

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

LISTED ON:
VLR 06/21/2012
NRHP 08/22/2012

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Armitage Manufacturing Company

other names/site number Fibre Board Container Company / VDHR No. 127-6693

2. Location

street & number 3200 Williamsburg Avenue

city or town Richmond

state Virginia code VA county Independent City code 760 zip code 23223

not for publication
 vicinity

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

[Signature] Signature of certifying official/Title 6/29/12 Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Name of Property

Richmond, VA

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

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

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY: Manufacturing facility
INDUSTRY: Industrial storage

INDUSTRY: Industrial storage
Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Industrial

foundation: BRICK
walls: BRICK

roof: ASPHALT: Built up
other: Windows: wood and metal

Narrative Description
See Continuation Sheet.

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Name of Property

Richmond, VA

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Industry

Period of Significance

1900-1956

Significant Dates

1900

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Noland & Baskervill

James Fox & Sons

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance extends from the initial date of construction (1900) to the date that the property was sold to Continental Can (1956). During this period, the building achieved its current configuration and had been an important presence in the Richmond industrial economy for over 50 years.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance See Continuation Sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

See Continuation Sheet.

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Name of Property

Richmond, VA

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 # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): VDHR no. 127-6693

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 4.56 (Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

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

1	<u>18</u>	<u>286533</u>	<u>4155825</u>	2			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Debra A. McClane and Megan Rupnik
organization _____ date 3/9/2012
street & number 4711 Devonshire Road telephone (804) 233-3890
city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23225
e-mail dmcclane1@verizon.net / meganrupnik@gmail.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Photographs**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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

name James P. Carreras
street & number PO Box 147400 telephone (804) 358-2342
city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23221

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Richmond, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 1

Narrative Description

Summary Description

The two-story warehouse stands on the north side of Williamsburg Avenue on a 4.56-acre parcel in the City of Richmond. The industrial building consists primarily of two wings, with the original two-story brick-constructed plant built in 1900 for the production of building supplies and roofing paper, and then used for corrugated container manufacturing. In 1954, a large barrel-roofed, metal bowstring truss wing was added to the rear corner of the warehouse. No secondary resources are associated with the building.

General Description

The warehouse at 3200 Williamsburg Avenue is located in the Fulton area in the East End (Marshall Ward) of the City of Richmond. The 4.56-acre parcel is bounded by S. 31st Street (formerly Elm Street) on the west, Chimborazo Hill on the north and east, and Williamsburg Avenue on the south. The building parcel is adjacent on the north to the thriving neighborhoods of Chimborazo and Church Hill; the historic Fulton neighborhood, now demolished, formerly occupied areas to the east and southeast. The warehouse's location took advantage of the numerous transportation routes and modes in the area including the James River, Williamsburg Avenue, Route 5, and the tracks of the C&O and Southern railroads (the latter, formerly the Richmond and York River Railroad). The warehouse is located across from the former City of Richmond (Fulton) Gas Works and historically was surrounded by other light industrial enterprises such as the Richmond City Mills, the tobacco warehouses on Shockoe Bottom, and the industries at Rocketts. The gravel-surfaced parking area behind the building is accessed from S. 31st Street. A loading dock is located at the west end of the building and overhead doors are located on the south, west, and north sides of the building. A chain-link fence encloses the rear section of the parcel. Trees cover the hillside at the rear of the property and some trees are located near the front on the east end.

The building consists primarily of two wings: one fronting onto the sidewalk along Williamsburg Avenue and one extending northeast to the rear. The earliest part of the building is the two-story and basement east end of the front wing, which was constructed in 1900 from designs by the Richmond-based architectural firm of Noland & Baskervill. The firm's design, which replaced an earlier building that was destroyed by fire, may be the first industrial building completed by the nascent firm. The Armitage Manufacturing Company (Armitage Co.) erected the plant where it produced building materials and roofing paper utilizing the coal-tar by-product from the City's Gas Works. The Armitage Co. occupied the building site from the late 1880s until 1913 when the company filed for bankruptcy and the property was sold at auction. In 1916, the Fibre Board Container Co. (Fibre Board), manufacturers of corrugated shipping containers, occupied the building and soon purchased the property. Between 1924 and 1939, the original plant was expanded as depicted in three building permits issued to James Fox & Sons, Richmond-based contractors. These additions were largely sympathetic to the original structure in scale and materials. In 1954, a large barrel-roofed, metal bow-string truss wing was added at the rear corner of the warehouse for paper storage. Fibre Board remained in the building until the late 1950s, when the company was acquired by the Robert Gair Company Inc.--a nationwide paper and container manufacturing concern. By the 1960s, the plant closed and since then has been used mainly as warehouse storage space.

