive. Modifications include the early 1960s relocation of the primary entrance from the 1956 façade's center to the east elevation's north bay and the replacement of most multipane steel sash in the 1944 mill with sheets of particle board on wood framing. Manufacturing and storage areas retain open plans and the office configuration on the 1956 addition's second story is intact. As Amos and Smith Hosiery Mills has been extensively renovated to serve as Surry Community College's Pilot Center, and most of the Armtex knitting plant at 312 East Highway 52 Bypass was demolished after suffering extensive damage during a January 2016 fire, Pilot Hosiery Mill best represents Pilot Mountain's mid-twentieth-century industrial heritage.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ A two-story feed (baled hay) storage building appears at this location on 1925 Sanborn map. Fulk and Needham, Inc. was owned by general contractor Oscar Meigs Needham Jr., known as O. M., and William C. Baucomb, called Bill. The concern purchased the property in October 1963. Needham, who was also co-owner of Mount Airy Builders Supply in Mount Airy, died in 1994. Baucomb dissolved the company in 1997 and sold the building in June 1998. David L. Thomas, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, May 1, 2020; "Oscar Meigs Needham Jr.," *Greensboro News and Record*, August 12, 1994; Surry County Deed Book 244, p. 404; Deed Book 693, page 458; "Fulk and Needham, Inc., business filings, North Carolina Secretary of State, https://www.sosnc.gov/online_services/search/Business_Registration_Results (accessed May 2020).

⁴⁶ Adrienne DiPiazza and Michael Hennessey, "Fire continues to burn at Pilot Mountain tire plant," Fox 8 News, January 12, 2016; David L. Thomas, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, May 1, 2020.

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Section 10. Geographical Data

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Latitude: 36.383432 Longitude: -80.464322

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property comprises the full extent of Surry County tax parcel # 596620818632 as indicated by the bold line on the enclosed map. Scale approximately 1" = 50'

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses 1.03 acres historically associated with Pilot Hosiery Mill.

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Photographs

All photographs by Heather Fearnbach, Fearnbach History Services, Inc., 3334 Nottingham Road, Winston-Salem, NC, on November 11, 2019. Digital images located at the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office in Raleigh.



1. Northeast oblique (above) and 2. Northwest oblique (below)



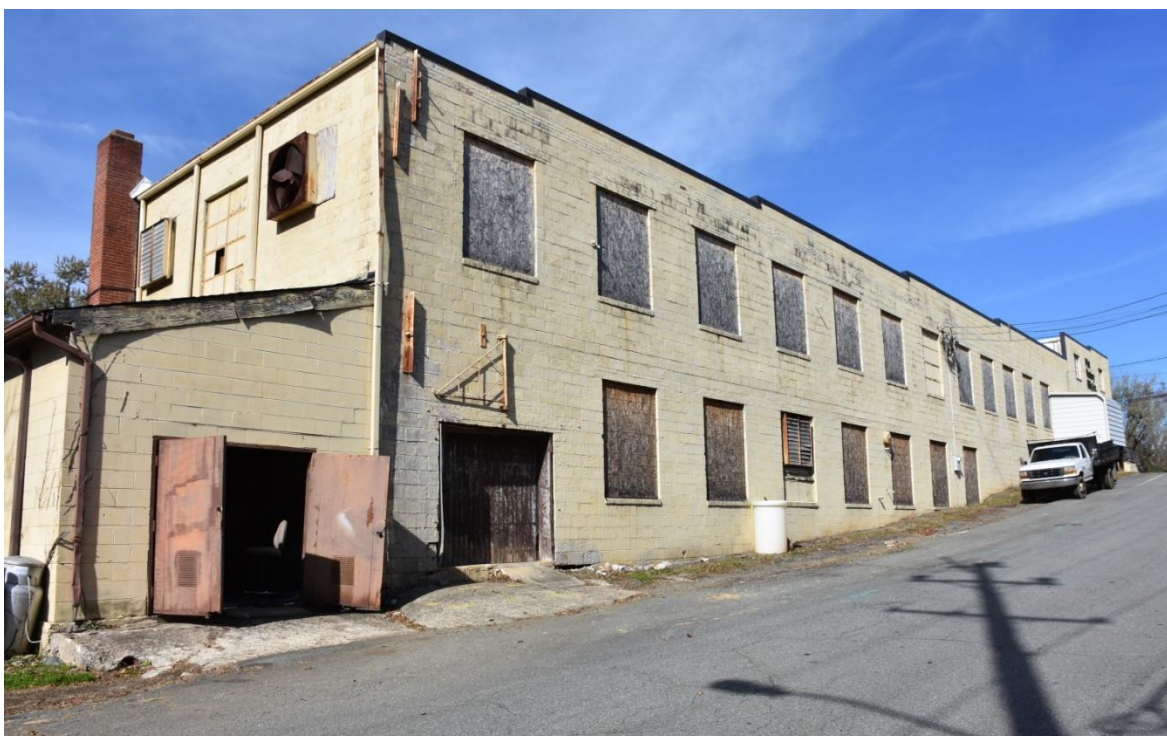
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3. Southwest oblique (above) and 4. Southeast oblique (below)



