

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form

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This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic Properties of Fort Mill, S. C., c. 1779 - c. 1940

B. Associated Historic Contexts

The Growth and Development of Fort Mill, c. 1779 - c. 1940
The Commercial and Institutional Development of Fort Mill, c. 1860 - c. 1940
The Residential Development of Fort Mill, c. 1869 - c. 1940

C. Geographical Data

Corporate limits of the Town of Fort Mill, South Carolina

See continuation sheet

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

Mary W. Edmonds 4/21/92
Signature of certifying official Date
Mary W. Edmonds, Deputy SHPO, S.C. Dept. of Archives & History
State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Patrick Andrews 6/11/92
Signature of the Keeper of the National Register Date

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

The multiple property submission for the Historic Properties of Fort Mill, c. 1779 - c. 1940, includes one historic district, one complex of properties, and six individual properties within the town limits of Fort Mill. These resources, dating from c. 1779 to c. 1940, and illustrating the historic and architectural development of the community of Fort Mill from the late eighteenth century to the twentieth century, serve as visible reminders of the town's history. Fort Mill is located in the northeastern section of York County and developed as the commercial, industrial, and social center of the Fort Mill Township.

Additional Information

The Fort Mill Township is located in the northeast corner of York County, South Carolina. The town of Fort Mill is the most important community in the Township, and has served as its commercial, industrial, and cultural center for over 150 years. Prior to settlement by Europeans, the area was part of the large territory controlled by the Catawba Indians. It is thought that the Catawbas were of Siouan stock and moved into the area from the north sometime prior to contact with whites.¹ They were firmly established as the dominant tribe in the area when contact was initiated. There were several Catawba towns, some in the Fort Mill area, including Nauvassee.² The Catawbas may have been present when the great Spanish explorers de Soto (1539-40) and Pardo (1566-68) passed through the region, probably up the Catawba-Wateree Valley.³ The presence of a strong tribe in the area which is now eastern York County retarded the development of the area by settlers. The first known white settler of the area was Thomas Spratt. According to local tradition, he was passing through the area on the Catawba Path to settle farther south when he was invited by the Catawbas to live among them.⁴ Other early settlers included the Erwin, White, Elliott, and Garrison families, who were each able to negotiate for land with the Catawbas.⁵ The center of the settlement was north of present-day Fort Mill at a point where the Nations Ford Road crossed Steele Creek, and became known as "Little York."⁶ It contained a grist mill, store, tavern, several homes, and the first location of Unity Presbyterian Church. Gradually the center of the community shifted south toward the intersection of Nations Ford Road and Camden Road (now Tom Hall Street).⁸ Unity Church was moved southward to this vicinity in 1804 to the site of the present Old Unity Cemetery. A post office opened in 1820, and by 1830 the name Fort Mill had been adopted. It honored the old grist mill at the original site and a small garrison fort begun by the British in the 1750s just south of the present town limits.⁹ The Catawba Nation had been dwindling in numbers due to diseases and the impact of white culture, and a treaty in 1840 resulted in the relocation of most of the tribe to a reservation across the Catawba River east of present-day Rock Hill.

In 1852, the Charlotte, Columbia, and Augusta Railroad was completed through the area. This event had a major impact on the small community. The rail station provided a convenient point for farmers from the surrounding areas to bring their cotton and other crops

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for sale and shipment to markets. Cotton brokers and other merchants began to congregate near the railroad station, leading to the development of a commercial center for the community along present-day Main Street. The decade of the 1850s also saw the first concentrated residential areas begin to develop. Built chiefly for the new merchant class, these houses closely surrounded the commercial center.¹⁰ None of these residences remain today. The Civil War had a great impact on the small town, even though no encounters occurred in the area. The community sent a large number of men to serve in the Confederate Army. The presence of the railroad meant that the town had some importance as a supply point and trading point during the war. In April 1865, the Confederate Cabinet and President Jefferson Davis passed through the area. The President stayed at Springfield Plantation, two miles north of the town and the home of the Springs family. The Cabinet had a meeting on April 27, 1865, on the grounds of the William Elliott White House, just north of the present town limits. Both properties remain today and are listed in the National Register.

