NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. Aug. 2002)

OMB No. 1024-0018

VLR 6/19/8
NRHP 9/12/8

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Commerce Street Industrial Historic District
other names/site number 123-5420

2. Location

street & number Commerce, Upper Appomattox, West, Dunlop, and South Streets not for publication N/A
city or town Petersburg vicinity N/A
state Virginia code VA county Ind. City code 730 zip code 23803

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ____ nationally ____ statewide X locally. (___See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

M Catherine Busser — July 30, 2008
Signature of certifying official — Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this 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 _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- X private
- X public-local
- ___ public-State
- ___ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- ___ building(s)
- X district
- ___ site
- ___ structure
- ___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
12	1	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
13	1	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/ EXTRACTION	manufacturing facility
COMMERCE/TRADE	store
DOMESTIC	single dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/ EXTRACTION	
COMMERCE/TRADE	vacant
DOMESTIC	store
	single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS	Colonial Revival
OTHER	Vernacular

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
roof METAL: Standing Seam Metal, OTHER
walls WOOD: Weatherboard, BRICK
other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

__X__ 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.

__X__ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

____ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

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

____ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
____ B removed from its original location.
____ C a birthplace or a grave.
____ D a cemetery.
____ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
____ F a commemorative property.
____ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1880 - 1958

Significant Dates 1915

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder N/A

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
____ previously listed in the National Register
____ previously determined eligible by the National Register
____ designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # ____
____ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #____

Primary Location of Additional Data

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property 9.6 acres

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

Chase City Quadrangle

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1 18	285587	4122538	**2** 18	284952	4122269	**3** 18	284911	4122350	**4** 18	285358	4122548

____ 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.)

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11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Kimberly M. Chen
organization Johannas DesignGroup date April 2008
street & number 1901 West Cary Street telephone 804.358.4993
city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23220

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Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets
Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.
Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.
Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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Property Owner

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

name MULTIPLE (see attached list)
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this

form to the National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

Summary Description

The Commerce Street Industrial Historic District is located on the west side of the City of Petersburg in the nineteenth and early-twentieth century residential neighborhood of Pride's Field. The linear district is arrayed along the north side of Commerce Street in the 800-1100 blocks, and is dominated by four early-twentieth century industrial buildings – Petersburg Trunk and Bag Company (ca. 1915), Titmus Optical Company (ca. 1919), Rogers and Madison Trunk Corporation (ca. 1921), and Southern Chemical Company (ca. 1925). These buildings have been expanded numerous times during the intervening years and now form complex industrial compounds. Architecturally, they represent a vernacular, industrial aesthetic that was tied to practical construction methods and flexible space, and not to a sophisticated design ethic. Interspersed within these industrial buildings are a few late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century residential and commercial buildings that are remnants of the modest dwellings and stores that once lined the north side of Commerce Street. The frame dwellings and commercial building are also vernacular in nature and embody minimal stylistic influences. The industrial character of the proposed district sets it apart from the rest of Pride's Field which is largely residential in nature. The industrial integrity of the district is intact and continues to convey its relevance as an early-twentieth century industrial area where modest dwellings and commercial buildings stood among the factories.

Detailed Description

The Commerce Street Industrial Historic District is located in the western portion of the City of Petersburg in an area known as Pride's Field. The district is roughly bordered on the east by North South Street, on the south by Commerce Street, and on the north by the right-of-way for the Upper Appomattox Canal and the Seaboard Air Line Rail Road. The western boundary is defined by the property line between 1131 and 1201 Commerce Street. The building at 1201 Commerce Street is a large warehouse, constructed in 1987. More specifically, the northern boundary of the proposed district is the same as the southern boundary of the Battersea North/Pride's Field Historic District, which includes 1112 Upper Appomattox Street (123-5035-0149) that is located on the south side of the right-of-way and excluded from the Commerce Street Industrial Historic District boundary. The eastern and a small portion of the southern boundaries of the district coincide with the western and northern boundaries of the Petersburg Old Town and Folly Castle Historic Districts. Visually, the linear district is defined by a collection of industrial buildings that are positioned between the grass berm that represents the right-of-way for the Upper Appomattox Canal and the Seaboard Air Line Rail Road and the north side of Commerce Street.

The larger Pride's Field neighborhood is residential in character with interspersed stores and churches. The Commerce Street Industrial Historic District is a twentieth century industrial corridor in the heart of a nineteenth and early-twentieth century residential neighborhood. The scale of the four industrial complexes dominates the modest one- and two-story dwellings that remain on the north side of Commerce Street and the west side of North West Street. The design of the residential buildings is

consistent with other dwellings found throughout the Pride's Field neighborhood and in other sections of the City of Petersburg. The industrial buildings are representative of the early-twentieth century design ethic that was focused on functionality and flexibility. The buildings possess a high level of integrity and continue to convey their role in the twentieth century industrial development of the City of Petersburg.

When platted in 1811, Pride's Field extended south from the south bank of the Appomattox River to Brickhouse Run and west from North South Street to just beyond Wyoming (North West) Street. The five-mile Upper Appomattox Canal cut across Pride's Field between Pine (High) and Commerce streets. The "Company Square," the location of the canal turning basin, occupied the block bound by South, Commerce, Dunlop, and Pine (High) streets. Pride's Field was subdivided into approximately 121 lots. The majority of the lots, especially those to the south of Washington Street were 145 feet wide and 300 feet deep while the lots on the north side of Commerce Street, between the street and the canal, were only 100 feet wide and 280 feet deep. Sixty-foot wide streets organized the lots into a grid pattern. The 900 through 1000 addresses are contained in a single block as are the 1100 through 1200 addresses. These long blocks are likely the result of not wanting to provide bridges over the Upper Appomattox Canal in the nineteenth century. The east-west streets were Plum (McKenzie), Pine (High), Commerce, Pearl (Hinton), Washington, Shepherd, Rome, and Farmers. The north-south streets were South, Dunlop, and Wyoming (West). The original grid pattern of the blocks in Pride's Field is still evident and unlike the rest of the city that presents an irregular organization of streets and blocks.[1] By 1903, the Seaboard Air Line Rail Road cut diagonally across the "Company Square" from both the northeast and the southeast. The two lines joined together west of Dunlop Street and ran parallel to the canal, and a depot was built at the corner of Dunlop and the "canal bank".[2]

During the early-nineteenth century, industrial buildings and warehouses were concentrated around the Company Square, while the rest of Pride's Field was sparsely developed well into the 1850s. These nineteenth century factories were all demolished and replaced by new and expanded industrial buildings during the early-twentieth century. The four twentieth century industrial buildings in the district dominate the north side of Commerce Street and share a similar architectural character. They are all constructed of brick and two to four stories in height. They often present a narrow profile to the street and it is this facade that usually displays a minimal level of architectural elaboration. The other elevations are composed of regularly placed window openings.