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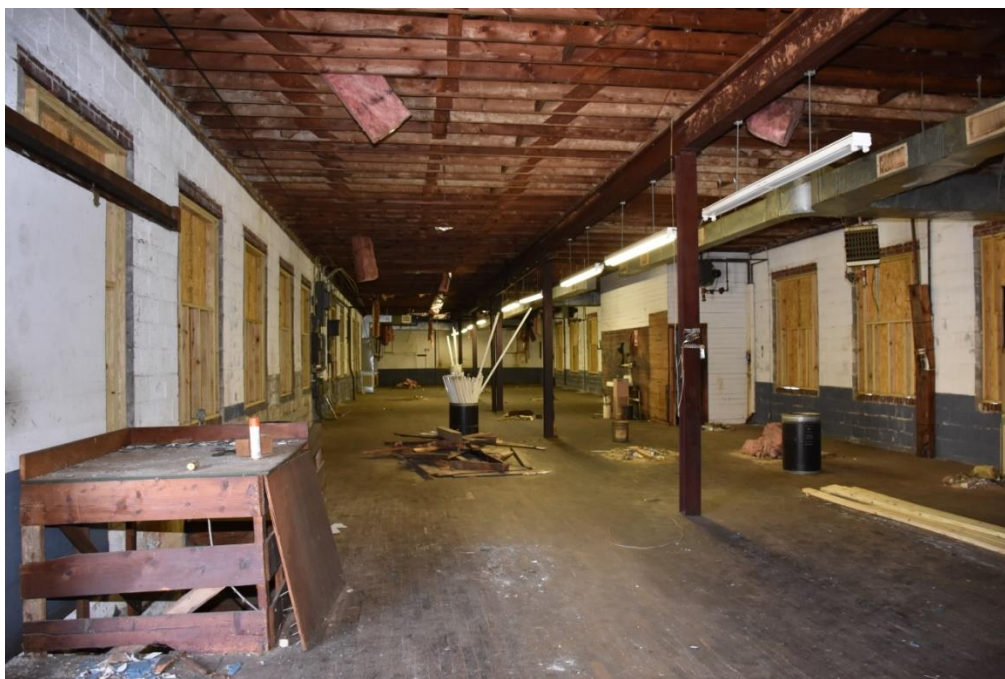
5. 1956 addition, first floor, north room, looking west (above)
6. 1944 building, first floor, looking north (below)



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7. 1944 building, first floor, looking south (above)
8. 1944 building, basement, looking south (below)