Front Wing

Exterior

The original section of the building's front (south) wing, designed by the architectural firm of Noland & Baskervill, was constructed in 1900. This section of masonry construction is 135' 8" long and 51' deep and originally contained two stories with a partially-raised basement level. A third story was added in 1924 and has identical architectural detailing. The roof is slightly sloped and covered with a tar composition. The fourteen-bay façade (south elevation) features exterior brick walls laid in a seven-course American bond with projecting full-height brick pilasters separating each bay. Details include a corbelled cornice, stepped end walls, and 3- and 2-row brick segmental arches above the door and window openings. Door openings along the street level include a modern metal and glass entrance (with a bricked-in transom), as well as a metal overhead door. Wide wooden plank doors are also present. Windows include 8-over-8, 8-over-12, and 12-over-12 wooden double-hung sash. Many sashes are intact, but some have been replaced, damaged, or are boarded over. A metal fire escape is centered on the front elevation. The ghost of the "Fibre Board Container Corp." painted sign is still visible on the façade above the first floor window openings.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Richmond, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 2

The three-bay east end elevation holds window openings only on the third story; the 8-over-8 wooden sash windows are detailed with segmental brick arches and wooden sills. A one-story and basement brick addition was added to the east end of the building in 1930. The addition is covered by a flat parapet roof with terra-cotta tile coping. The three-bay front (south) façade features centered double-leaf metal doors with a 12-light metal sash transom above. The openings to either side of the doors appear to have been modified (partially bricked-in) and at present hold 6-pane metal windows with concrete sills. The second-floor level features a recessed blind center bay flanked by 9-light metal sash windows with concrete sills; a decorative band of soldier course brick extends along the top of the façade wall. The addition features a clipped corner of interlaced brick and the side (east) elevation holds two tall, metal-sash multi-light windows.

Interior

The interior of the original wing features two rows of heavy timber posts, measuring 10"x10", with 10"x12" bolsters and wrought iron T-straps supporting heavy timber beams. Timber posts in the basement measure 12"x12". The supports in the basement and on the first floor were set on granite plinths, which are still visible. Floors were originally gravel in the basement, and gravel and wood on the first-story. Diagonally laid, narrow wood-plank flooring is found on the upper stories with protective steel plates covering large sections of the floors. Enclosed wooden stairs are located near the front entrance and at the opposite corner, adjacent to an original elevator shaft. An interior loading dock is located to the right of the front stairs and is accessed by the overhead door on the front entrance.

The interior of the first story of the rear addition to the front wing contains a warehouse space with a row of steel posts supporting steel beams. A 12"-thick brick wall (original exterior wall) separates the original space and the rear addition; two punched openings, one with a rolling fire door, are present in the wall. The second and third stories of the addition connect directly into the original building, although the rear section of the addition on the third story is divided into smaller spaces with 2"x4" studs and plywood partition walls.

The interior of the west end addition to the front wing incorporated a vehicular drive-through alley from the front (street side) to the back of the building. The alley is accessed via the overhead door in the easternmost bay of the addition. The remaining first floor space of the addition is divided into offices and storage areas with gypsum board and plywood paneling. The upper floors of the west-end addition contain warehouse space with steel supports and connect directly with the original building space.

Additions

During the 1920s and 1930s, the size of the building was more than doubled by major additions to the rear and west side of the original front wing. Around 1928, a three-story extension was constructed at the rear (north) of the front wing. The steel-frame addition is clad with brick and is covered by a flat roof of tar composition. The addition is not visible from the front and connects to the original spaces on the interior. In 1974, an enclosed parking area clad with metal siding was added to the lower level of the rear of the addition, and a two-story concrete-block addition was added to the northwest elevation in 1979. The latter holds five overhead doors and an entrance door on the rear (north).

The three-bay pilastered end elevation (west) features a paved loading area that accesses the loading dock leading into the second floor of the building. The present round-arched, corrugated metal roof over the dock replaced the original flat metal canopy. Three overhead garage doors are located on this level, and three 16-light metal-sash windows with brick sills are on the third-story level. The faint remnants of the "Fibre Board Container Corp." painted sign are present on the west end wall.

Rear Wing

The largest section of the rear wing was built in 1954 and is connected to the front wing by a tall, one-story hyphen. The hyphen, built in 1930, is constructed of steel framing, is clad in brick, and is topped with a monitor roof with wire-glass clerestory windows. The interior features a tall, open space with a central row of steel supports. The floors are covered in steel plates, and a large opening with a rolling fire door connects the hyphen to the front wing. These additions had direct access via a transfer shed to the C&O railroad line that extended along the east side of the building.

