

Grey Hosiery Mill

301 Fourth Avenue East
Hendersonville NC, 28792

Local Landmark Designation

Prepared by
MacRostie Historic Advisors

In Partnership With
Grey Mill Ventures

Completed June 2019

**Local Landmark Designation Report
Grey Hosiery Mill
Hendersonville, NC**

1. Name of Property

Grey Hosiery Mill

2. Name and Address of Current Property Owner

Grey Mill Ventures, 103 Parker Street, Carrboro, NC 27510

3. Location of Property, Legal Description, National Register Status

Grey Hosiery Mill (also referred to as Grey Mill) is located at 301 Fourth Avenue East in the city limits of Hendersonville, North Carolina. The mill sits on the northeast corner lot at the intersection of North Grove Street and Fourth Avenue East. Fifth Avenue East bounds the northern property line. The property consists of 1.09 acres.

Grey Hosiery Mill was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on October 6, 2000.

4. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal

As listed in the Henderson County Real Property database, the total appraised value of the property (including the building) is \$1,170,500. The parcel is appraised at \$759,700 and the building is appraised at \$410,800.

5. Justification of Land Proposed to be Designated

All acreage on site was associated with the operation of the Grey Hosiery Mill.

6. Property Included in Designation and Boundary

This designation includes the interior and exterior of the mill building and all its additions, and the 1.09 acres historically related to the complex.

7. Dates of Construction

1915, 1919, 1926, 1947, 1970s

8. Period of Significance

The period of significance for the property is 1915, when the original plant was constructed, through 1950, which was the 50-year end date at the time of the property's listing in 2000.

9. Summary Statement of Significance

Listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places in 2000, Grey Hosiery Mill is the only remaining early twentieth century industrial structure in Hendersonville. First constructed in 1915 with later additions in subsequent years up until the 1970s, Grey Mill was the product of hard work on the part of Captain James P. Grey and his son James P. Grey, Jr. His family ran the mill until 1965 when they sold it to Holt Hosiery Mills, Inc. of Burlington.

10. Architectural Description

Site

The entire mill complex was completed over a few decades beginning in 1915. As the mill grew, so did the property. The first building was constructed on a north-south axis along N. Grove Street. Later additions were built to the north and to the east, connected by an office at the south of the property. A small courtyard separates the two wings that run north to south. A gravel parking area off Fourth Ave East fills the southeastern portion of the lot. The undeveloped land to the north of the east additions does not fall within the property lines of Grey Mill.

Exterior

The exterior of Grey Mill is defined by the different building campaigns the mill underwent during its time. The main entrances to the structure are along the south façade on Fourth Street. The 1915 Knitting Room, the first structure built on the site, occupies the southwest corner of the greater Grey Mill complex and contains a centrally located double-door entrance on its southern elevation that leads directly to the Knitting Room. Concrete steps with rough-cut stone sidewalls and a low-slope canopy surround the door. The Knitting Room is a single-story brick structure with two large steel sash windows on either side of the south entrance. Past the Knitting Room and centrally located on the southern elevation is a larger porch with four bays, alternating between nine-over-nine wooden residential windows and single-leaf wood doors. The doors lead to the Office to the west and the Shipping Room to the east. The 1919 Shipping Room addition fills the remaining portion of the south elevation. The south elevation of the Shipping Room has six bays. The western-most bay was converted to a wood loading door with a concrete loading dock. The other five bays are replacement eight-over-eight paired windows with infilled brick above. This portion of the southern elevation has a raised basement with small paired six-pane windows in each bay.

The west elevation is composed of two sections: the 1915 Knitting Room and a later 1947 addition to the north. The older 1915 portion has an overhanging roof with exposed rafter tails and large rectangular window openings with concrete sills. Five of the original steel-sash 36-pane windows with two operable pivoting panels remain at the southern end of the west elevation. The other remaining window bays have been infilled with brick and four have a smaller glass block window within the infill. The seventh bay from the south was later altered to fit a door that remains today.

The single-story 1947 portion is primarily a blank brick wall with a flat roof and simple brick parapet. There are eight small, elevated windows that have since been infilled.

The north elevation of the Grey Mill complex consists of the 1947 addition, the 1926 Finishing Rooms, and the 1970s Warehouse. All are relatively single-story blank brick facades. The 1947 addition has four paired one-over-one aluminum windows and a single doorway. There is a small series of vents along the 1970s Loading Room.

The east elevation is three main sections. The southern portion is the 1926 Shipping Room which has a blank brick wall on a stone foundation with a stepped parapet and terracotta coping. The 1926 Finishing Room has a brick wall, large rectangular steel sash windows and a low slope roof with over-hanging eaves and exposed rafter tails. A poured concrete loading dock extends along most of this portion of the east elevation and includes a small brick bathroom on top of the loading dock. The brick 1926 Boiler Room is at the northern portion of the Finishing Room and is partly enclosed in the circa 1970s Loading Room. The east elevation of the Loading Room is a blank brick façade with an elevated concrete basement.

Interior

The interior of Grey Mill consists of eight main areas: the 1915 Knitting Room, the 1947 Knitting Room addition, the 1919 Office, the 1919 Shipping Room, the 1926 Dye House, the 1926 Finishing Rooms, the 1926 Boiler, and the ca. 1970s Loading Room. The interior of the Knitting Room now holds a lobby at the south end and offices along a part of the west walls with lowered ceilings that conceal the original industrial space and features of the building. The majority of the south Knitting Room remains open with wood flooring, painted brick walls and exposed beams, ceiling and clerestory. A central line of columns runs down the middle of the building supporting the beams above. The columns are now a combination of wood and steel and in places have additional I-beams for support. A frame partition with windows and beadboard divides the north eight bays of the 1915-1926 Knitting Room from the south portion. A single loading opening at the east end provides circulation to the north part of the Knitting Room and the large 1947 addition. To the north of the partition the Knitting Room and 1947 addition run together as a single open manufacturing space with concrete floors and painted brick walls. The only indications of the change from the older Knitting Room to the addition are the roof structure which changes to steel beams with no clerestory, a change of window type and the increased width of the 1947 addition which expands to the east just north of a brick mechanical addition along the east wall. A series of offices have been created at the north end of the Knitting Room addition with lowered ceilings.

The Office addition is now divided into two sections of rooms with carpet, faux wood paneling and vinyl tile dating to the 1990s. At the south end of the Office plan, a corridor (or lobby) joins the Shipping and Knitting Building. A doorway to the north of the corridor leads into office and storage space with carpet and gypsum board walls. At the north side of the Office plan another hallway with faux wood paneling and vinyl floor tiles leads to small offices and connects the Knitting and Shipping Rooms.