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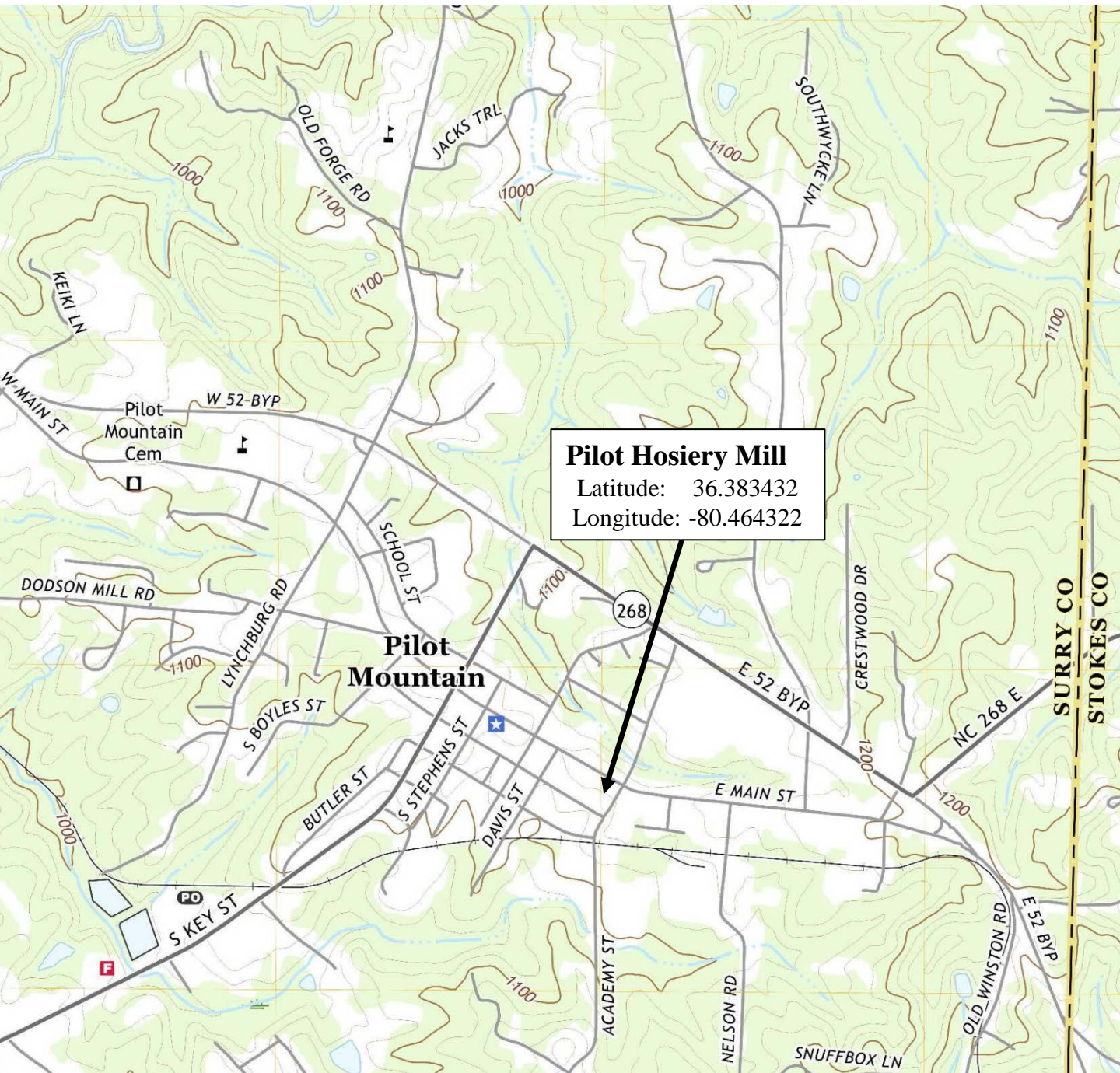


9. 1956 addition, second floor, northwest room, south (above)
10. 1986 warehouse addition, looking east (below)