The arch-roofed rear wing features concrete-block construction with a metal bow-string truss roof sheltering a massive open space measuring 90'x290'. This wing extends north lengthwise from the hyphen connector. Metal multi-pane

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Richmond, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 3

windows are set high on the west elevation and span the entire length of the wall. The arched roof is clad in metal and rooftop ventilators are evenly spaced on the roof. Concrete-block boiler rooms are located on the north elevation, and a metal-clad addition is located on the south elevation. The impressive space is free of interior supports and has exposed metal trusses, concrete-block walls, and floors covered in steel plates.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Richmond, Virginia

Section number 8

Page 4

Summary Statement of Significance

The warehouse at 3200 Williamsburg Avenue has been associated with Richmond's manufacturing industry since its construction in 1900. The property meets National Register of Historic Places Criteria A and C. The warehouse is eligible under Criteria A for its importance to the local manufacturing industry from 1900-1956. The first building on the site, erected in the late nineteenth century and destroyed by fire, was replaced by a two-story brick plant in 1900, which now comprises the eastern end of the front wing of the warehouse. The warehouse has been associated with two major industries significant to the industrial history of Richmond: building supplies and roofing paper and corrugated cardboard container manufacturing. Until 1912, the Armitage Manufacturing Co. utilized the coal-tar byproduct from the Fulton Gas Works located directly across the street to produce building materials at this site that were used in some of the major construction projects in the city. Three generations of the Armitage family were involved in operating the manufacturing businesses at this location. In 1916, the Fibre Board Container Co. occupied the building and began manufacturing corrugated paperboard containers; some of their major clients were the tobacco companies and cigarette manufacturers located in Richmond. Over the next 30 years, additions were made to the plant to increase capacity. In 1949, the nationwide corporation Robert Gair Company, Inc., acquired the building and in 1956, Continental Can purchased the property and continued operations there until 1977.

The warehouse is eligible under Criterion C in the area of architecture as an example of turn-of-the-twentieth-century heavy-timber construction and as the earliest industrial design of the Richmond-based architectural firm of Noland & Baskervill (present day Baskervill & Son). The design was utilitarian, but also reflected architectural details in the brickwork such as jack arches above doors and windows, a corbelled cornice, recessed bays, and stepped end walls. The latter element was echoed in the design of the nearby Fulton Gas Works when that facility was rebuilt in 1925. The heavy-timber framing and brick exterior walls were reminiscent of the tobacco warehouses in nearby Shockoe Slip and Shockoe Bottom. The Noland & Baskerville design is still the prominent façade of the building and is intact. Later additions, also employing heavy-timber construction, were executed by James Fox & Sons, a well-known Richmond-based contracting company that worked with many of Richmond's leading architects. A 1954-addition employed metal bow-string truss construction and is an impressive wing with an open span measuring 90 feet by 290 feet.

Historical Background

Following the end of the Civil War, a large portion of the City of Richmond's former commercial center was a pile of rubble. Over 20 blocks of the city were consumed by the evacuation fire set on April 2, 1865, by fleeing Confederate forces. Included in the devastation were banks, warehouses, groceries, brokerage houses, offices, print shops, and small iron works, although the city's large Tredegar Iron Works escaped damage. In addition to these commercial interests, much of the city's industrial sector was severely damaged, including a stove foundry, a machinist shop, carriage factories, two paper mills, a tin shop, a potter, two tobacco facilities, and several flour mills.¹

Clearing and rebuilding began almost immediately. Telegraph lines were quickly restored and four of the five railroads that terminated in the city resumed some level of operations by the end of April 1865 and soon replaced the canal as a means of transporting goods. Richmond, which ranked as the second largest Southern city before the war, rebuilt faster than many Southern cities that suffered similar devastation. The city expanded and improved its infrastructure in the postwar years including its water and gas lines. Northern interests, seeking to take advantage of Richmond's location and amenities, financed some of the city's industrial rebuilding. Although the nation experienced a depression in the 1870s, this was generally a period of growth for Richmond in which "industrial diversification compensated for lackluster performance of older firms."² Wood products, chemical industrials, and coffee and spice manufacturers and distributors replaced the iron and flour industries. By the 1880s, cigarette manufacturing by the city's tobacco companies soared. "Mass production of cigarettes meant increased need for packing, box design, chemicals, and dyes."³ By the last decade of the nineteenth century, Richmond boasted a highly diverse industrial community that included the manufacturing of agricultural implements, books and paper boxes, boots and leather goods, bricks, brooms, wooden- and tinware, confectioners, construction trades and building supplies, and chemicals.⁴ It was into this flourishing environment that the Armitage Manufacturing Co. first established its industrial presence at 3200 Williamsburg Avenue.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Richmond, Virginia

Section number 8 Page 5

The Armitage Manufacturing Co.