The Shipping Room is an open space with wood floors, exposed ceiling beams and a central column line running east to west through the space. A simple wood staircase along the west wall leads to the basement and appears to have been altered many times. The current material of the stairs

appears to have been built in the 1990s. A doorway at the northwest area of the Shipping Room holds tall double wooden doors with horizontal raised panels. A freight elevator now enclosed with gypsum board sits at the north wall near the northwest doorway. A storage or office enclosure has been built of plywood at the east end of the Shipping Room and a small doorway at the northeast corner of the Shipping Room leads into a restroom that was added after the original construction. A basement level exists below the Shipping Room with exposed stone foundation walls at the perimeter and unpainted exposed beams and columns.

The interior of the Finishing Room is now divided into two sections with the four south bays separated from the remainder of the room by a floor to ceiling gypsum board partition. A single door at the east side of the partition provides access between the spaces. The south space is open with central wood columns, wood flooring, painted brick walls and exposed beams, ceiling and clerestory. A doorway holding paired wood doors with panels and 9-light windows sits in one bay along the west wall providing access to the courtyard. The remainder of the Finishing Room to the north of the partition has a series of framed office partitions along the east and west walls with hard ceilings below the full height of the building and concrete floors. Like the other older sections, a central line of columns runs down the middle of the building supporting the beams above and clerestory. The columns in the Finishing Room all appear to be wood with the exception of the north two bays that were added after the 1947 addition. This addition has steel columns and a corresponding change in brick visible from the courtyard.

The Boiler Room is a single open space that sits at ground level, below the main floor level of the other buildings. A wood stairway in the southwest corner connects to a doorway, now infilled with concrete block, into the Finishing Room. Another doorway at the north wall of the Boiler Room appears to have been added and leads to an inaccessible space that must sit below the Loading Room.

Mechanical equipment fills the space and a low brick enclosure surrounds the boiler at the east side of the space. The walls of the Boiler room are exposed brick stained black by soot. A series of large metal I-beams span the entire room from east to west and support the concrete roof.

The Loading Room is an open room with exposed brick walls and steel scissor trusses spanning the space from north to south to support the flat roof. Plywood office enclosures have been created at the northeast and west and south sides of the room. Two garage doors sit at floor level to the east side of the uninsulated south wall and a concrete ramp at the west side of the Loading Room leads down to a third garage door at ground level.

11. Historic Significance

Adapted from the Grey Hosiery Mill National Register of Historic Places Form, completed in 1999 by William A. Gray, Jr. and Amanda Blosser of Preservation Society of Henderson County. New sources not found in the National Register Form have been cited within this document.

The founding of Grey Hosiery Mill coincided with the rapid growth of the town of Hendersonville. While in existence since 1841, it was not until the first railroad line in 1879 reached the town that considerable development began. The city saw an exponential rise in population and commercial ventures in the beginning of the twentieth century, but it never grew to be more than a one-street downtown, far over-shadowed by nearby Asheville, North Carolina. As the town grew though, industry in the area did not. Some mills had popped up in the area, but not enough to support all of the town's citizens. The citizens of Hendersonville were eventually so frustrated with the lack of jobs that they approached Captain James P. Grey and his son James P. Grey, Jr. in 1915 with the sum of six hundred dollars (some reports say only five hundred)¹ to build a mill after plans for a flour mill in Hendersonville had fallen through.

Captain Grey had made his fortune through business ventures in Louisville, Kentucky and decided to learn the textile business at a mill in Johnson City, Tennessee. His son Grey Jr. also worked in Johnson City in the textile industry and was the driving force behind the construction of the hosiery mill in Hendersonville. Grey Jr. was an alumnus of Davidson College and knew the area, but it was not until the opportunity arose to construct his own mill that he became a resident of Hendersonville. The area had already experienced success with two other hosiery mills.² He purchased a lot at the corner of Grove Street and Fourth Avenue East near the railroad. A newspaper article from the *Western North Carolina Times* describes Grey, Jr.'s plans for the building as "a nice brick mill building, which he will equip with the most up-to-date machinery for the manufacture of hosiery." Grey Jr.'s goal at first was to produce on average almost 2,500 pairs of seamless hose a day. The building was originally built with the potential to increase to 12,000 pairs a day.

By 1919, the operation had already outgrown the original building and an addition was built to the east to create an L-shaped structure.³ Grey Mill saw a slight downturn in production during the early 1920s when women's hosiery was not selling as well, but about a decade later the mill was running day and night and employed around 75 people.⁴ Based on Sanborn Maps, in 1926 two additions were built to the north of the 1919 addition, creating a slightly U-shaped structure with a narrow courtyard between the original 1915 Knitting Room and the 1926 Dye House and Finishing Rooms. After 1932 and throughout the Depression Grey Mill, along with many others in the area, experienced some periods of continuous work and other periods where they were forced to cut mill production down to only three days of the week.

¹ "Prospects Bright for New Hosiery Mill in this City," *Western Carolina Democrat and French Broad Hustler* (Hendersonville, NC), July 29, 1915, accessed June 18, 2019, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/144105676/?terms=%22james%2Bgrey%22>.

² "Third Hosiery Mill: James P. Grey and James P. Grey, Jr., Locate Plant at Hendersonville," *The Charlotte Observer*, September 23, 1915, accessed June 18, 2019, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/74204786/?terms=%22james%2Bgrey%22>.

³ "Enlarge Mill," *French Broad Hustler* (Hendersonville, NC), June 26, 1919, accessed June 21, 2019, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/64212149/?terms=%22grey%2Bhosiery%2Bmill%22>.

⁴ "Business Shows Several Gains," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, September 21, 1931, accessed June 21, 2019, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/195748586/?terms=%22grey%2Bhosiery%2Bmill%22>.

Around this time local baseball and basketball leagues were created for the women of the local mills. Grey Hosiery Mill often had a team, with their 1941 women's basketball team winning the B League for Hendersonville.⁵ The mill stayed in business through World War II and in 1946 applied for a permit to build a 7,700 square foot addition to the north of the 1915 Knitting Room. This extended the building all the way to 5th Street and allowed for Grey, Jr. to accommodate "new full-fashioned knitting machinery."⁶ After the addition the mill was producing about 66,000 pairs of stockings a week and reached its highest employment number of about 250 people. The mill was one of the largest employers in Henderson County and Grey Jr. became a prominent figure in the area. He had brought significant employment to Hendersonville and Grey Mill was known for its more progressive management style, including insurance for employees, a nurse on duty, and even childcare along with the sports teams supported by the mill.