The first of the twentieth-century industrial buildings to be constructed in the district was the Petersburg Trunk and Bag Company factory (123-5420-0008). The Petersburg Trunk and Bag Company factory is composed of five sections that were constructed between ca. 1915 and ca. 1948. This complex of interconnected industrial buildings is located on the west side of Dunlop Street between Commerce Street and right-of-way for the Upper Appomattox Canal on the site of the ca. 1860 Hoag/Noltenius Tobacco factory. The first two sections are four stories high, three-bays wide and nineteen-bays deep. The next section of the building to the west, built ca. 1920, is two stories in height and constructed of bricks laid in a six-course American bond pattern. The three brick portions of the building maintain a continuous wall

plane on the north and south elevations and a consistent fenestration pattern of regularly spaced punched openings with segmental arched-heads. The next section to the west is two stories in height and consists of frame construction with metal siding on three sides and concrete block on the west elevation. The metal clad portion of the building is projected to the north beyond the adjacent brick facades and has two rows of industrial steel-sash windows on the south elevation and steel windows placed high on the east elevation. The final portion of the building was erected ca. 1948 and is one story in height and constructed of bricks laid in a six-course American bond pattern. The Dunlop Street facade, built ca. 1915, is the most articulated elevation. Four story pilasters define the edges of the three-bay facade. The pilasters are corbeled near the top of the building and edge a stepped parapet with a projected centered block with flanking corbels. The floor lines are defined by a corbeled belt course. On the first and second stories there are central, double-leaf, diagonal bead board doors with upper lights. Flanking these doors are paired, wooden, six-over-six, double-hung sash windows. There are three windows each on the third and fourth stories. The windows have brick rowlock sills and all of the openings -- doors and windows -- have jack arches with a corbeled header course at the top.

In 1919, Titmus Optical (123-5420-0005) began a building campaign that would last for the next fifty years. According to City of Petersburg records and the Sanborn maps there were approximately thirty buildings constructed during a thirty year period from the 1930s to the 1960s, which culminated in the current complex. The Titmus Optical complex occupies the entire 1000 block of Commerce Street, from the street face to the right-of-way. The first section of the Titmus Optical building was constructed in 1919 on the site of the J. W. Phillips Wood and Lumber yard. The building carried an Upper Appomattox Street address and is now embedded in the multi-building complex. Two more sections were added in 1928 and 1931 to the north side of the original building. The Commerce Street elevation is composed of four distinct sections near the center of which is the most articulated elevation – the former office. The office portion of the building, constructed in the mid-1930s, was a free standing building and was the first of the Titmus buildings to face Commerce Street. It is a two-story, five-bay Colonial Revival composition constructed of brick laid in a stretcher bond pattern. The facade is organized into three sections by brick pilasters set on a granite pedestal with granite bases and capitals. The pilasters support a dentiled-cornice with a plain frieze. Above the cornice is a brick parapet with granite coping. The center portion of the facade on the first story is dominated by a centered entrance with a granite, pedimented-architrave with Doric pilasters and a dentiled cornice. The entrance is approached by granite steps with granite cheek walls. The remaining bays on the first and second stories have two, six-over-six, double-hung wooden sash windows. The windows have finished granite sills and brick jack arches with granite key stones. This elevation is in sharp contrast to the other sections of the building and its stylistic elements were likely intended to convey the importance of this section of the building as “the office.” Located to the east of the office block are two large industrial buildings. Both are constructed of brick laid in a five-course American bond pattern, have stepped parapets with concrete coping and the door and window openings have concrete sills and lintels. The eastern most building is one-story, nine-bay block and the next section to the west is a two-story, eight-bay mass. To the west of the office block is a two-story, fifteen-bay warehouse building constructed of brick laid in a stretcher bond pattern with concrete coping

at the top of the parapet. This mass of the building extends along West Street for the entire depth of the lot to the railroad right-of-way. Located near the center of the Titmus complex is a mid-twentieth century steel water tower.

The Rogers and Madison Trunk Company (123-5420-0007) is a complex of four interconnected industrial buildings sited on the north side of Commerce Street in the 1100 block. The center two buildings in this complex were built ca. 1921. The western most of these two buildings is set closer to the sidewalk and is a two-story, three-bay industrial building constructed of brick laid in a five-course American bond pattern with terracotta coping at the top of the parapet. The symmetrical building has a central entrance with flanking triple, wooden, six-over-six, double-hung sash windows with brick rowlock sills and concrete lintels. There are three similar windows on the second story. The central entrance has a segmental arched head with slightly recessed double-leaf, diagonal bead board doors. The facade corbels out on the sides just above the second story windows and forms a front parapet with metal coping. The second building is sited to the east and set back from the facade of the western building. It is a two-story, five-bay industrial building constructed of brick laid in a five-course American bond pattern with a five-part stepped parapet with concrete coping. Centered in the facade on the first and second stories are slightly recessed double-leaf, diagonal bead board doors. To the west of the central doors are two, stacked, wooden, one-over-one, double-hung wood sash windows. There are two similar windows on the east side of the second story. On the first story to the east of the central entrance is a wooden, single-leaf, flush door with a transom above. The door is approached by three concrete steps. In the eastern most bay is a pair of wooden, one-over-one, double-hung wood sash windows. All of the windows have brick rowlock sills and all of the openings have segmental arched heads. These two buildings are connected by a two-story brick and corrugated metal hyphen. To the west of the two original buildings is a ca. 1960, one-story, three-bay industrial building constructed of brick laid in a five-course American bond pattern with terracotta coping at the top of the parapet. The asymmetrical facade has a three-part, industrial steel sash window with ten-lights in each section in the western most bay and a ten-light industrial steel sash in the eastern most bay. The windows have steel lintels and concrete sills. The double-leaf steel door with six lights in each leaf and a transom above is located between the windows. The door has a concrete threshold. It is attached to the western building at the north end by a one-story connector. A ca. 1960, metal Quonset building is attached to the east side of the eastern most of the two original buildings.