In 1840, George Armitage immigrated to the United States from England. He established a roofing business in Chester, Pennsylvania (Delaware County), and his son John followed him into the roofing business. John and his wife Caroline had three sons, George L., Charles F., and William C. In 1860, John founded the Armitage Manufacturing Co., and was joined by his son George in the partnership. The company produced roofing paper, paints, and other products.⁵

By 1886, the Armitages had established a branch in Richmond and around that time, John Armitage moved to Richmond to oversee the factory operations. In 1886, the partnership between father and son dissolved and John took charge of the Richmond branch and his son George continued the operations in Chester, Pennsylvania. Beginning in 1886, the company held contracts with the City of Richmond to purchase tar from the municipal gas works. Charles and William joined their father's business in Richmond and in 1891, they purchased the Williamsburg Avenue property from George T. King, who was the owner of the adjacent Richmond City Mills.⁶ King had purchased the property in 1887 from Jefferson Powers, who had acquired the land in 1885 from the City's Bureau of Public Works.⁷

The Armitage factory initially consisted of a one-story plant situated at the front of the parcel along Williamsburg Avenue, as depicted on Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps beginning in 1895. The building had an iron-clad earthen floor, a separate office building, and two tanks on the property. The Armitage factory's location was convenient to numerous transportation routes, but was largely a result of the presence of the City Gas Works (Fulton), which was located directly south of the factory across Williamsburg Road. The gas works, established in 1850, produced tar as a by-product of its coal gas carbonization process; the Armitage Co. used the tar in its production of roofing papers and paints, varnish, pitch, carbolic acid, and building lining papers. The two industrial sites were physically linked by an elevated train trestle that extended from the coal shed of the gas works to the east side of the Armitage plant. A coal chute and an elevated platform led from the trestle to the manufacturing plant and appear to have been the conduit by which the coal tar was transferred from the gas works to the tar-paper plant.⁸

In 1897, the Armitage partnership was dissolved upon the retirement of John Armitage. The two Armitage brothers, Charles and William, continued the successful operation of the Richmond plant for many years. In 1900, the company's plant was destroyed by a fire; undeterred, the brothers engaged the Richmond-based architectural firm of Noland & Baskervill to design a fireproof factory for them at the same site. The new factory, which was to cost a reported \$20,000, was completed in 1901.⁹

The company continued to purchase tar from the city through the 1910s. The firm's success had spread to other areas of the state and in 1900, Armitage secured a five-year contract for all the coal-tar made at the Norfolk gas works and erected a branch factory in that city.¹⁰

By 1905, Armitage was one of the leading roofing producers in the city offering slag, granite, and gravel roofing that was guaranteed for 10 years. Armitage's products were used on several notable buildings erected in Richmond during the period, including the American National Bank, the Mutual Assurance Building, the Jefferson Hotel, the New Richmond Hotel, the Chesterfield Flats, the American Tobacco Co., the American Can Co., the American Locomotive Works, the Richmond Cedar Works, and the Gallego Mills. In addition, the company supplied coal-tar for the building of the Panama Canal, a project of national pride undertaken by President Theodore Roosevelt.¹¹

In 1907, Charles assumed all responsibility for the Armitage Manufacturing Co. after his brother, William, withdrew from the partnership in order to devote his time to operation of the Westover Paper Company and the Alcatraz Asphalt Paint Company, both of which were located in Richmond.¹² William's leadership appears to have been beneficial to the Alcatraz Company, which reported in 1908 that its sales of iron and structural paints had doubled in the preceding year with trade increasing in the West and the Midwest.¹³

In November 1912, the Armitage Manufacturing Co. filed for bankruptcy.¹⁴ At the time, the company owed the City of Richmond \$4,300 for tar with bills dating several months back. In December 1912, the U.S. District Court appointed Allen

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Richmond, Virginia

Section number 8

Page 6

G. Collins and Stafford H. Parker as trustees to the case and the Armitage property was sold at auction on January 30, 1913. As advertised in the Richmond Times-Dispatch, the plant consisted of two lots (nos. 193 and 194) fronting onto the north side of Williamsburg Avenue with a "large brick factory," all fixtures, tools and appliances in the plant, large tar stills located on the premises, as well as a large frame dwelling and another parcel of land located adjacent to the factory property.¹⁵

After Armitage

On April 1, 1913, the property was conveyed to Piper Roofing Co., the high bidder at the auction. Piper placed the property into a deed of trust on which the company defaulted in 1915.¹⁶ Again, the property was sold at auction, this time to B.F. Kronheiner and S.A. Johnson of Hillsboro, North Carolina. It is unclear whether the new owners operated a business from the property, but in May 1916, they conveyed the property to the Alcatraz Co., Inc. Thomas A. Armitage was secretary of the Alcatraz Co., a firm for which his father, William C. Armitage, had left the family business.¹⁷ The company produced roof and iron paint, roofing cement, creosote, rubber roof coating, and other paints and compounds. In 1979, Alcatraz became a subsidiary of the Sampson Paint Co., another Richmond-based company established in 1899.¹⁸

Fibre Board Container Co.