The town continued to grow during the years following the Civil War. As the numbers of houses and businesses increased, new churches and institutions were established. The Fort Mill Academy became a center of learning, and a number of civic organizations began to form. In 1887, an enterprise was begun which was to have a major influence on the development of the community. A group of local investors, led by Samuel Elliott White, organized the Fort Mill Manufacturing Company, a textile operation. A second mill, the Luna, was begun in 1892 and was later reorganized as a part of the Fort Mill Manufacturing Company. These two mills were the foundation of what is today Springs Industries, an international corporation¹¹ headquartered in Fort Mill with sales in 1989 of \$1.9 billion.¹¹ Following the construction of the textile mills, Fort Mill entered a period of rapid growth. In 1887, the town was described as including the "...railroad station and on the hill above it several stores. Nearby were two churches, a tavern, a school, a Post Office, a gin, a corn mill, and the homes of a number of the cotton landlords."¹² Within fourteen months of the development of the first cotton mill, the population had jumped from 400 to 900.¹³ The Fort Mill Manufacturing Company had built thirty mill houses for workers, and employed about 200 persons by 1890.¹⁴ By 1907, employment at the two mills reached 475.¹⁵ Although housing was being built for the mill workers, who were encouraged to purchase homes, perhaps twenty-five percent of the workers lived in the ten or more boarding houses in Fort Mill.¹⁶

The rapid growth in population led to increased commerce and the construction of additional stores. The presence of a large work

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force in the mills provided a base of customers who received a regular income. This factor added a welcomed stability for merchants who were accustomed to depending on area farmers who might have to curtail their business during years with bad crops. By 1889, the town boasted eight general stores, a bank, an insurance agency, a drug store, and the mill's company store.¹⁷ One of the problems which began to surface in the newly crowded commercial area was the threat of fires. A disastrous fire in 1894, for example,¹⁸ destroyed five stores, the post office, and a house on Main Street. Gradually, wooden commercial buildings were replaced with masonry. Many current downtown buildings result from this period of construction between 1900 and 1920. The presence of Confederate Park in the downtown area is the result of the donation of land by Samuel Elliott White about 1890. The monuments were erected between 1891 and 1900, and the bandstand in 1904.¹⁹ By the 1920s, the Main Street area had assumed roughly the appearance it has today. It flourished throughout the period of significance. Over the years, a number of storefronts have been altered with modern materials.

Residential resources in Fort Mill went through a period of rapid expansion after the establishment of the mills. This period began in 1887 and continued through about 1920. As the commercial area expanded, houses in the immediate vicinity were either demolished or moved. Other residential streets were developed to accommodate the growing number of merchants, clerks, and shopkeepers who were attracted to the town, as well as professionals such as doctors, educators, and ministers. Streets such as Confederate, Cleborne and Banks became more densely developed. Several homes built during earlier periods were expanded during this time of rapid growth (1887-1920), through the addition of new wings or second floors. The mill villages built by the textile company represent another important residential resource. These areas were surveyed in 1983 as part of the statewide South Carolina Textile Mills and Villages Survey. Because of the modifications to many of the houses, it was determined that the villages are not eligible for the National Register. The same is true of the mills themselves. Fort Mill Springs Mill # 2, the White Plant, has been heavily altered. Mill # 1, the original mill, was demolished in recent years, although the mill office building remains.