Southern Chemical Company factory (123-5420-0002) is a grouping of interconnected industrial buildings, constructed between ca. 1925 and ca.1960, that occupy the north side of the 800 block of Commerce Street and the east side of Dunlop Street. The earliest portion of this complex was built ca. 1925, and is a two-story, five-bay building constructed of brick laid in a stretcher bond pattern. The building is set on a raised foundation and the primary entrance is centered in the facade at the elevated first story level. The entrance is approached by a series of concrete steps enclosed by brick cheek walls with finished concrete caps. The entry is protected by a suspended metal canopy. There are a total of eight, twenty-light (four panes wide by five panes tall) industrial steel sashes on the first and second stories of the facade and four, twelve-light (four panes wide by three panes tall) industrial steel sashes in

the elevated foundation. All of the windows have brick row lock sills and soldier course lintels. The windows are stacked vertically one above the other with two windows on each side of the entrance. There are recessed brick panels between the windows at the first and second stories and a continuous recessed panel above the second story windows. Above the recessed panel is a five-part stepped parapet with a corbeled brick coping. Built at the same time and later connected to this primary building on the east by a hyphen located at the north end of the buildings is a one-story, three-bay brick building with a stepped parapet. The Titmus Optical Company purchased the Southern Chemical Company buildings ca. 1941 and subsequently constructed two additional buildings. Built ca. 1956 and connected to the west side of the Southern Chemical factory by a hyphen at the north end is a one-story, concrete block warehouse building that extends to Dunlop Street. Built ca 1970 and connected to the east of the one-story ca. 1921 brick building is a two-story, five-bay concrete block warehouse. There are two, overhead load doors flanking the center of the facade, with a single leaf flush metal door with a light to the east and west. In the last bay on the east side of the facade is a twenty-light (four panes wide by five panes tall) industrial steel sash. The doors are approached by concrete steps. There are no openings on the second story of the facade. The one noncontributing building in the district, 202 North South Street (123-5420-0009), is a ca. 2000, one-story, concrete block warehouse. It further illustrates the continued industrialization of the north side of Commerce Street in the later half of the twentieth century.

The continued industrialization of Petersburg and railroad development in the 1830s led to a population boom between 1830 and 1850 that spurred residential development in Pride's Field. [3] In 1856, just six years after Petersburg became a City, *The Daily Express* gives the following account of growth to the south and west sides of the City.

> To the south and west in 1851, there were open fields, and ponds, and groves... Battersea and a few small houses were all that the west end could boast. Since then, in both sections, beautiful streets have been laid off, and are now garnished with villas, cottages, and dwellings of every description.[4]

The 1897 Sanborn Map of the Pride's Field neighborhood shows that the mid-nineteenth century dwellings had been supplemented by additional residential and commercial development. The 800 block between South and Dunlop streets had three modest dwellings, a church, a blacksmith shop, a meat market, a grocery store, and a large vacant lot near the center. The long block between Dunlop and West Street (900-1000) was almost completely developed with modest one, 1 ½ and two-story dwellings. Three of these dwellings had attached stores. The west side of South Street, abutting the district, was industrial in character. The east side of Dunlop Street was residential in character while the west side of the street was dominated by the I.P. Hoag and Company Trunk Factory (ca. 1860 Hoag/Noltenius Tobacco factory). The east and west sides of West Street were occupied by one and two-story residential and commercial buildings. During the twentieth century all of the mid-nineteenth century dwellings and commercial buildings were demolished along with many of the houses and stores constructed in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Today, seven late-nineteenth or early-

twentieth century dwellings and one commercial building remain in the historic district.

The adjacent North Battersea/Pride's Field Historic District nomination provides a description of the houses found throughout Pride's Field, the majority of which were built in the late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century.

> The overwhelming character of the neighborhood is of frame, two-story houses on low brick foundations with a few smaller, one-story dwellings….There are few rear ells on the houses. Instead, the houses have one-story, usually shed-roof extensions across the full width of the rear. The vast majority of the houses have front porches, usually a full-width porch although several of the double houses have porches only at the entries.[5]

The double house and cottage are not only found in Pride's Field but also in almost every Petersburg neighborhood. The seven remaining dwellings and the one extant commercial building are representative of the simple buildings that once lined the north side of Commerce Street and the side streets and are typical of those found elsewhere in Petersburg. Four late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century cottages remain in the historic district. Two of the cottages, 817 and 921 Commerce Street, appear to date from the 1880s, and 1107 Commerce and 222 North West streets appear to date from the first decades of the twentieth century. All are frame dwellings set on low brick foundations, and the two older dwellings have side-gabled roofs while the other two have hipped roofs. Only 222 North West Street (123-5420-0013) has a full-width porch. The other three have porches centered on the entrances. All of the houses have side-hall plans except 1107 Commerce Street (123-5420-0006) which has a center-hall plan. The dwelling at 817 Commerce Street (123-5420-0001) is the only one that is 1 1/2–stories in height, and is the only cottage that is also a double house.

There are three, two-story dwellings that face North West Street, one of which 218 North West Street (123-5420-0012), is a double house. Dating from the first decades of the twentieth century, the two-story houses are frame and set on low foundations with full-width porches on their facades. The houses at 208 (123-5420-0010 and 214 North West Street (123-5420-0011) have hipped roofs and Doric columns on the porches. These Doric columns are one of the few stylistic elements found on any of the dwellings in the historic district. The overall lack of decorative details is one of the primary differences between the dwellings in this historic district and those found in the North Battersea section of the larger Pride's Field neighborhood where Italianate decorative influences including bracketed and paneled cornices on the house and porch are common.[6]

While much altered, the only building in the district that displays the stylistic influences described in the North Battersea district is the store and dwelling located on the northeast corner of Commerce and Dunlop streets. Built ca. 1900, 853 Commerce Street (123-5420-0003) is a two-story, four-bay commercial building with a recessed two-story, two-bay residential wing and a further recessed one-story, one-bay, flat-roofed wing. The two-story portions of the building are covered with a standing seam metal,

hipped roof. The frieze on the commercial block has been covered with asbestos shingles but widely spaced brackets are still visible. The wooden storefront has a metal base and wooden, box cornice with a plain frieze at the top. To the east of the storefront is a single-leaf, four-panel wooden door that is protected by a gable-roofed canopy that is supported by wooden brackets. The two-story, two-bay porch that extends the full width of the residential wing has square posts with brackets on the first story, and turned posts and a picket balustrade on the second story.

Today, the grid pattern and the organization of the blocks established by the 1811 plat for Pride's Field is still evident and the right-of-way for the Upper Appomattox Canal and the Seaboard Air Line Rail Road is expressed by an undeveloped grass berm. The early and mid-nineteenth century dwellings and commercial buildings that once stood in the district have all been demolished and replaced by later development. The standing late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century dwellings and commercial building are remnants of the vernacular working class housing and neighborhood services that once thrived in the shadows of the industrial buildings. These buildings are similar to those found throughout the Pride's Field neighborhood and the City of Petersburg. The early-nineteenth century industrial buildings that once stood near the turning basin and adjacent to the canal have been demolished and replaced in the early-twentieth century by new industrial buildings. The four industrial complexes that dominate the district are also vernacular in form and characterize a twentieth-century industrial architecture based on practicality and function.