The Alcatraz Company retained ownership of the Williamsburg Plant until 1937 when it sold the property to David J. Donati Jr. and Leo N. Donati, who conducted business under the firm name of Fibre Board Container Co.¹⁹ Newspaper articles and historical maps indicate that Fibre Board occupied the Williamsburg Avenue site along with Alcatraz through the 1920s.²⁰ The Donati brothers were lifelong residents of Richmond's East End and in 1916, the two founded Fibre Board. The company produced corrugated cardboard boxes and was a primary supplier of cigarette boxes to the nearby tobacco industries, as well as to companies along the entire Atlantic seaboard.²¹ The timing of the company's founding coincides with the rapid rise of cigarette manufacturing and it is likely that the brothers entered into the paper manufacturing business specifically to supply the needs of the local tobacco firms such as the American Tobacco Company. During the 1920s, the Donati brothers enlarged the plant by adding a third floor to the original two-story plant and a three-story wing to the west. The Donati brothers also opened a Martinsville branch of Fibre Board.

In 1949, Fibre Board Container Co. sold all of its property to the Robert Gair Company, Inc., and in 1954 the two companies merged.²² The Robert Gair Company, Inc., established in New York City in 1864, was a manufacturer of paperboard, folding cartons and shipping containers. In the late nineteenth century, the company was one of the pioneers in the invention, manufacture, and sale of corrugated shipping containers and in the twentieth century was one of the nation's major producers of corrugated products and other paper products. By the 1950s, the Gair Company had absorbed about 25 different mills and plants nationwide into its manufacturing empire. Among the plants acquired were the Fibre Board Container Co. in Richmond and Martinsville.²³

The Richmond plant, which continued to operate under the name of Fibre Board, manufactured numerous types of cardboard containers, including cigarette boxes for the nearby tobacco plants in Shockoe Bottom. Fibre Board also produced packing containers for such manufacturers as Johns-Manville, B.F. Goodrich, Planters Peanuts, and the E.I. DuPont factory in Bell, West Virginia, as well as packages for regional food producers, local department stores, and local chemical companies. The Richmond plant was the most profitable of Gair's 22 corrugated plants. The Richmond plant hired a local workforce of about 150 people for three shifts consisting of about 60 percent white workers and 40 percent black workers. Both men and women were among the workers, with the latter serving as administrative staff. Workers were hired from the nearby neighborhoods of Church Hill and Fulton, as well as from Charles City County.²⁴

During World War II, Richmond was a significant supply shipping point. The city's most important industry during the war was tobacco, although some tobacco factories converted their operations to war production. The city's second leading industry was the manufacturing of paper and paper products. The Fibre Board Container company had been a supplier to the federal government of paper products and likely continued that supply, as well as its supply to cigarette manufacturers during the war year. Following the war, Richmond enjoyed the benefits of the postwar economic boom and its industries were among the fastest growing in the country.²⁵

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Richmond, Virginia

Section number 8

Page 7

The Fibre Board Container Company's business grew during the postwar period and in the 1950s, additions were made to the Williamsburg Avenue building to increase the plant's manufacturing capacity. The basement level served as the maintenance area and offices and some storage was located on the first floor. The second floor served as the main manufacturing space and was the site of the 100-foot-long corrugating machine. The large arch-roofed rear wing of the plant, constructed of concrete block with a metal bow-strong truss roof, connected to the second floor and held the large 2.5-ton rolls of cardboard that arrived at the plant via the C&O railroad siding on the east side of the building. Forklifts were used to carry the paper rolls from the wing to the corrugating machine. The third floor was for storage of finished products prior to shipment, either by truck or by rail. Vehicular access on every level of the building facilitated shipment of the plant's products via truck. In the 1950s, when the west end addition was constructed, 31st Street (the former Elm Street) was realigned to allow space for a loading dock on that end of the building.²⁶

Late Twentieth Century

In 1956, a Certificate of Consolidation between the Robert Gair Co., Inc., and Continental Can Co., Inc., was filed with the Virginia State Corporation Commission. At that time, Continental Can assumed ownership of the Gair plants and mills, including the Williamsburg Avenue plant. Continental Can incorporated in New York in 1913 as a manufacturer of metal cans and containers. The company ventured outside of the can making industry in 1956 when it acquired the Gair Company and the Hazel-Atlas Glass Company. The company continued to operate the corrugated manufacturing plant at the Williamsburg Avenue building until 1977, when it moved the operations to a new building near the Richmond airport.²⁷

In 1979, The Continental Group, Inc. (successor to Continental Can Co.) sold the warehouse property and surrounding acreage to P&J Associates (later, P&J Properties, Inc.), a Richmond-based company.²⁸ Since that time, the building has been utilized primarily as a storage facility.