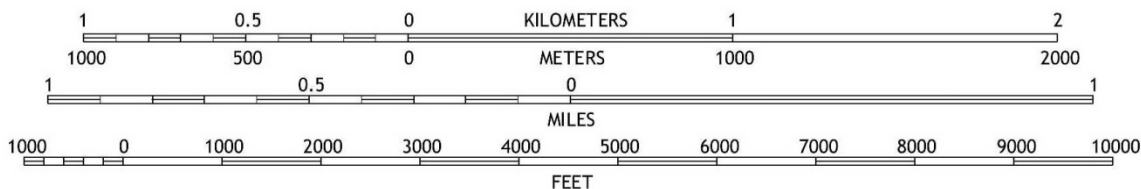


**Pilot Hosiery Mill, 224 East Main Street
Pilot Mountain, Surry County, North Carolina
Location Map**

U. S. Geological Survey
Pilot Mountain Quadrangle, 2019



SCALE 1:24 000

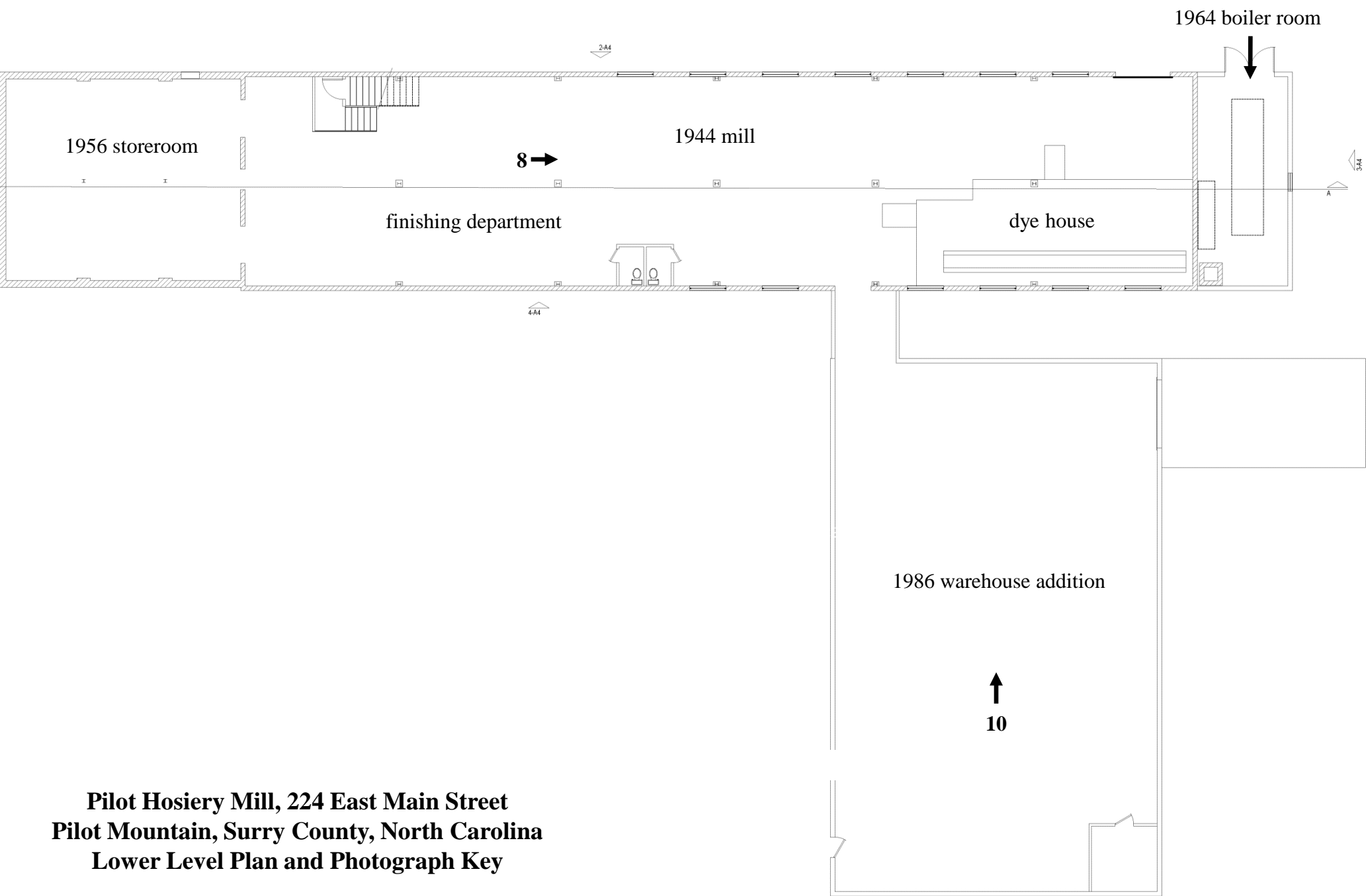


**Pilot Hosiery Mill, 224 East Main Street
Pilot Mountain, Surry County, North Carolina
National Register Boundary Map and Photograph Key**