Inventory

817 Commerce Street **123-5420-0001**
Primary Resource Information: Double Dwelling; one-story, frame; Vernacular; ca. 1880
Individual Resource Status: Double Dwelling Contributing

827-839 Commerce Street **123-5420-0002**
Primary Resource Information: Factory, Southern Chemical Co., three-story, brick; Vernacular; ca. 1925; with warehouse additions by Titmus Optical, ca. 1952; concrete block; one-story; and ca. 1958; concrete block; two-story, five bay
Individual Resource Status: Factory Contributing

853 Commerce Street **123-5420-0003**
Primary Resource Information: Store and Dwelling; two-story, frame; Victorian, ca. 1890
Individual Resource Status: Store and Dwelling Contributing

921 Commerce Street **123-5420-0004**
Primary Resource Information: Dwelling; one-story, frame; Vernacular, ca. 1880
Individual Resource Status: Dwelling Contributing

1015 Commerce Street **123-5420-0005**
Primary Resource Information: Factory, Titmus Optical; one and two-story, multiple buildings, brick;

Colonial Revival and Vernacular; ca. 1919 – 1960
Primary Resource Information: Water Tower; steel structure
Individual Resource Status: Factory Contributing
Individual Resource Status: Water Tower Contributing

1107 Commerce Street **123-5420-0006**
Primary Resource Information: Dwelling; one-story, frame; Vernacular, ca. 1910
Individual Resource Status: Dwelling Contributing

1131 Commerce Street **123-5420-0007**
Primary Resource Information: Factory, Rogers and Madison; one and two-story, multiple buildings, brick; Vernacular; ca. 1921; Quonset hut
Individual Resource Status: Factory Contributing

214 North Dunlop Street **123-5420-0008**
Primary Resource Information: Factory, Petersburg Trunk and Bag Company; four-story, three-bay, brick; ca. 1915 with additions
Individual Resource Status: Factory Contributing

202 North South Street **123-5420-0009**
Primary Resource Information: Warehouse; one-story, concrete block; No Style Listed; ca. 2000
Individual Resource Status: Warehouse **Noncontributing**

208 North West Street **123-5420-0010**
Primary Resource Information: Dwelling; two-story, frame; Vernacular; ca. 1910
Individual Resource Status: Dwelling Contributing

214 North West Street **123-5420-0011**
Primary Resource Information: Dwelling; two-story, frame; Vernacular; ca. 1920;
Individual Resource Status: Dwelling Contributing

218 North West Street **123-5420-0012**
Primary Resource Information: Dwelling; two-story, frame; Vernacular; ca. 1900
Individual Resource Status: Dwelling Contributing

222 North West Street **123-5420-0013**
Primary Resource Information: Single Dwelling; one-story, frame; Vernacular; ca. 1900
Individual Resource Status: Dwelling Contributing

Statement of Significance

Located on the west side of the City of Petersburg, the Commerce Street Industrial Historic District is an early-twentieth century industrial corridor in the heart of a nineteenth and early-twentieth century residential neighborhood. The Commerce Street Industrial Historic District has always possessed a mixture of industrial, commercial, and residential land uses. This pattern of uses was established in the early-nineteenth century with the construction of the Upper Appomattox Canal, ca. 1807, and continued into the twentieth century with the construction of the Seaboard Air Line Rail Road in 1902. The early and mid-nineteenth century industrial, commercial and residential buildings have been replaced by late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century development. The industrial buildings located in the Commerce Street Industrial Historic District are associated with two of the primary twentieth-century industries in the city. Architecturally, these buildings are representative of an early-twentieth century design ethic that was focused on functionality and flexibility. The modest one and two-story dwellings on the north side of Commerce Street are the remnants of residential development that coexisted with the industrial buildings. The design of the residential buildings – simple vernacular renditions of late 19th and early 20th century styles -- is consistent with other dwellings found throughout the City of Petersburg and in the Pride's Field neighborhood. These residential resources generally have good integrity and are examples of the late-nineteenth- and early-20th-century buildings, that with the neighboring industrial buildings dating from the same period, replaced a similar mix of resources that were originally constructed in the early and mid-19th century, thereby maintaining the historic pattern of development as the area evolved. The industrial buildings possess a high level of integrity and continue to convey their roles as places where significant twentieth-century industrial activity took place in the City of Petersburg.

The Commerce Street Industrial Historic District is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A because of its association with two leading twentieth century industries in the City of Petersburg – the manufacture of trunks and optical lenses. The manufacturing of trunks filled the industrial void created in Petersburg by the decline in tobacco and cotton production in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The Titmus Optical Company grew from a modest local company in 1908 to a major international manufacturer of prescription protective lenses and optical testing equipment. The district is also representative of the necessary linkages between transportation corridors and the location and expansion of industrial uses. The early industrial character of this section of Pride's Field was established because of its proximity to the Upper Appomattox Canal and the continuation of industrial uses in this area, represented in the early-twentieth century industrial complexes visible today, was tied to the placement of the tracks of the Seaboard Air Line Rail Road along the right-of-way for the canal in 1902.

The district is also eligible for listing under criterion C. The remaining residential architecture in the district is typical of other late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century dwellings found throughout the City of Petersburg. Originally marked by a combination of both dwellings and industrial resources dating from the mid-to-late-19th century, the area today shows the evolution of the neighborhood and displays the

historic pattern of development which was maintained through the subsequent construction of a similar mix of resources during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The industrial character is the dominant feature of the district and the industrial complexes are eligible under criterion C because they possess the characteristics of twentieth century industrial design that was based on flexible spaces and ease of construction. Industrial architecture by design expressed strength and stability with minimal decoration. Industrial buildings were generally constructed of brick with regularly placed window openings and frequently monitors or skylights to illuminate open work areas. Floor plans were kept open through the incorporation of timber and later steel columns, beams, and trusses. The open plan made industrial buildings flexible and readily adaptable to a variety of manufacturing processes. The industrial buildings in the Commerce Street Industrial Historic District conform to this pattern of design and construction. While they employed specialized manufacturing processes they did not require specialized buildings. Rather they needed sturdy, well lit buildings with open and flexible plans that could be adapted as businesses or manufacturing processes changed.

Historic Background

The Commerce Street Industrial Historic District is located in the western part of the City of Petersburg in an area known as Pride's Field. William Pride purchased the Pride's Field tract about 1745 from Major Peter Jones and established a mill, dam, millrace and tavern. Between 1807 and 1810, the heirs of William Pride sold his land to four Petersburg businessmen, Samuel Christian, Donald McKenzie, R. Maitland, and William Bowden, who laid out the tract in lots and retained the name Pride's Field.[7] It was the mills along the Appomattox River and the recently completed Upper Appomattox Canal that enticed these four Petersburg businessmen to purchase and develop the land.[8] The 1811 plat for Pride's Field prepared by James Hargrove for Donald McKenzie illustrates a tract of land that extended south from the Appomattox River to Brickhouse Run and west from South Street to the incorporation line for the town of Petersburg just beyond the current West Street. The portion of Pride's Field north of Commerce Street, including the canal, was part of the town of Petersburg when it was incorporated in 1745. The southern part of the neighborhood from Commerce Street to Brickhouse Run was annexed into the city in 1816, and the area to the west beyond West Street was not annexed by Petersburg until 1932.