Architectural Background

In 1897, William Churchill Noland (1865-1851), a native of Hanover County, Virginia, and Henry Eugene Baskervill (1867-1946), a Richmond native, formed their architectural firm. Noland had traveled to Europe and received training in firms in New York, Philadelphia, Roanoke, and Richmond. He served as the firm's main designer; he also enjoyed the reputation as "dean" of Virginia architects and was elected as the first president of the Richmond Architects' Association in 1911. Baskervill studied electrical engineering at Cornell University and served as Richmond's City Engineer from 1895-1897.²⁹

Around 1894, Noland returned to Richmond, opened his firm, and invited Baskervill to join him. Initially, the firm undertook minor additions and modifications to existing buildings. Soon, however, the firm was engaged to design new hospital buildings, schools, and churches for some of the city's most respected institutions and residences for its prominent citizens. The firm designed in various architectural styles popular during the American Renaissance period including Colonial Revival, Italianate, and Greek and Gothic revival. Within the firm's catalogue, the Armitage factory is one of only a few distinctly industrial buildings designed by Noland & Baskervill. Other similar designs listed in the firm's records are the Patterson Tobacco Factory at Main and S. 26th Street (1913) and a warehouse for the Harry (W.H.) Grocery Company at the corner of Dock and S. 15th Street (1916), both locations in the Shockoe Valley.³⁰ The Armitage Manufacturing Company building, therefore, represents one of three known industrial buildings executed by the team of Noland & Baskervill. Noland retired from the firm in 1917; Henry Baskervill continued to maintain the architecture firm taking on other design partners. Under the name Baskervill & Son, the firm is in its 115th year and remains one of Richmond's most prominent architectural firms.

The site of the Armitage Manufacturing Company plant is in the east end of the City of Richmond just beyond the area known as Shockoe Valley (Bottom), part of which has been listed in the National Register as a historic district for its association with Richmond's commercial and industrial history.³¹ Multi-storied brick commercial buildings and tobacco warehouses with decorative brick detailing are a predominant feature of the district. Although the Armitage warehouse is located outside of the gridded core of the historic district, it is likely that Noland & Baskervill drew on the character of the area when developing their design, which recalls the brick industrial vernacular style exhibited by warehouses in the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Richmond, Virginia

Section number 8 Page 8

Shockoe Valley area, The Armitage building exhibits typical elements and features associated with the industrial and commercial buildings of the period, including broad masonry walls, ornamental brickwork, articulated building bays, a flat roof, stepped end walls, painted advertising signage, and arched window openings.

Several of the later additions made to the Armitage Manufacturing Company building were completed under the ownership of the Fibre Board Container Company by James Fox & Sons, a Richmond-based building contractor. The firm served as the building contractor for projects by many Richmond architectural firms, including Baskervill & Son, Charles K. Bryant, Clinton & Russell, Albert F. Hunt, Duncan Lee, Carneal & Johnston, Charles M. Robinson, Carl Ruehrmund, and Marcellus E. Wright, as well as out-of-town architects completing designs in Richmond. These projects included residences, schools, office buildings, factories, and churches and synagogues.³²

Records from the City of Richmond's Bureau of Permits indicate that between 1924 and 1939 three building permits (#13484A, #14420A, and #26039A) were issued to Fox for additions to the Fibre Board building, including a third story addition to the existing plant and the three story addition on the west end of the building, which replicates the architectural style of the original building section.³³ Drawings and specifications are recorded only with the 1924 addition for a third-story addition to the building (Permit #13484A). Most of the drawing sheets are unsigned, but two appear to have "Cruickshanks Iron Works" in the title block referencing a local iron works firm that may have provided steel structural members for the building. It is notable that the drawings submitted for the 1925 addition at 3200 Williamsburg Avenue (Permit #14420A) were drawn by James Fox rather than by an architect.³⁴ No permit or drawings for the bowstring truss wing added to the rear of the building in 1954 have been located. Bowstring trusses, both steel and wooden, are often used in buildings where an open interior space is desired, such as aviation hangars. Such trusses were commonly used in military hangars beginning in the 1930s. The tension from the arched top of the truss is transferred by diagonal cross members to the bottom, horizontal chord and then to the exterior walls, thus eliminating the need for interior supports. At the Fibre Board Container Company, the open interior space was used to storage large rolls of paper that were off-loaded from the railroad siding adjacent to the east side of the building. Use of the bowstring allowed for an uninterrupted floor plan, as well as a significant interior height.