Scale: one inch equals approximately fifty feet

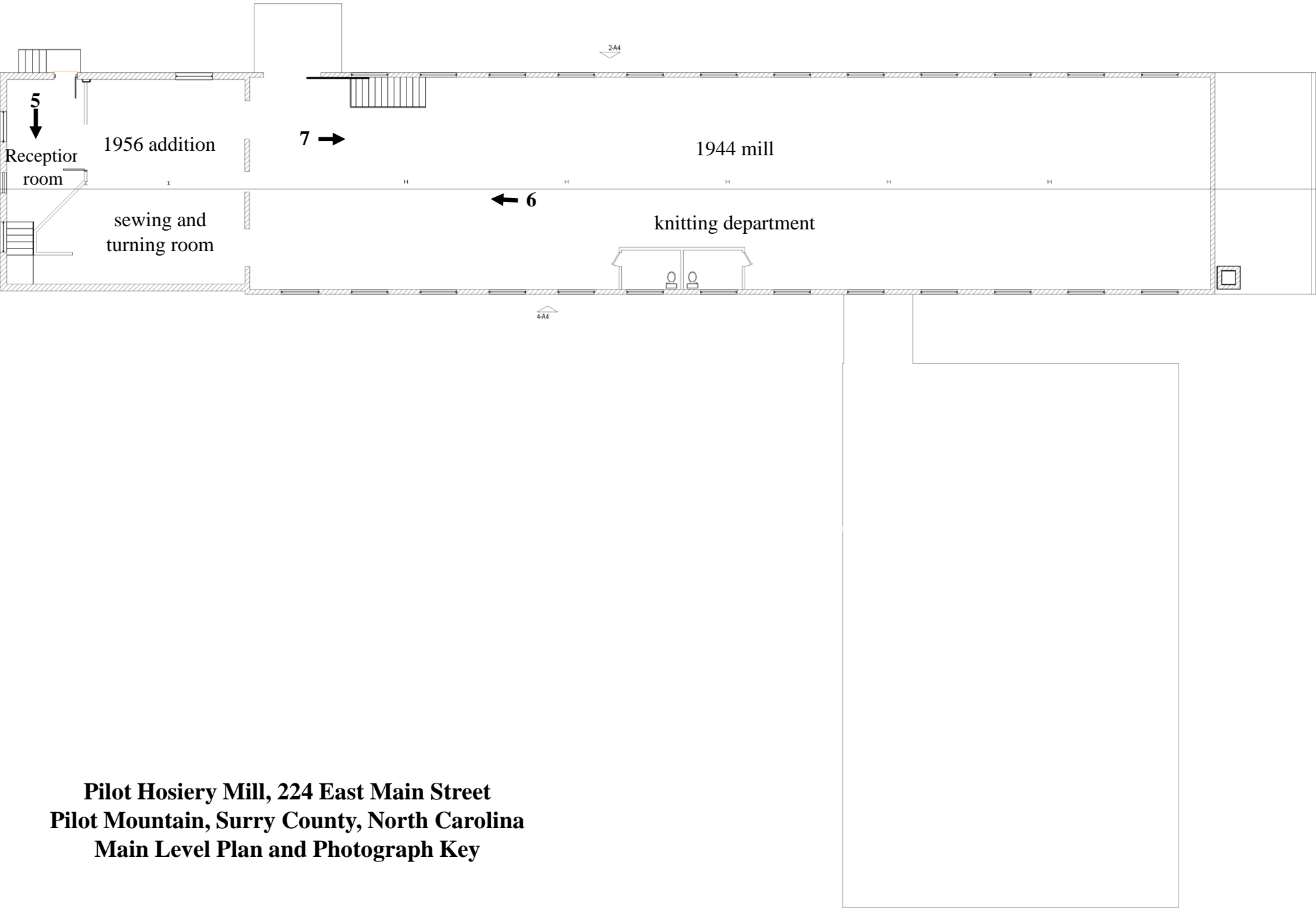




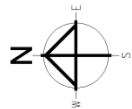
**Pilot Hosiery Mill, 224 East Main Street
Pilot Mountain, Surry County, North Carolina
Lower Level Plan and Photograph Key**



Base plan created by Lafferty Architecture in April 2020 and annotated by Heather Fearnbach in April 2021