A key feature of the Hargrove/McKenzie plat for Pride's Field is the Upper Appomattox Canal. The Upper Appomattox Company was incorporated in 1795 to build a canal that would circumvent a descent of twenty-nine feet into Petersburg from the west. The canal terminated on the east in a basin located in the block, known as the "company square," bound by High, South, Commerce, and Dunlop streets. Ownership of this block was retained by the canal company and was the location of its warehouses. The South Canal, a millrace, flowed from the basin into the Appomattox River. In the early-nineteenth century, warehouses, cotton mills and tobacco factories were built near the basin and along Canal Street, which paralleled the South Canal, and was known as "the street of mills."[9] By 1864, the Upper Appomattox Canal "had degenerated into a mere mill race" but was still an important medium of

transportation for trade and munitions during the war.[10] In 1902, the tracks of the Seaboard Air Line Rail Road were laid to the south of the Upper Appomattox Canal. The tracks entered the district from both the north and south and crossed the company square and combined on the west side of Dunlop Street where they paralleled the canal. By 1908, the canal and basin had been filled.[11] A depot was constructed on the west side of Dunlop Street, within the district boundaries, next to the tracks. The Dunlop Street depot was demolished ca. 1943, and a new depot was constructed ca. 1959 just outside the western boundary of the district. The new depot was built on the site of the Totty Trunk and Bag Company factory and it has now been incorporated into a large warehouse constructed in the 1200 block of Commerce Street in 1987.

The 1860 directory depicts Pride's Field as a sparsely developed mixed use neighborhood with grocery stores in the vicinity of Commerce and Dunlop streets; scattered houses of millers, coach and cabinet makers, machinists, and freight agents; and industrial uses concentrated around the Appomattox River, the Upper Appomattox Canal, and the "company square." In the section of Pride's Field to the north, between the canal and the river, factories were replaced with dwellings in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The section of Pride's Field to the south of Commerce Street was devoid of industrial uses. It is the presence of early-twentieth century industrial buildings that distinguishes the Commerce Street Industrial Historic District from the rest of Pride's Field. The mid-nineteenth century dwellings, especially some of the tenements that once stood near the turning basin in the company square may have been built by industries located there and it is likely that the workers lived nearby. For example, Nathan Hoag, tobacconist, had his factory on Dunlop Street between Commerce Street and the canal, and his residence in the 1000 block of Commerce Street near West Street. All of the mid-nineteenth century buildings, that once stood in the historic district, have been replaced by dwellings and industrial buildings constructed in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The remaining residential buildings in the historic district do not appear to have been tied to the industries currently located on the north side of Commerce Street. There is no consistent style or pattern to these dwellings that would suggest that they were part of a concerted effort to build worker housing by any of the companies. The houses that are currently standing are vernacular in nature and reflect dwellings from this same period found throughout the City of Petersburg and the Pride's Field neighborhood. Between 1915 and the present, twenty-eight dwellings and small commercial buildings were demolished within the boundaries of the historic district. Some were replaced by new dwellings, some by the expansion of the industrial buildings, and still others are now represented by vacant lots. Today, all of the houses except one are owned by absentee landlords and four of the seven appear to be vacant. They are included in the district as contributing buildings because, situated as they are amid the larger industrial resources, they convey the nature of the historic pattern of development in the area, where dwellings and industrial buildings are neighbors.

Manufacturing in Petersburg was stimulated by the War of 1812 but the city did not achieve industrial importance until the 1830s, "a decade which witnessed the rise of other southern factory centers."[12] During the antebellum period tobacco and cotton were the leading industries in Petersburg. "Joseph

Martin in his *Gazetteer* of 1835 recorded that Petersburg had six tobacco factories, three cotton factories, two cotton-seed mills, six flour mills, one brass and cast-iron foundry, two earthenware potteries, numerous mercantile stores, and four druggist shops."[13] By the beginning of the Civil War, Petersburg had attained a prominent position as a center of transportation and manufacturing and as such it "was the object of the longest military campaign ever waged against a city in the United States."[14] During the siege of Petersburg in 1864, loss of life was surprisingly low but it is estimated that over 800 buildings were damaged by the Union shelling.[15] The areas most affected were to the north and east where many of the city's early industrial buildings were located. After the war, "good transportation facilities had a great effect on Petersburg industry, bringing leaf tobacco, cotton, grain, peanuts, lumber and other products and carrying away plug and smoking tobacco, cotton cloth, corn meal, hulled and cleaned peanuts as well as lumber products of various kinds."[16]

During the first quarter of the twentieth century, a shift in demand from plug tobacco to cigarettes and the moving of cotton interests to North Carolina led to declines in Petersburg's leading industries. Two industries that stepped into the void created by losses in tobacco and cotton processing were the manufacturing of trunks and optical lenses. A 1917, economic and municipal report prepared by the Chamber of Commerce for the City of Petersburg stated that Petersburg was "one of the most important tobacco, peanut, and trunk manufacturing centers in the United States."[17] Two trunk factories were constructed in Pride's Field between 1915 and 1921 and Titmus Optical, once one of the largest manufacturing concerns in Pride's Field, and the "world's no. 1 producer of prescription protective eyewear and vision screening instruments" began construction on its complex of buildings in 1919.[18] The twentieth century concentration of industrial uses in this area was tied to the proximity of the Seaboard Air Line Rail Road and prolonged the earlier industrial tradition for the area established by the Upper Appomattox Canal. The expansion of industrial land uses between the tracks and Commerce Street slowly replaced the residences that once lined the north side of the street.

In the late-nineteenth century, the majority of America's trunk manufacturers were located in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston but the two most prolific producers were the M. M. Secor Company in Racine, Wisconsin and the Seward Trunk Company in Petersburg, Virginia. The trunk and luggage business in Petersburg had its beginnings in 1878 when Simon Seward and his brother-in-law, H. F. Munt, established a luggage factory on the north side of the Appomattox River.[19] The 1903 city directory listed four trunk and bag companies –Seward, Thacker, Virginia, and the Petersburg Trunk and Bag Company located in the historic district. The 1907 city directory declared that "the largest trunk and bag factory in the world (Seward) is located here, and the combined output of this and the five other similar plants in the city exceeds that of any other place in the country."[20] In 1915, nine companies engaged in the manufacture of trunks and bags, employed 2,000 workers, produced goods valued at three million dollars, and had spent one million dollars to expand their factories. In 1927, the combined product of the companies had grown to seven million dollars. The number of luggage factories peaked at twenty in 1922, and around 1931, thirteen manufacturers, including Seward and Petersburg Trunk and Bag, consolidated under the name American Hardware Company. The demand for trunks in the 1930s and

1940s was replaced by suit cases and smaller bags. Many of the Petersburg trunk companies went out of business or were converted to non-trunk related industries. The American Hardware Company diversified into the manufacturing of novelty furniture. Seward Trunk Company was purchased by Dayco Corporation in 1967 and in 1998 Mercury Luggage Manufacturing Company purchased Seward. While Seward is still in business, their trunks are manufactured in Florida but they maintain a limited warehouse presence in Petersburg. The former factory at 434 High Street in Petersburg has been converted to condominiums.