During the period of rapid growth in Fort Mill between 1887 and 1920, the town developed a number of institutions which have become important to the cultural life. Unity Presbyterian Church occupied its fourth site, and Baptist and Methodist congregations were begun. Organizations such as the Masons and local military companies, including Company K, 118th Infantry, South Carolina National Guard, became important. The

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Fort Mill Academy was an outstanding institution in the 1880s and attracted students from many towns in both Carolinas as well as from Fort Mill.²⁰ The buildings related to many of these institutions became important elements of the built environment. Growth was slower during the period from 1920 to 1940. The presence of the Springs Mills helped to buffer Fort Mill's residents from the effects of the Depression during the 1930s, as Springs made every effort to maintain employment in the face of declining sales. A limited number of commercial buildings were constructed during this period. The most important institutional building was the Armory, built as a WPA project in the late 1930s. Additional churches, both in the black and white communities, were established during this period as well.

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FOOTNOTES

¹ Douglas Summers Brown, The Catawba Indians: The People of the River. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1966, p.11.

² Catawba Regional Planning Council, Historic Sites Survey, York County, 1977, p. 45.

³ Joseph Judge, "Exploring Our Forgotten Century," National Geographic, March 1988, p. 335.

⁴ William R. Bradford, Jr., Out of the Past: A History of Fort Mill, South Carolina. (Fort Mill, S.C.: Bradford Publishing Company, 1980), p. 10.

⁵ Ibid., p. 11.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁰ Yorkville Enquirer (York, S.C.), 17 January 1936.

¹¹ Springs Industries, Inc., Fort Mill, S. C., 1989 Annual Report, p. 1.

¹² Elliott White Springs, Clothes Make The Man. (New York: J. J. Little & Ives, 1926), p. 28.

¹³ Nancy Biggs Thomas, "Fort Mill: Transition From a Farming to a Textile Community, 1880-1920" (Master's Thesis, Winthrop College, 1984), p. 85.

¹⁴ Ibid.

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¹⁵Ibid., p. 90.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 104.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 103.

¹⁸Marsha Murdock, Tales, Tips and Treasures. (Fort Mill, S.C.:
By the Author, 1984), p. 23.

¹⁹Evening Herald (Rock Hill, S.C.), 13 February 1952.

²⁰Palmer Grier Sherer, "A Partial History of Some of the Early
Schools and Educational Movements of York County" (Master's Thesis,
University of South Carolina, 1929), p. 39.

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Historic Properties of Fort Mill, S. C., c. 1779 - c. 1940

Fort Mill Downtown Historic District
Unity Presbyterian Church Complex
Wilson House
Banks-Mack House
Thornwell-Elliott House
Mack-Belk House
Mills House
National Guard Armory

Properties Within the Town Limits of Fort Mill, S. C. Already Listed
in the National Register and Contributing in Whole or in Part to
the Historic Properties of Fort Mill, S. C., c. 1779 - c. 1940
Multiple Property Submission:

John M. White House

9/12/85

F. Associated Property Types

I. Name of Property Type _____

II. Description

See continuation sheets.

III. Significance

IV. Registration Requirements

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet for additional property types

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

The multiple property nomination for Historic Properties of Fort Mill, c. 1779 - c. 1940 is based on information gathered in the Historic Resource Survey completed in June 1989 for the Town of Fort Mill. This survey was undertaken through a grant from the South Carolina Department of Archives and History by Mary Beth Gatza of Charlotte, N. C. Additional information on local history and contexts and on the development of specific properties was gathered from locally available materials, both published and unpublished, and on interviews with persons knowledgeable about local history and sources. The historic context was developed based on major periods of physical growth and development in Fort Mill. The property types were determined largely by function and use. The standards of integrity are based on National Register standards and the information available from survey data. The multiple property submission was developed by Paul M. Gettys Associates, Catawba, S. C. through a grant from the South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

See continuation sheet

H. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheets.

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> State historic preservation office | <input type="checkbox"/> Local government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other State agency | <input type="checkbox"/> University |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Federal agency | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other |

Specify repository: York County Library, 138 E. Black St., Rock Hill, S. C.