Grey Mill was an important part of industrial and social life in Hendersonville. It also stands as an important structure today as the only surviving representative of early twentieth century mill design in the area. Fire safety had become an important issue by the time of its construction, which led to the construction of primarily brick mill buildings that were only one- or two-stories tall. Grey Mill has very few architectural details and the later additions have even less. Industrial design at the time was moving further and further towards and into International Modernism, where architectural details were shunned in favor of simple unadorned facades. The original 1915 structure contains a few details that are reminiscent of earlier mill design, where a few architectural details were found. At Grey mill these details included the overhanging roof with exposed rafter tails and large, steel and glass windows. The clerestory roof provided natural light to the workers inside and was a very indictive design element of industrial structures. The later additions at Grey Mill saw fewer and fewer details, till the walls were mostly just blank brick walls with a few, small windows and simple low-slope roofs.

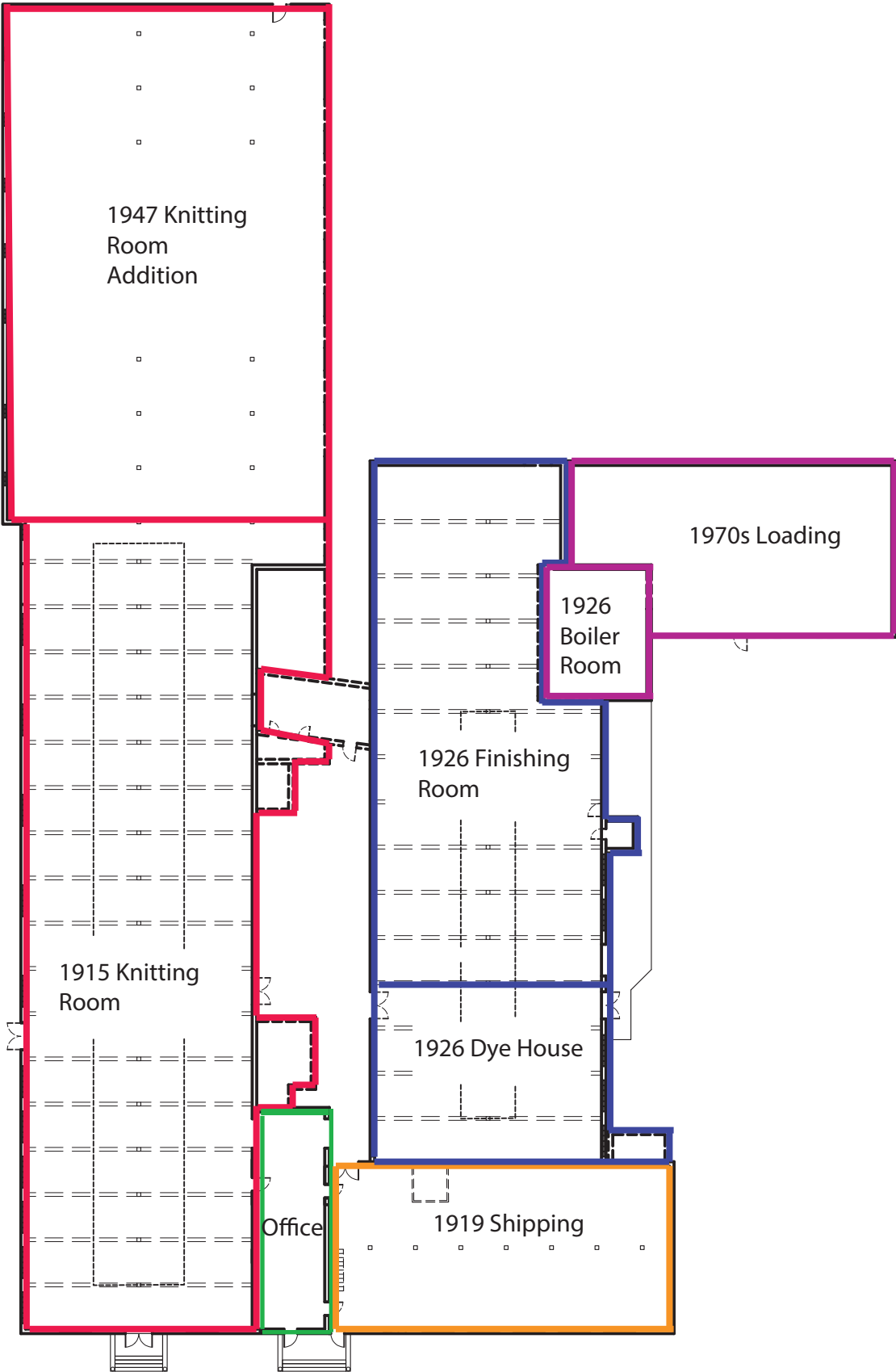
Grey Hosiery Mill continued to produce hosiery until 1965 under the Grey family's leadership, after which the property was sold to Holt Hosiery Mills, Inc. It ran under the name of Holt Hosiery until the plant was closed only two years later. Afterwards it changed hands until the city came into ownership. A few different redevelopment plans were in the works through the first decade of the twenty-first century, but ultimately, they all fell through. The building has fallen into disrepair, but fortunately Grey Mill was recently purchased by a developer and it is under redevelopment as a hotel and event space. Grey Mill is the last standing testament to the industrial might of Hendersonville in the first half of the twentieth century.

12. Integrity

Grey Mill is a mostly intact, early 20th century industrial building. Character defining features of the property such as steel framed multi-paned windows, the steel framed clerestory, hardwood floors, and circulation patterns are intact. Building campaigns completed in 1919, 1926, 1947, and the addition of a modern shipping warehouse and dock in the 1970s added significant additional space. These additions are intact with original materials preserved. Overall, the complex has good integrity and is an important entry into the textile history of the region.

⁵ "Fine Record Chalked Up by Grey Hosiery Sextet," *Asheville Citizen Times*, March 14, 1941, accessed June 21, 2019.

⁶ "Grey Hosiery Mill Planning New Addition," *Asheville Citizen Times*, March 22, 1946, accessed June 21, 2019, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/197964906/?terms=%22grey%2Bhosiery%2Bmill%22>.