There are several reasons for the early-twentieth century demand for trunks but among them are the completion of five railroad systems that crossed the continent, a growing world consciousness, and an expanding middle class that was increasingly traveling for leisure. The west had been won at the close of the nineteenth century with the end of the Indian Wars and the completion of nearly 200,000 miles of railroad tracts. The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, the Pan-American Exposition of 1901, and the Spanish-American War contributed to an increased interest in the architecture and peoples of other nations and the American West. This increased interest and expanded transportation routes, led many, especially the growing middle class, to travel for leisure. Popular among travelers, the flat top trunk was produced in large quantities from the 1870s to 1920s. These trunks consisted of a rectangular box constructed of pine sometimes poplar and most often covered with canvas or occasionally sheet metal. Hardwood staves, metal trim and hardware were added over the covering. In the mid-twentieth century trunks were covered with synthetic materials and hardwood staves were replaced with flat metal bars. Petersburg was an ideal location for the production of trunks because of its easy access to raw materials – wood, cloth, and metals – and transportation routes. The Seward plant occupied a several block area on either side of the Seaboard Air Line Rail Road to the east of the Commerce Street Industrial Historic District. Several other trunk manufacturers including Virginia Trunk and Bag Company were located on both sides of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad to the southeast of the historic district. Two factories, Petersburg Trunk and Bag, and Rogers and Madison were located in the historic district on the south side of the Seaboard Air Line Rail Road and the Totty Trunk and Bag Company was located along the tracks just west of the historic district.

Between 1887 and 1897, the former Nathan Hoag tobacco factory, also operated as the H. Noltenius Stemmery and the I.P. Hoag tobacco factory, became the I.P. Hoag Trunk factory, the first of two such businesses to operate in the Commerce Street Industrial Historic District. Heinrich Noltenius was the owner/proprietor and I.P. Hoag was the book keeper. In 1903, the name of the business was changed to the Petersburg Trunk and Bag Company. Noltenius was still the owner but Hoag was no longer associated with the business. Around 1908, Petersburg Trunk and Bag Company built a three-story building immediately west of the Seaboard depot and adjacent to the tracks. In 1915, the mid-nineteenth century Hoag tobacco factory was demolished and a new factory for the Petersburg Trunk and Bag Company (123-5420-0008) was constructed on the Dunlop Street property just south of the 1908 factory. A spur line of the Seaboard railway was extended to the new building. The Totty Trunk and Bag Company was also constructed in 1915 just outside the western boundary of the historic district. The

Rogers and Madison factory (123-5420-0007) was constructed at 1131 Commerce Street in 1921. Seward purchased the Rogers and Madison building in 1927 and by 1929 the building was owned by Atkinson and Long Manufacturing Company, manufacturers of trunk locks. Long Manufacturing, as the company was known after 1952, occupied the building and continued to manufacture trunk hardware until the business closed in 1995. The building is now occupied by Triple C Mechanical Company. Totty Trunk and Bag Company was out of business by 1931 and the building was demolished in the 1950s. The new Seaboard Air Line passenger station was constructed on this site in 1959 and a large warehouse that incorporated the train depot was constructed on the property in 1987. American Novelty Trunk and later American Novelty Furniture, both subsidiaries of the American Hardware Company occupied the Dunlop Street property until the 1970s and it has had various uses since then, most recently as a warehouse. The 1908 factory was demolished sometime after 1956 leaving the 1915 building which in 2007, was purchased by a developer and is being converted into apartments.

The manufacture of optical glass and lenses in the United States got a huge boost during World War I. Prior to the war the great majority of the best optical material came from Germany. During the war this supply was quickly cut off and the need for lenses, especially for those associated with the military, became urgent.[21] The Optical Glass and Instruments Division of the War Industries Board was created with the primary objective to find the proper materials of a quality and purity for the manufacture of optical glass. Fortunately, large quantities of sand free of iron were found in Pennsylvania. Artificial abrasives for grinding and polishing lenses were soon developed in the United States to replace the high quality emery, a variety of the mineral corundum, from Turkey that was no longer available. Several factories, including Bausch-Lomb Company of Rochester, the Spencer Lens Company of Buffalo, and the Pittsburgh Glass Company, were soon producing sufficient quantities of optical glass.[22] By the end of World War I, America had emerged as a leading producer of optical products. The history of the Titmus Optical Company in Petersburg parallels the post World War I development of the optical manufacturing industry in the United States.

Titmus, a native of Petersburg, grew up in and around the Pride's Field neighborhood. He began work at the age of fourteen with Buchannan Brothers, Jewelers. In 1898, Titmus spent three months at the Philadelphia Horological College where he studied watchmaking.[23] After, studying in Philadelphia he returned to Petersburg where he continued to work for Buchannan Brothers until 1902 when he started his own jewelry business. Titmus's interest in the optical business began about this time and he traveled to Richmond to receive training in examining eyes from Frank Bullington with Galeski Optical Company.[24] In 1908, Edward Titmus founded the Titmus Optical Company, a wholesale and prescription optical business, which he operated in conjunction with his jewelry store. It was the first optical business in Petersburg. In 1916, he began experimental work on manufacturing ophthalmic lenses. Titmus would purchase optical glass from dealers in New York and polish the lenses for his customers. This work was carried out in the rear of his jewelry store. The early years of the optical business were very successful and it was moved from the jewelry store to an old residence on Bollingbrook Street. Titmus quickly out grew this building and in 1919 purchased a parcel of land in the Pride's Field neighborhood. In 1927,

Titmus closed his retail jewelry and optical business and devoted himself to the manufacturing of optical lenses. In 1960, it was observed that Titmus Optical has developed in a half century or more into what is reputed to be the largest independent lens company in the country.[25] Titmus employs 1,200 persons and is ranked fourth nationally in the overall optical business. In addition to its ophthalmic lens department, it has departments for the manufacture of frames and a full line of sun ware. They also manufacture optical products for industry including equipment and vision testers.[26] Except for a short lived business started by a former employee of Titmus, this was the only plant of its kind south of New York State.[27] In 1974, Titmus Optical was purchased by the German optical firm, Carl Zeiss, and in 1995, the Titmus holdings were purchased by the French firm, Bacou-Dalloz. In an attempt to retain over 500 jobs the City of Petersburg agreed to purchase the Commerce Street properties if Bacou-Dalloz would move to a new factory in nearby industrial park. As a division of Bacou-Dalloz, Titmus continues to be a leader in the manufacture of prescription safety lens and vision screening instruments and employs over 150 in the Petersburg area. In March 2008, the City of Petersburg agreed to sell the Titmus complex in the 1000 block of Commerce Street to a developer who plans to convert the buildings to a mixed use property. The buildings in the 800 block are still owned by the City of Petersburg and occupied by Habitat for Humanity and Downtown Churches Incorporated.