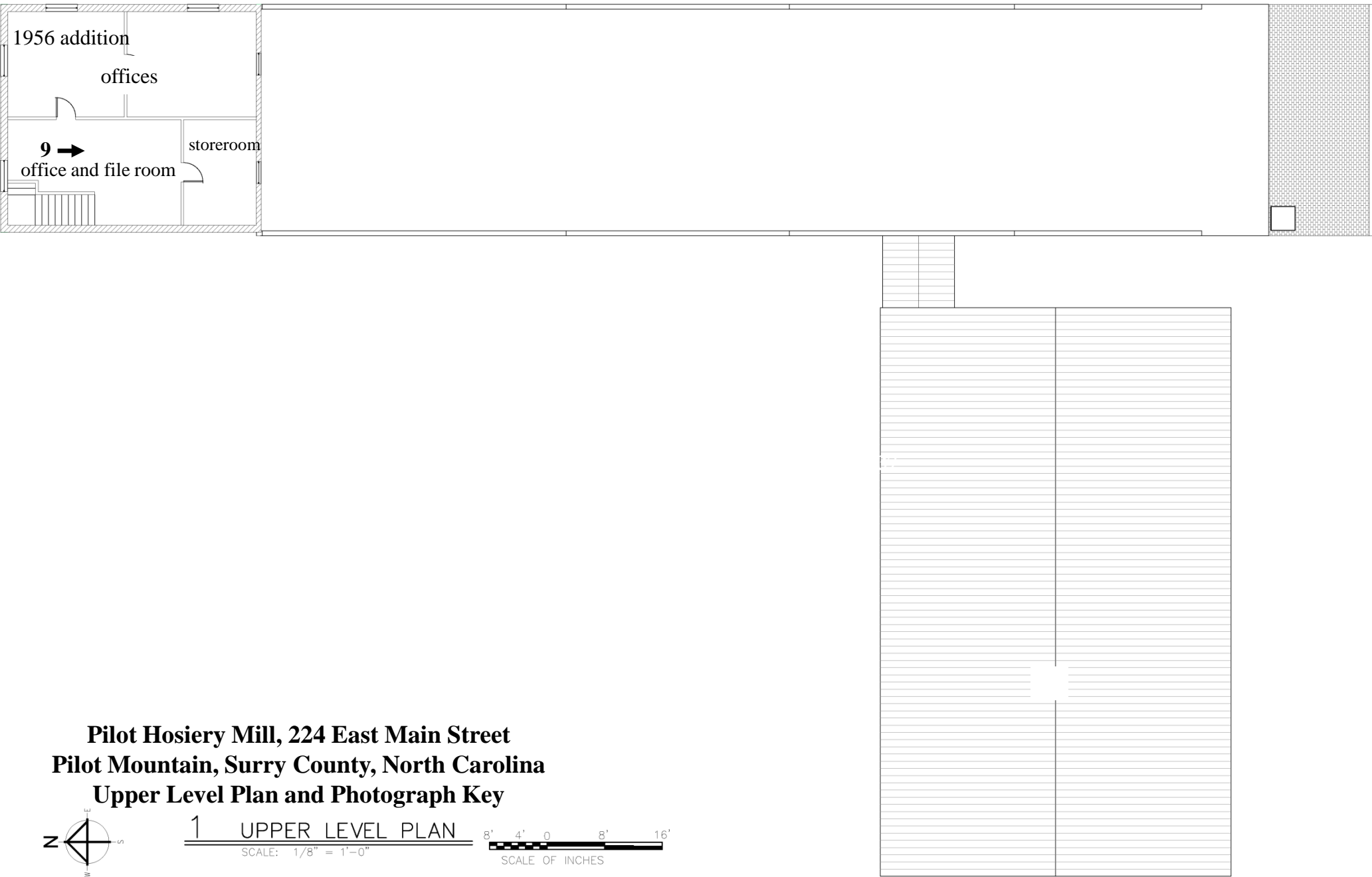


**Pilot Hosiery Mill, 224 East Main Street
Pilot Mountain, Surry County, North Carolina
Main Level Plan and Photograph Key**



1 MAIN LEVEL PLAN
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"





**Pilot Hosiery Mill, 224 East Main Street
Pilot Mountain, Surry County, North Carolina
Upper Level Plan and Photograph Key**



1 UPPER LEVEL PLAN
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