1. Grey Mill, South Facade, Looking North



2. Grey Mill, 1915 Building, Southwest Corner,
Looking Northeast



3. Grey Mill, 1915 Building, South Facade, Looking Northwest



4. Grey Mill, 1919 Building, South Facade, Looking Northeast



5. Grey Mill, 1919 Building, South Facade, Looking Northwest



6. Grey Mill, 1919 Building, South Facade, Looking North



7. Grey Mill, 1915 Building, West Elevation, Window Detail



8. Grey Mill, 1915 Building, West Elevation, Looking Southeast



9. Grey Mill, 1915 Building, West Elevation, Looking Northeast



10. Grey Mill, 1915 Building and 1947 Addition,
West Elevation, Looking Northeast



11. Grey Mill, 1947 Addition and 1915 Building, West Elevation, Looking Southeast



12. Grey Mill, 1947 Addition, Northwest Corner,
Looking Southeast



13. Grey Mill, 1947 Addition, North Elevation, Looking Southwest



14. Grey Mill, 1947 Addition, North Elevation, Inside Wall, Looking Southwest





15. Grey Mill, 1947 Addition, North Elevation, Looking South



16. Grey Mill, 1947 Addition, North Elevation,
Looking West



17. Grey Mill, 1970s Warehouse, Looking North



18. Grey Mill, 1919 Building and 1970s Warehouse,
East Elevation, Looking Northwest



19. Grey Mill, 1919 Building, East Elevation, Looking West



20. Grey Mill, 1919 Building, East Elevation, Looking Southwest



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21. Grey Mill, 1919 Building, East Elevation, Window Detail



22. Grey Mill, 1919 Building, East Elevation, Loading Dock, Looking West



23. Grey Mill, 1970s Warehouse, Looking Northwest



24. Grey Mill, 1919 Building, East Elevation,
Looking West

Grey Hosiery Mill, Hendersonville, NC
Hendersonville Local Landmark Designation Photos

December 2017



27. Grey Mill, 1919 Building to Office, Looking West



28. Grey Mill, Rear Office, Looking West



31. Grey Mill, 1915 Building, South End, Looking West



32. Grey Mill, 1915 Building, South End, Looking North



33. Grey Mill, 1915 Building, South End, Looking East



34. Grey Mill, 1915 Building Entrance Doors, Looking South



37. Grey Mill, 1915 Building, Looking North



38. Grey Mill, 1915 Building, Looking West



41. Grey Mill, 1915 Building, Looking North



42. Grey Mill, 1915 Building, Looking South



43. Grey Mill, 1915 Building, Monitor Detail



44. Grey Mill, 1947 Addition, Looking North



47. Grey Mill, 1947 Addition, Looking North



48. Grey Mill, 1947 Addition, Looking South



49. Grey Mill, 1947 Addition, Looking East



50. Grey Mill, 1947 Addition, Looking North



51. Grey Mill, 1947 Addition, Looking Northwest



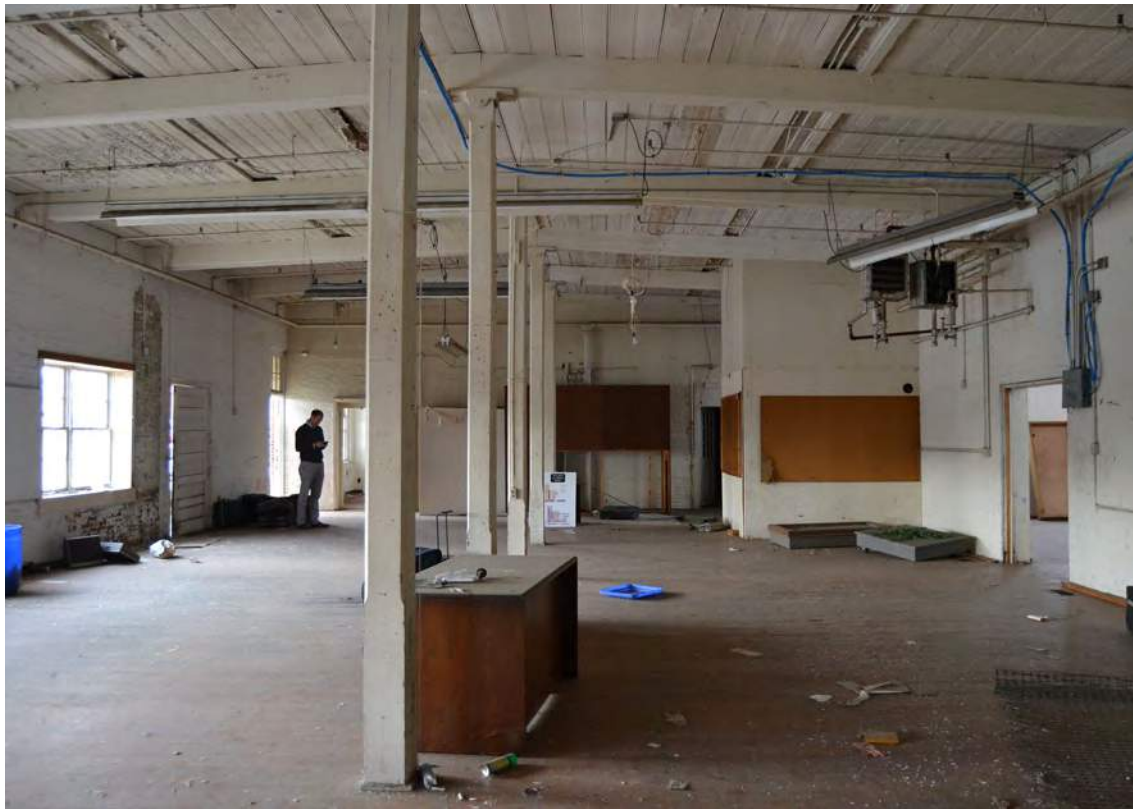
52. Grey Mill, 1947 Addition, Looking South