Titmus built its first building in the Commerce Street Industrial Historic District on a lot bounded on the north by the Seaboard Airline Railway and on the south by an alley running from West Street to an alley running from Commerce Street to the Seaboard Airline Railway. “On this lot we built our first building, fifty feet by one-hundred and twenty feet, two stories high. This was a brick building and was built by John H. Harvell and Sons, local contractors.”[28] A second building was constructed in 1928 and a third in 1931. In 1953, Titmus wrote:

> Almost every year for the past twenty-three years we have added a new building or buildings to take care of the increase in our business. In addition to those we have erected ourselves, about eight years ago we purchased a three-story brick building in the block below our main plant … for the production of lenses. … The land which we now own is approximately four and one-quarter acres, and the floor space we now occupy is approximately one hundred and seventy-six thousand five hundred square feet. We still have some vacant land left for further expansion.[29]

The building Titmus purchased was the former Southern Chemical Company building (123-5420-0002) in the 800 block of Commerce Street. The two buildings on the Southern Chemical site were built ca. 1927. Southern Chemical manufactured flavorings and extracts, and Spartan brand aspirin. From 1939 to 1941, the building was occupied by Spartan Products Corporation, likely related to Southern Chemical Company. The fate of these businesses after Titmus purchased the buildings could not be determined. Between 1950 and 1970, Titmus Optical expanded its buildings within the historic district. They constructed a concrete block warehouse on the east side of Dunlop Street, a second concrete block

warehouse was constructed in the 800 block of Commerce Street, and a large brick building was constructed at the western end of the 1000 block of Commerce Street.

As illustrated by the trunk and the optical industries, Petersburg has lost a great many manufacturing jobs to suburban industrial parks or other cities. The City of Petersburg's annual report shows that manufacturing no longer ranks as one of the leading sources of employment. Today service jobs are the most prevalent with Southside Regional Medical Center and Wal-Mart being among the largest employers. The city's population has declined steadily over the past decade and a growing number of residents are unemployed and living below the poverty line. A bright spot in the City's future is the expansion of nearby Fort Lee which has lead to another trend exhibited in the now vacant industrial buildings – their conversion to housing and other uses.

The early-twentieth century industrial buildings along the Commerce Street corridor in Pride's Field are similar in form and construction. They are all constructed of brick and two to four stories in height. Most present a narrow facade to the street with minimal architectural elaboration. The long elevations are fenestrated by regularly placed, stacked, punched openings. Similar in form, the four industrial buildings are examples of "spontaneous vernacular structures not carefully designed buildings."[30] These early-twentieth century industrial buildings possess a utilitarian aesthetic based on the most practical means of construction and flexibility of space that can be readily adapted for new uses. Industrial architecture was intended to express strength, stability, and function and avoided the use of lavish or extensive decoration. While an emphasis on style or decoration was avoided these builder-designed or engineered buildings often employed limited elements, such as corbelling, to evoke an architectural style or to relate to the preferred taste of the time. "Despite the modernizing forces at work during the early twentieth century, many industrial buildings erected for and altered to accommodate mass production operations were not conceived as examples of architectural industrial Modernism."[31] As illustrated by the Commerce Street buildings tradition, pragmatism, and adaptation were more influential than architecture style or modern design.

Today the Commerce Street Industrial Historic District is envisioned by the City of Petersburg as an area where rehabilitation for residential use may give new life to the vacant industrial complexes through the state and federal tax credit programs and where another evolution of the area may permit residents to again find a home within or beside these old factory buildings.

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Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The Commerce Street Industrial Historic District is roughly bound by Commerce Street on the south, the west property line of 1131 Commerce Street (parcel number 024150015) on the west, the right-of-way to the Seaboard Airline Rail Road to the north, and South Street to the east. The northern boundary is also defined by the southern boundaries of the North Battersea/Pride's Field Historic district and the Petersburg Old Town Historic District. The Petersburg Old Town Historic District also defines the eastern boundary and a small portion of the southern boundary is defined by the Folly Castle Historic District. More specifically the district is described by the following parcels as identified by the City of Petersburg:

023010004, 023010005, 023010006
024130012, 024130013, 024130014
024140002, 024140003, 024140005, 024140006, 024140007, 024140008, 024140009, 024140010, 024140011, 024140012, 024140013, 024140014
024150004, 024150005, 024150006, 024150007, 024150008, 024150009, 024150010, 024150011, 024150015, 024150009,

Boundary Justification

The proposed boundary is justified because it encompasses all of the contiguous early-twentieth century industrial buildings located on the north side of Commerce Street in the Pride's Field neighborhood. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character and distinguished from the industrial character of the proposed linear district. The northern boundary is further defined by the grassed berm that represents the right-of-way for the Seaboard Airline Rail Road. The proposed district abuts three existing National Register Historic Districts – North Battersea/Pride's Field, Petersburg Old Town, and Folly Castle Boundary Expansion 1999. The northern boundary is defined by the southern boundaries of the North Battersea/Pride's Field and the Petersburg Old Town Historic Districts. This includes the exclusion of 1112 Upper Appomattox Street which is included in the North Battersea/Pride's Field Historic District. The Petersburg Old Town Historic District also defines the eastern boundary and a small portion of the southern boundary is defined by the Folly Castle Historic District.

Photographic Index

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Property: Commerce Street Industrial Historic District (123-5420)
Location: Petersburg, VA
Photographer: Kimberly M. Chen
Date: November 2007
Negatives File: Digital

Photograph Inventory:

1 800 block Commerce Street looking west
2 800 block Commerce Street looking east
3 Southwest corner Commerce and Dunlop streets looking northeast
4 Southeast corner Commerce and Dunlop streets looking northwest
5 200 block Dunlop Street looking west
6 1015 Commerce Street
7 Southwest corner Commerce and West streets looking northeast
8 Southeast corner Commerce and West streets looking northwest
9 Southeast corner Commerce and West streets looking northwest
10 1100 block Commerce Street looking northeast
11 Seaboard Airline Rail Road right-of-way looking southeast
12 Seaboard Airline Rail Road right-of-way looking southwest
13 West Street and Seaboard Airline Rail Road right-of-way looking southwest
14 Seaboard Airline Rail Road right-of-way looking southwest

End Notes

[1] Plat of Pride's Field prepared for Donald McKenzie and surveyed by James Hargrove, 1811-1812.

[2] Hill Directory Company, Hill Directory, Petersburg Virginia 1903-1904.