I. Form Prepared By

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city or town	<u>Catawba</u>	zip code	<u>29704</u>

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Section F. Associated Property Types

I. Name of Property Type : Commercial Buildings

II. Description

Commercial properties included in the Multiple Property submission are all located in the Fort Mill Downtown Historic District. They represent the development of a commercial core for the town. Most are masonry buildings of one or two stories, and were built to provide general mercantile space, financial services, or personal services. Typical forms include recessed entrances, show windows at the front, and transom windows above the show windows and doors. Most buildings have flat roofs, some with stepped parapets where side walls are visible. The buildings face Main Street, and many share side walls. Many of the commercial buildings have been altered through placement of modern materials on the storefronts, including metal replacement windows and doors, closure of the transom windows, and modern materials being placed over front walls.

The commercial buildings included in this property type conform to three of the compositional types identified by Richard Longstreth in The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture. These types are the one-part commercial block, the two-part commercial block, and the vault.

Subtypes:

A. One-Part Commercial Block

This form is composed of one-story commercial buildings, usually rectangular or square in form with a decorated facade. The type appears to have developed during the mid-nineteenth century and soon became commonly used. Most were used originally for retail stores, and included plate glass windows, an entrance, usually centered, and often transom window bands. The space above the windows may have room for advertising, and may include decorative elements, such as brickwork or metal panels or cornice. The stores are often built in rows or groups. In Fort Mill, most of the examples of this subtype are single buildings. Jones Drug Store (124 Main Street) is an excellent example of the type with cast iron facade and cornice, dating from about 1860. Other good examples are at 210 Main Street, 223 Main Street, and 225 Main Street, all of which feature brick panels and corbelling and date from around 1900.

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B. Two-Part Commercial Block

Generally limited to buildings of two to four stories, the two-part commercial block is characterized by a horizontal division into two distinct zones. These two areas reflect the division of space on the interior. The lower space includes more public areas, usually retail space, while the upper levels may include more private areas, including residential, office, or storage uses. The form was prevalent from the middle part of the nineteenth century until the 1950s. These buildings are often altered by the placement of modern materials on the storefront level. The upper levels have often been left vacant as the nature of uses in downtown areas has changed. In Fort Mill, a number of Main Street buildings follow this form, many of them dating from around 1900. A number of these buildings have been altered by closure of the upper windows, reflecting the loss of tenants on the upper levels. Good examples of the form include 227 Main Street, 229 Main Street, and 231 Main Street. The First National Bank/Old Town Hall at 218 Main Street represents a variation of the form, with vertical masonry bands.

C. Vault

The vault form has a facade characterized by a tall and narrow center opening, usually with an arched surround. The form has often been used for bank buildings, beginning in the early nineteenth century, but emerging as a much more common type in the early twentieth century. In addition to banks, the form was also used for theaters, and sometimes for retail stores. The Spratt Building, 215 Main Street, has a central vault opening which has been altered with a modern door and windows. It was built in 1911 and housed the Savings Bank, the Fort Mill Depository, and the Bank of Fort Mill, and more recently offices.

III. Significance

The commercial buildings of the Fort Mill Downtown Historic District relate to three important elements of the town's historic context. The downtown area began its development as a result of the location of the first railroad through the area in 1852. Commercial uses began to cluster around the railroad depot. This development pattern was accelerated by the development of the textile industry in 1887 and the resulting population growth and economic expansion. The present form and buildings to a large degree represent rebuilding

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efforts after fires destroyed a large number of earlier buildings. Thus, the property type represents an association with the broad pattern of the growth and development of the Town of Fort Mill. The properties have significance in the areas of architecture and commerce.

IV. Registration Requirements

Buildings to be included in the Commercial Buildings property type should have a clear relationship to the development of the commercial core of Fort Mill. They should reflect the period of significance, c. 1860 - c. 1940, established in the historic context, The Commercial and Institutional Development of Fort Mill. Most properties of this type should illustrate architectural merit and workmanship typical of commercial structures of the period, including features such as decorative brickwork, stone or wood trim, and decorative cornices. Although some modifications may have occurred in materials and design, the basic integrity of the building should be intact.