55. Grey Mill, 1919 Building, Looking East



56. Grey Mill, 1919 Building, Looking Northeast



63. Grey Mill, 1919 Building, Looking Southwest



64. Grey Mill, 1919 Building, Looking West



67. Grey Mill, 1926 Addition, Finishing Room, Looking Northeast



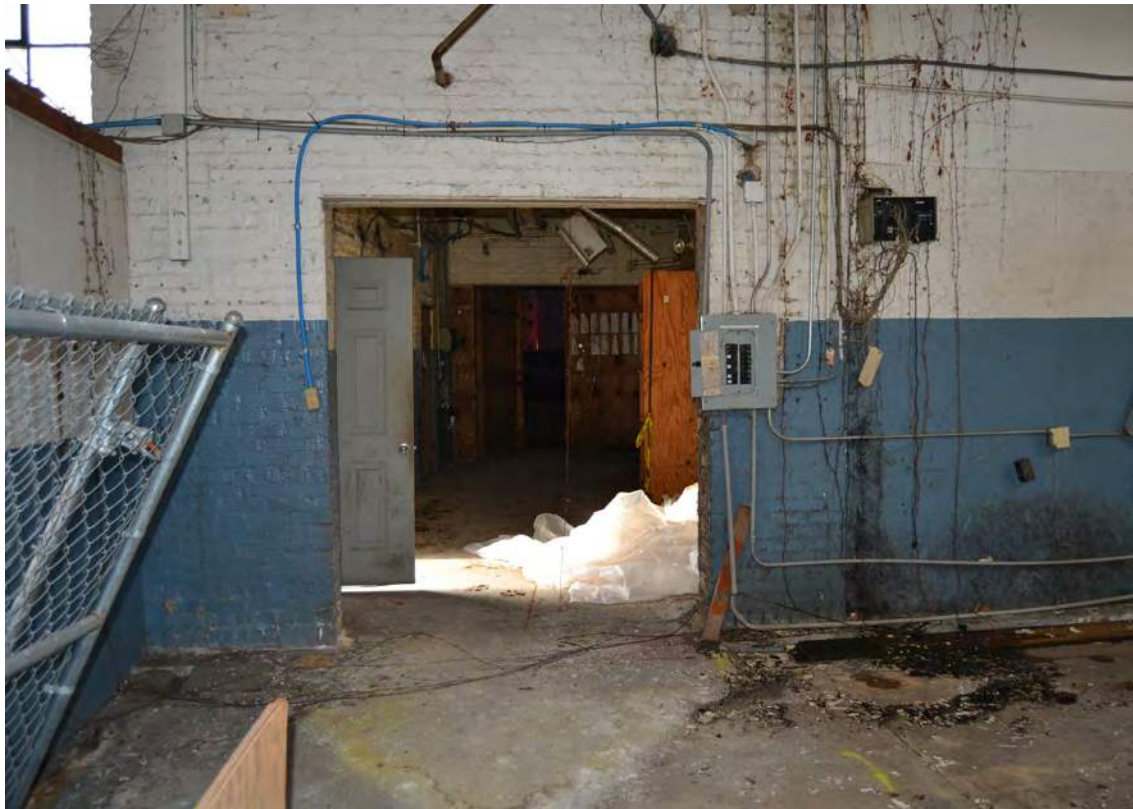
68. Grey Mill, 1926 Addition, Finishing Room, Looking North



69. Grey Mill, 1926 Addition, Finishing Room, Looking Southeast



70. Grey Mill, 1926 Addition, Finishing Room,
Looking Southwest



77. Grey Mill, 1926 Addition, Drying Room, Looking West to the Connector



78. Grey Mill, 1926 Addition, Drying Room, Looking East



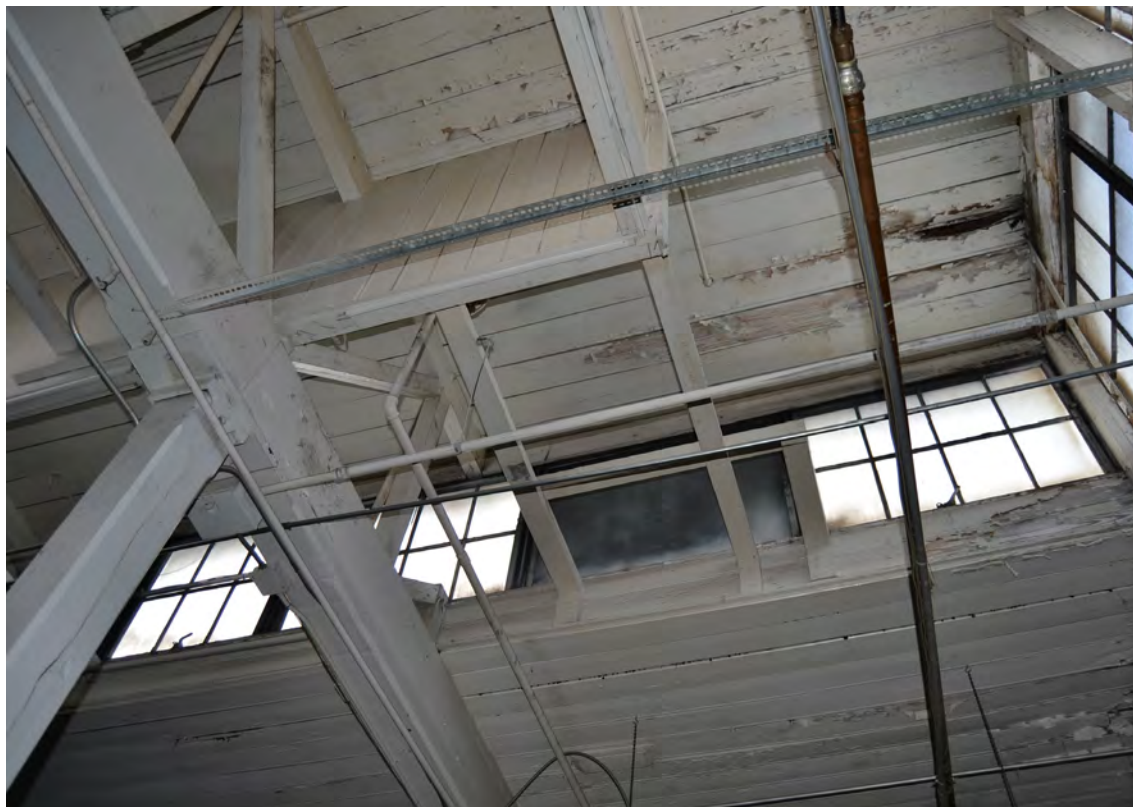
80. Grey Mill, 1926 Addition, Looking West



81. Grey Mill, 1926 Addition, Looking East



82. Grey Mill, 1926 Addition, Looking South



83. Grey Mill, 1926 Addition, Monitor Detail



86. Grey Mill, 1926 Addition, Looking Southeast



87. Grey Mill, 1970s Warehouse, Looking East



88. Grey Mill, 1970s Warehouse, Looking Northeast



89. Grey Mill, 1970s Warehouse, Looking East



90. Grey Mill, 1970s Warehouse, Looking West



91. Grey Mill, 1970s Warehouse, Looking Southeast

Grey Hosiery Mill, Hendersonville, NC
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93. Grey Mill, Courtyard, Looking South