The Armitage Manufacturing Company building represents the interwoven relationships of local industries throughout the twentieth century. The Armitage Manufacturing Company selected a local architectural firm to build its manufacturing plant at the site on Williamsburg Avenue as a direct result of the presence of the Fulton Gas Works. Armitage obtained the tar needed for its building papers from the gas works and those papers and other company products were in turn used in some of the city's noteworthy building projects completed during the early twentieth century. After the demise of the Armitage firm, the building came under the ownership of the Richmond-based Fibre Board Container Company. This firm, which produced corrugated paper container packages, was one of the supporting industries of Richmond's early twentieth century cigarette producers including American Tobacco Company, Philip Morris, and Liggett & Myers, among other clients. The building represents the relationships that existed between Richmond's local industries and how these industries both benefitted from and supported each other throughout the twentieth century to create a vibrant and diverse industrial and commercial market.

Endnotes

1. Marie Tyler-McGraw, *At the Falls: Richmond, Virginia, and Its People* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 162.
2. Tyler-McGraw, 189.
3. Tyler-McGraw, 190.
4. Tyler-McGraw, 190.
5. Winfield Scott Garner and Samuel T. Wiley, *Biographical and Historical Cyclopedia of Delaware County, Pennsylvania* (New York: Gresham Publishing Co., 1894), 212.
6. "Dissolution of Copartnership," *Richmond Dispatch*, June 10, 1897; City of Richmond Deed Book [CRDB] 144:2 (copy on file in the Office of Clerk of the Circuit Court, John Marshall Courts Building, Richmond).
7. CRDB 133B:519.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Richmond, Virginia

Section number 8

Page 9

8. Abby Marie Chryst, "Fulton Gas Works: Historical, Cultural, and Ethnographic Meaning of Site [re]-activating the urban fabric" (Master's thesis, University of Virginia, 2011), 16; "Furnace and Factory: John Armitage," *Richmond Times*, September 25, 1892; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, City of Richmond, 1895, 1905 (copy on file, Library of Virginia, Richmond).
9. "Fire at Powhatan," *Richmond Dispatch*, February 4, 1900; "Personals and Briefs," *Richmond Times*, November 30, 1900; Baskervill & Son, Drawings for Armitage Manufacturing Co., Factory Building, 1900, four sheets (Baskervill & Son Records [Mss3 B2922 aFA2], Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, VA).
10. "French Beaten by Richardson: Committee on Light," *Richmond Times*, July 17, 1900; "\$20,000 Plant: Armitage Manufacturing Company to Build in This City," *Richmond Times*, July 18, 1900; "No Increase for City Attorney: Another Proposition," *Richmond Times*, August 5, 1900; "Gas Ninety Cents Soon: Turpin to Fight," *Richmond Times*, July 2, 1904; "Did Syndicate Lose?" *Richmond Dispatch*, August 8, 1902; "Council Asked to Build Ice Factory: Gas By-Products Sold," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 11, 1911.
11. "[Roofing Ad for Armitage Mfg. Co.]," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 3, 1905; Ira Elbert Bennett, *History of the Panama Canal: Its Construction and Builders* (Washington, D.C.: Historical Publishing Company, 1915), 437.
12. "Dissolution Notices," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 12, 1907.
13. "Manufacturing and Business" in *The Railroad Gazette*, Vol. 44, No. 11 (1908):386.
14. "Favors Cuts in Price of Gas: Armitage in Bankruptcy," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 2, 1912.
15. "[Auction advertisement, Ruffin & Sloan, Harrison & Bates]," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 30, 1913.
16. CRDB 222a:77; CRDB 226a:276.
17. CRDB 231D:2; CRDB 237a:425.
18. Sampson Coatings, "Company History." Accessed February 10, 2012, Sampson Coating web site, <http://www.sampsoncoatings.com/copro2.htm>.
19. CRDB 406C:12.
20. "David Donati Dies at Home; Illness Brief," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 18, 1941.
21. "David Donati Dies at Home; Illness Brief," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 18, 1941.
22. CRDB 515a:545; CRDB 561A:301.
23. H. Allen Smith, *Robert Gair: A Study* (New York: The Dial Press, 1939); Robert Gair Company Inc., "From Tree to Box," Corporate brochure [ca. 1950](copy courtesy of Burford Latouche, Jr.).
24. Burford Latouche, Jr., Personal Communication, Telephone conversation with Debra McClane, March 7, 2012.
25. Tyler-McGraw, 271, 279.
26. Latouche, Personal Communication.
27. Latouche, Personal Communication.
28. CRDB 755:1375.
29. Charles E. Brownell, Calder Loth, William M.S. Rasmussen, and Richard Guy Wilson, *The Making of Virginia Architecture* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1992), 342.
30. Guide to Baskervill & Son Record (Baskervill & Son Records [Mss3 B2922 aFA2], Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, VA).
31. Karen Lang-Kummer and A. Rebecca Harrison (Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff). "Shockoe Valley and Tobacco Row Historic District." 1981. (copy on file Department of Historic Resources Archives, Richmond).
32. City of Richmond, Office of Building Inspection, Building Permit Applications, Architectural Blueprints and Specifications, 1907-1949, Index to Records (Accession no. 37533) (on file, Library of Virginia, Richmond).
33. City of Richmond, Office of Building Inspection, Permits #13484A (1924), #14420A (1925), and #26039A (1939).
34. John Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *The Virginia Architects: 1835-1955*. (Richmond VA: New South Architectural Press, 1997). James Fox may have been related to Ernest Fox, a Richmond architect active in the 1920s, or Julian Powers Fox, a Brooklyn, NY-based contractor who was working in Richmond as a contractor in 1910 for Richmond architect Carl Ruehrmund, and listed in 1912 as an architect. In 1915, architect Albert Huntt (also based in Richmond) designed a warehouse for James Fox & Sons on 17th Street in Richmond.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Richmond, Virginia