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I. Name of Property Type: Residences

II. Description

There are five residences included in the multiple property submission for Fort Mill. They represent residential resources developed in the town during its growth as a railroad center from 1852 to about 1875, and during the period of growth resulting from the development of the textile industry, 1887-1920. Four of the houses are two-story and four have frame construction with weatherboard siding; the fifth is a brick house. Two houses have gable roofs and three have hip roofs. The predominant roof material is composition shingles; one house has a slate roof. The foundations are brick or brick pier with fill. The houses have a variety of stylistic influences. Three houses are of the late Victorian period, with evidences of Italianate and folk Victorian influences. Four of the five houses have undergone alterations, including additions to three and the moving of one house. Property subtypes are defined on the basis of the existing stylistic characteristics, based on A Field Guide to American Houses by Virginia and Lee McAlester.

Subtypes:

A. Victorian Era Houses (c.1860 - c. 1900)

Residential architecture in the second half of the nineteenth century reflected a number of influences, and a variety of styles developed based on European precedents. The most common styles which developed during this period include Second Empire, Stick, Queen Anne, and Eastlake. However, many houses reflect no strict conformity to a style, but have adopted some characteristics of styles to preexisting forms. The industrialization of the period made possible the wide production of building components in a standardized, mass-produced fashion. Elements such as doors, windows, roofing, siding, and decorative elements could be utilized by local builders in a wide variety of settings. The ability to adapt these elements to any style house led to local variations and adaptations based on general stylistic forms and readily available mass-produced components. Many vernacular interpretations developed. In Fort Mill, the house which most closely follows a Victorian era style is the John M. White House, listed in the National Register and an excellent example of the Second Empire style. The houses from this period which are included in the multiple property submission have all undergone alterations since their construction. The Mack-Belk House (119 Banks Street), is a brick two-story house which was originally constructed

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about 1861 as a one-story residence. About 1890, the house was expanded and a second story added. Elements of Italianate influences characterize this house. The Wilson-Hull House (107 Clebourne Street) was built about 1869 and moved from its original location on Main Street in the 1920s. It has decorative elements of the period, including sawn brackets. The Thornwell-Elliott House (118 Confederate Street), is a one-story frame house with elements of Queen Anne detailing.

B. Classical Revival Houses (c.1900 - c.1915)

Around the turn of the century, there was a reaction against the exuberance and free characteristics of the Victorian Era in residential architecture. Much of the influence comes from the World's Columbian Exhibition held in Chicago in 1893. It had a classical theme, and many of the nation's best-known architects and designers planned buildings to reflect the theme. The buildings were photographed and widely reported. Soon, public and domestic architecture began to reflect the new interest in classical forms. In a reaction against the complex and often very complicated forms of the Victorian Era, these classical forms offered a return to simpler, more balanced designs. This period is generally known as Classical Revival or Neoclassical, and it followed to some degree the development of the Colonial Revival movement, which sought to recapture the purity of design from the nation's earliest periods. Classical Revival involved adaptations from the Greek and Roman classical designs, with many local vernacular interpretations and with the use of available materials. In Fort Mill, the best example of this period is the Mills-Mack House (122 Confederate Street), built in 1906. The Banks-Mack House (329 Confederate Street) is an older house (c.1875) which was greatly enlarged and expanded in 1910, and which was given many Classical Revival elements at this time.

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III. Significance

These properties are significant because of their association with the residential development of Fort Mill from its early years through the early twentieth century. They reflect the diverse architectural styles which have been popular in residential architecture during the period. Many of the homes are associated with leaders in the business community, the churches and schools, and the civic life of the developing town. In general, these resources should be listed under the Architecture area of significance.

IV. Registration Requirements

To qualify for listing, properties included in this property type within the multiple property submission should retain integrity of materials, design, craftsmanship, and association with the period of significance. Some alterations are acceptable, including minor repairs and additions, changes to windows and doors of a minor nature, and replacement roof materials.

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