94. Grey Mill, Courtyard, Looking South



95. Grey Mill, Courtyard, Looking Southwest



96. Grey Mill, Courtyard, Looking North



102. Grey Mill, Rear Courtyard, Looking North



103. Grey Mill, Rear Courtyard, Looking South



105. Grey Mill, Entrance to Basement, Looking North



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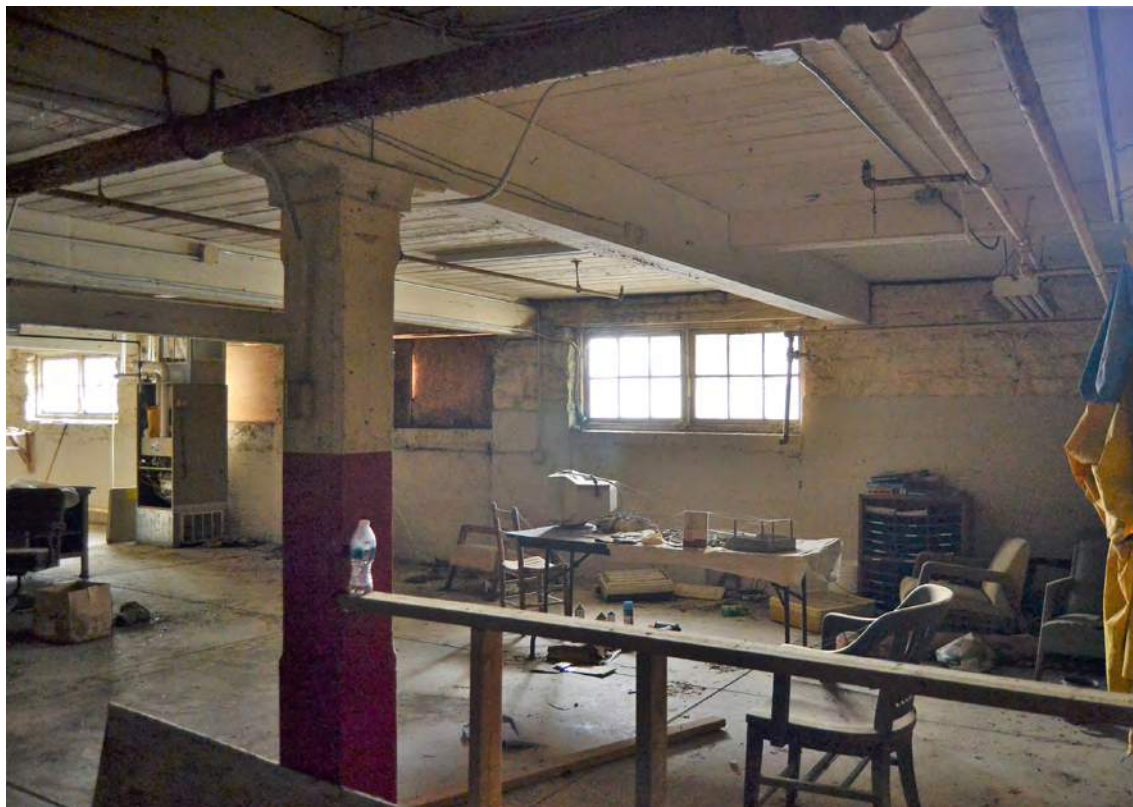
106. Grey Mill, Shipping and Storage Basement, Looking North



107. Grey Mill, Shipping and Storage Basement,
Looking East



108. Grey Mill, Shipping and Storage Basement, Looking North



109. Grey Mill, Shipping and Storage Basement,
Looking Southeast



110. Grey Mill, Shipping and Storage Warehouse, Looking East



111. Grey Mill, Shipping and Storage Warehouse,
Looking West



116. Grey Mill, Dye House Basement, Looking Northwest

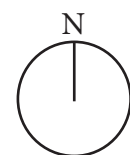


117. Grey Mill, Dye House Basement, Looking West

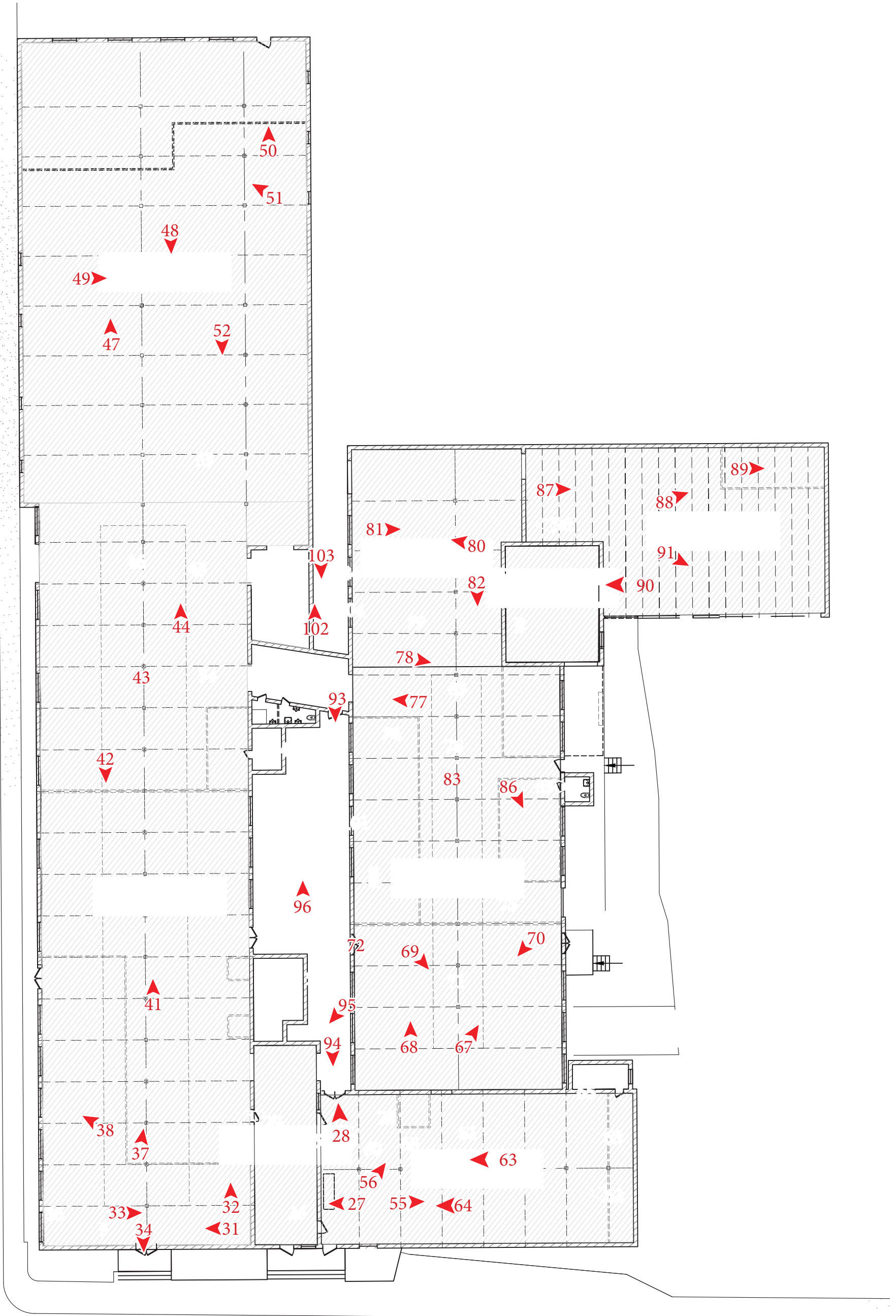


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Grey Hosiery Mill
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National Park Service
Part 1 Certification Photo Key
Site Plan