[3] Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Petersburg Old Town Historic District, Petersburg, Virginia., November 1979, Continuation Sheet #6, Item Number 8, p. 4. . "Demographic studies reveal Petersburg's population swelled from 8,322 in 1830 to 14,010 in 1850. By 1854 it was estimated to be 18,000, placing Petersburg third in Virginia with respect to population."

[4] Edward A. Wyatt, IV, "Rise of Industry in Ante-bellum Petersburg" William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine, Vol. 17, Second Series, No. 1 (January 1937), p. 5-6.

[5] Neville, Section 7, p. 3.

[6] Neville, Section 7, p. 5.

[7] Neville, Section 8, p. 32-33.

[8] Ashley M. Neville, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, North Battersea/Pride's Field Historic District, Petersburg, Virginia, December 15, 2004, Section 8, p. 33.

[9] Neville, Section 8, p. 35.

[10] Peter Cozzens and Robert I Girardi, ed., The New Annals of the Civil War (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpoole Books, 2004) p. 426-427.

[11] The name Seaboard Air Line Railway was first applied to a group of smaller railroads in the 1880s, which were officially organized in 1900, and the name changed from railway to rail road in 1946. In 1967, the Seaboard Air Line Rail Road merged with the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad to form the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad which in 1986 became part of the CSX Transportation system. The depot remained at the Dunlop Street location until 1943 when it was demolished. A new depot was constructed in the 1200 block of Commerce Street ca. 1959. The tracks were abandoned in the 1980s and portions removed.

[12] Wyatt, p 2-3.

[13] James G. Scott and Edward A. Wyatt, IV. Petersburg's Story: A History (Petersburg, VA: Titmus Optical Company; Richmond, VA: Whittet & Shepperson, 1960) p. 76.

[14] Scott and Wyatt, p. 167.

[15] Scott and Wyatt, p. 220.

[16] Scott and Wyatt, p. 289.

[17] Le Roy Hodges, Petersburg, Virginia: Economic and Municipal (Petersburg, VA: Chamber of Commerce Petersburg,

Inc., January 1917) p. 35

[18] "Job losses could have been worse." The Progress-Index (Petersburg, VA: March 13, 2004)

[19] Scott and Wyatt, p. 291.

[20] Hill Directory, 1907, p. 3.

[21] "SUCCESS IN MAKING OPTICAL GLASS HERE – The Way in which the Industry Was Developed to Meet the Needs of Wartime. " The New York Times, (New York, NY: January 26, 1919)

[22] Ibid.

[23] Edward Hutson Titmus, Looking Through the Lens, (Petersburg, VA: 1953) p. 14.

[24] Titmus, p. 28.

[25] Scott and Wyatt, p. 293.

[26] Titmus, p. 57.

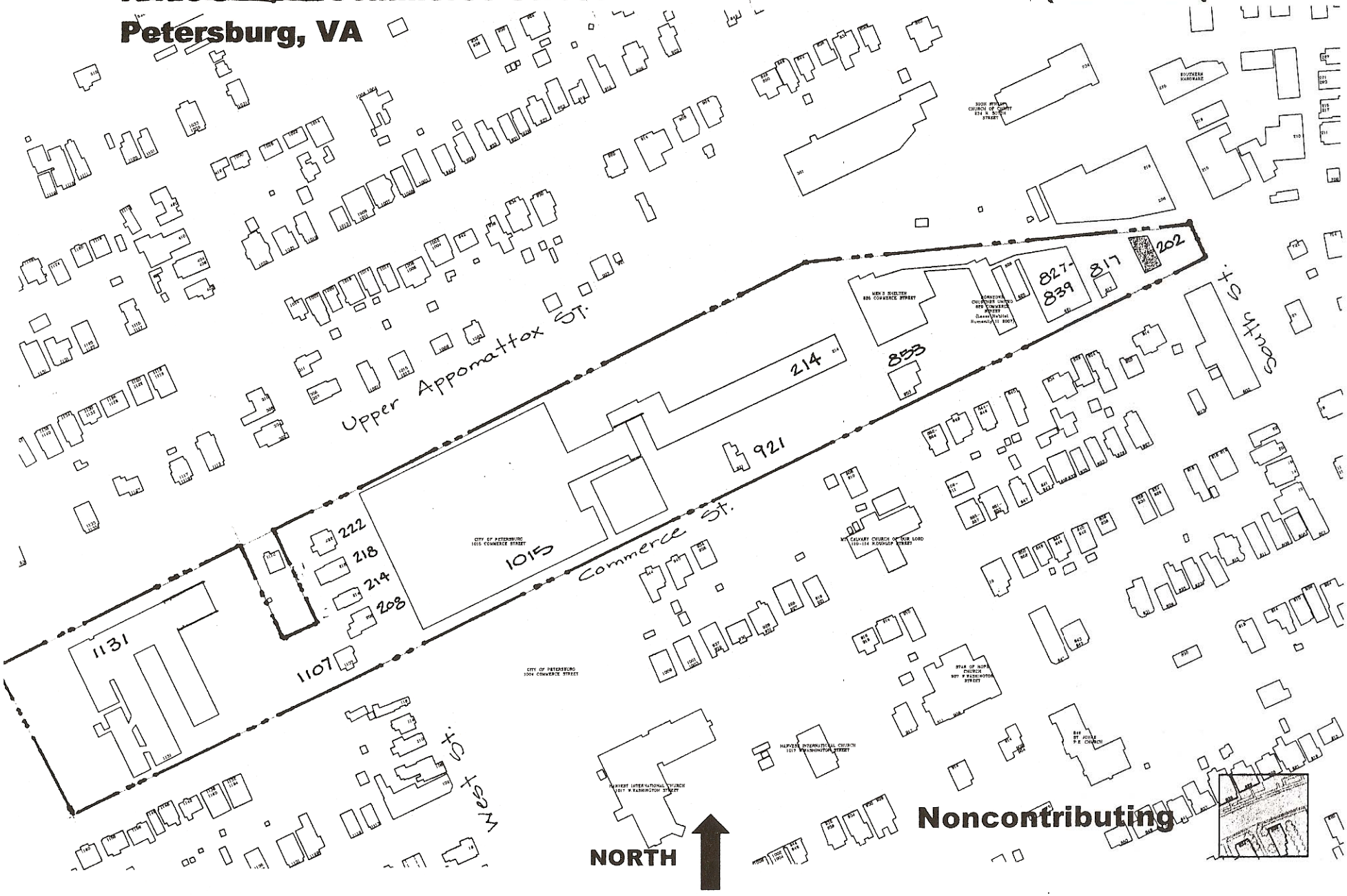
[27] Titmus, p. 64.

[28] Titmus, p. 50.

[29] Titmus, p. 65.

[30] Betsy Hunter Bradley, "Industrial Modernism: Architecture and Ideology", The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Vol. 54, No. 4 (December 1995), p. 510.

[31] Bradley, p. 508.

[redacted]Commerce Street Industrial Historic District (123.5420)

Petersburg, VA