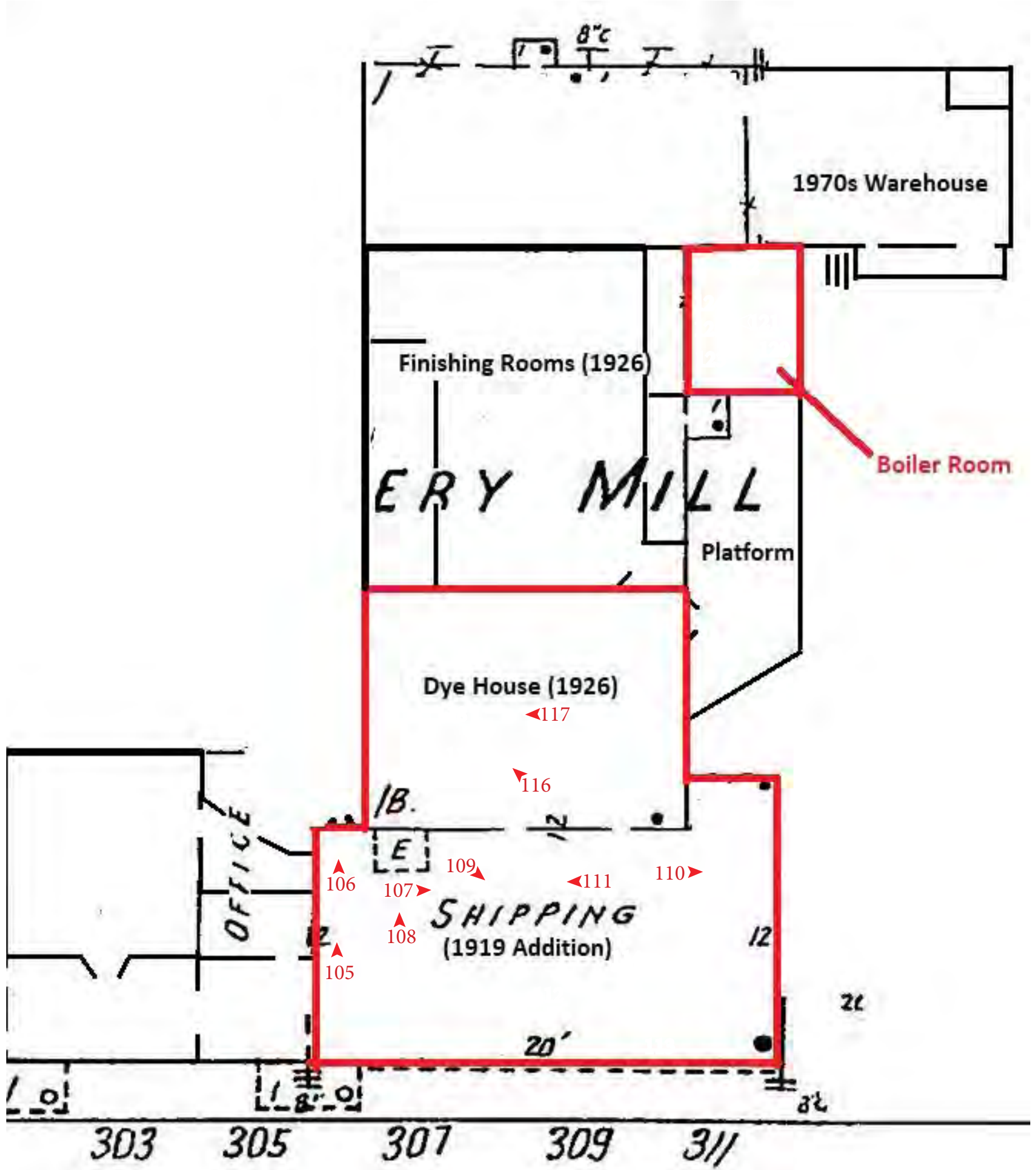


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National Park Service
 Part 1 Certification Photo Key
 First Floor Plan



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 301 Fourth Avenue East
 Hendersonville, NC 28792



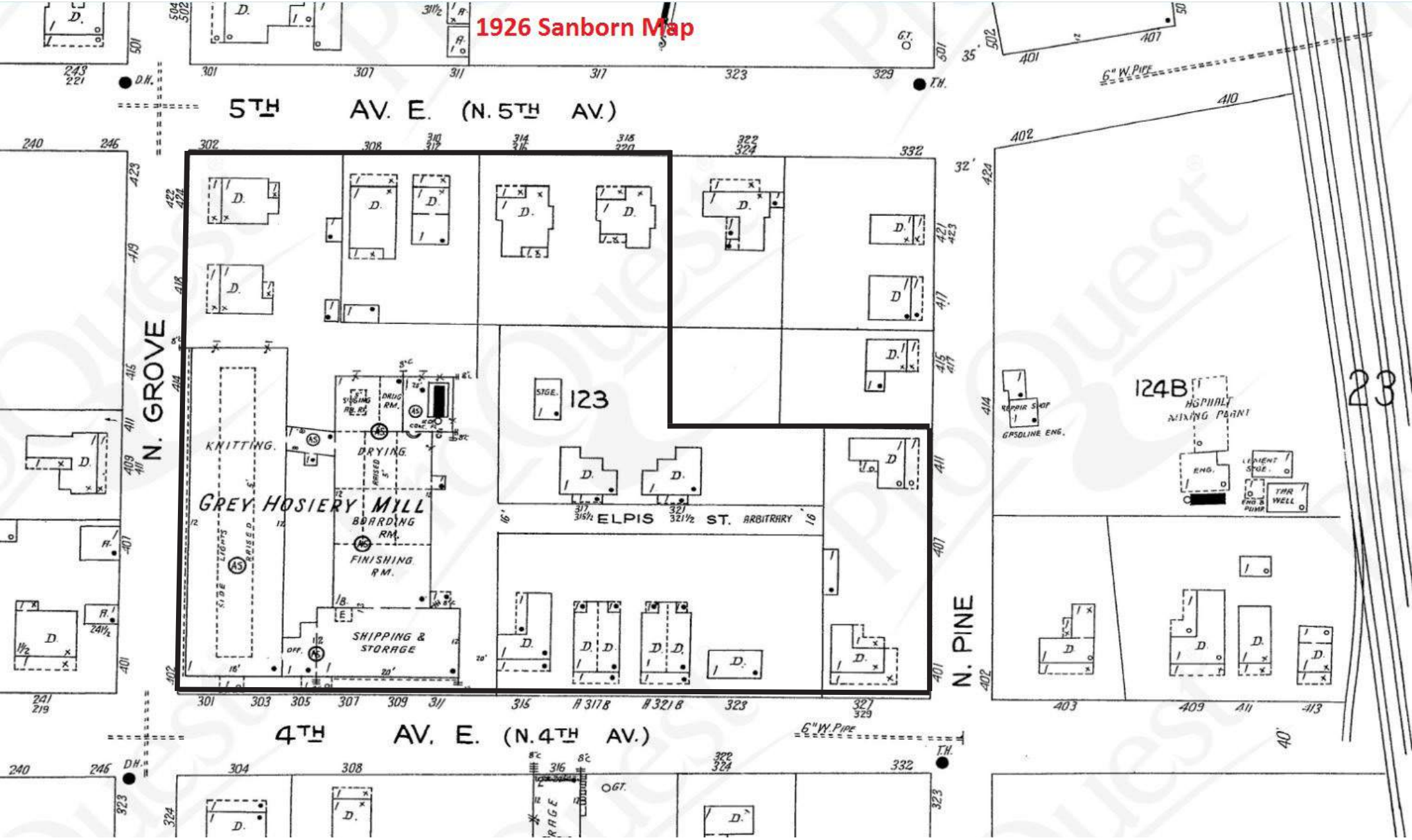
National Park Service
 Part 1 Certification Photo Key
 Basement Plan

Grey Hosiery Mill Hendersonville, NC

Local Landmark - Parcel History

Image Origin | Sanborn Fire Insurance
Image Date | 1922

**Outline shows proposed landmark boundaries



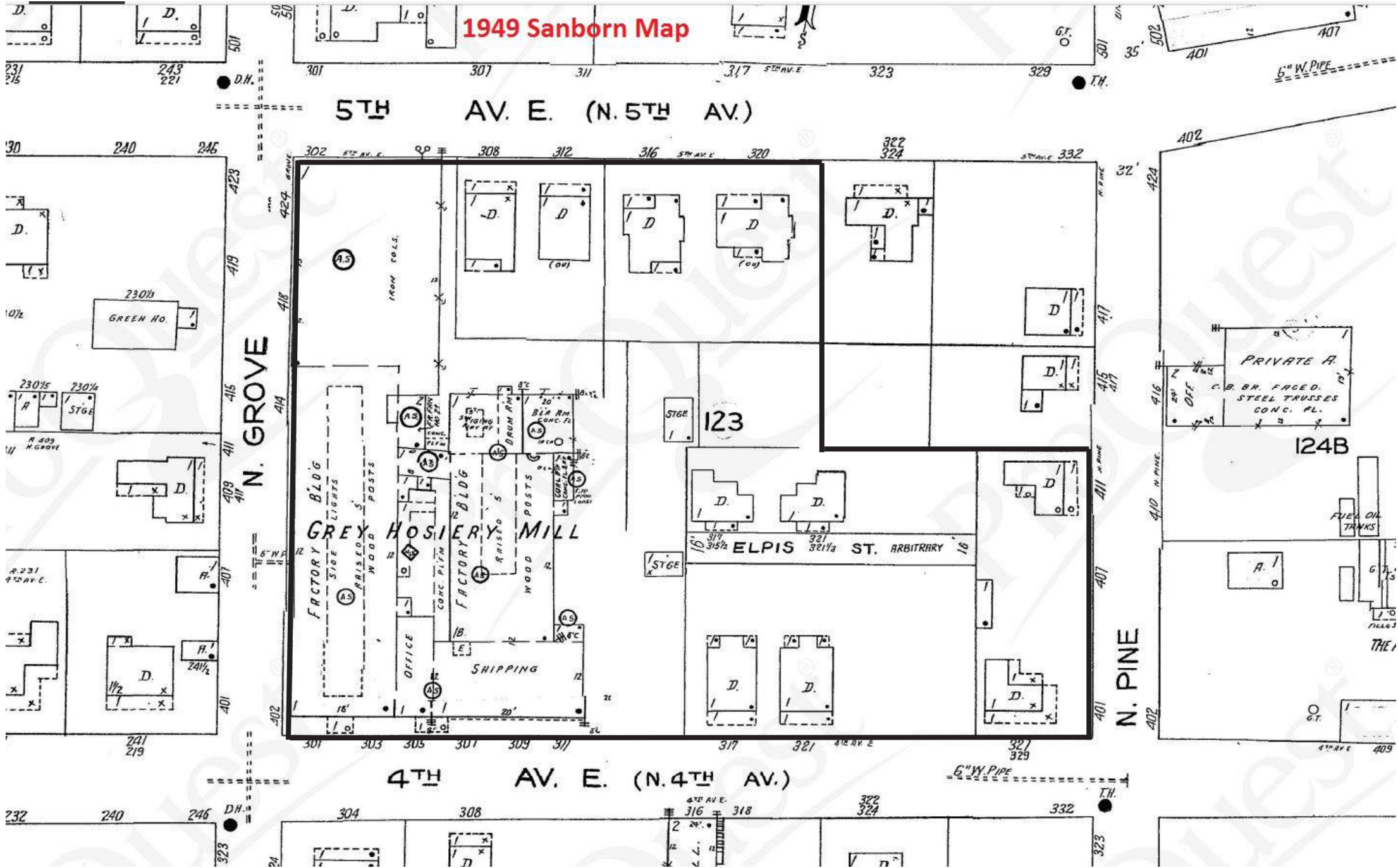
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Grey Hosiery Mill Hendersonville, NC

Local Landmark - Parcel History

Image Origin | Sanborn Fire Insurance
Image Date | 1949

**Outline shows proposed
landmark boundaries



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301 4th Avenue East

Hendersonville Parks & Recreation Center

Brunson's Furniture Center

Henderson County Partnership for...

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Memorial Park

Salvation Army

Google

**Grey Hosiery Mill - Hendersonville, NC
Proposed Boundary for Landmark
Designation**