Section number 9 Page 10

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Richmond, Virginia

Section number 10 Page 11

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

This property consists of tax parcel reference number E0000739002 (City of Richmond Deed Book 755:1374, July 31, 1979), totaling 4.56 acres, as noted on the City of Richmond's Tax Assessor's maps, which are held in that office at 800 E. Broad Street, Room 802, Richmond, Virginia. A copy of the tax map is included with this nomination for further reference.

Boundary Justification

The proposed Armitage Manufacturing Co. property boundaries encompass the parcel historically associated with the Armitage Manufacturing Co. and the Fibre Board Container Co. The proposed property boundaries appear to be identical to the parcel acquired by the Armitage Co. in 1891 from George T. King. In its present condition, the resource retains its historic context and, together with the intact industrial development and significant transportation routes, possesses a high level of integrity that is sufficient to interpret the historical setting of the property.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Richmond, Virginia

Section number Photographs Page 12

Additional Documentation: Photographs

Name of Property: Armitage Manufacturing Co. Building
City or Vicinity: Richmond State: Virginia
Photographer: Debra McClane; Christopher Cariano
Dates Photographed: February and March 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- Photo 1 of 15 – Warehouse, view looking northwest.
- Photo 2 of 15 – Warehouse, view looking northeast.
- Photo 3 of 15 – Warehouse, view looking southeast from Chimborazo Park.
- Photo 4 of 15 – Warehouse, south elevation view looking northeast.
- Photo 5 of 15 – Warehouse, rear (north) elevation, view to south.
- Photo 6 of 15 – Warehouse, rear wing addition view to southeast.
- Photo 7 of 15 – View across Williamsburg Rd. looking southeast.
- Photo 8 of 15 – Warehouse interior, third floor view looking southeast.
- Photo 9 of 15 – Warehouse interior, third floor view looking northwest.
- Photo 10 of 15 – Warehouse interior, second floor, rear section, view looking southwest.
- Photo 11 of 15 – Warehouse interior, second floor view looking northeast.
- Photo 12 of 15 – Warehouse interior, 1954 wing, view looking north.
- Photo 13 of 15 – Warehouse interior, connector view looking southeast.
- Photo 14 of 15 – Warehouse interior, first floor view looking, southeast.
- Photo 15 of 15 – Warehouse interior, first floor view looking southwest.

1. View looking northeast at Armitage Manufacturing Co./Fibre Board Container Co. from Williamsburg Avenue, ca. 1950. Note reconfigured 31st Street to right (west) of building and painted signage on exterior brick walls. Chimborazo Hill is visible in the background. Photograph courtesy of Burford Latouche, Jr.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Richmond, Virginia

Section number Additional Documentation Page 13

1. View looking northeast at Armitage Manufacturing Co./Fibre Board Container Co. from Williamsburg Avenue, ca. 1950. Note reconfigured 31st Street to right (west) of building and painted signage on exterior brick walls. Chimborazo Hill is visible in the background. Photograph courtesy of Burford Latouche, Jr.



**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Richmond, Virginia

Section number Additional Documentation Page 14

2. Marketing display of cigarette packages manufactured by the Fibre Board Container Co., ca. 1950.
Photograph courtesy of Burford Latouche, Jr.



**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Richmond, Virginia

Section number Additional Documentation Page 15

3. Marketing display of commercial cardboard packaging produced by Fibre Board Container Co., ca. 1950.
Photograph courtesy of Burford Latouche, Jr.



**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Richmond, Virginia

Section number Additional Documentation Page 16

4. Aerial view of Armitage Manufacturing Co./Fibre Board Container Co. complex. The Fulton Gas Works is located at the lower right of the photograph and Chimborazo Park is located at the upper right center. Note the wooden trestle of the C&O railroad to the right of the gas works. Photography by Adolph B. Rice Studio, April 15, 1955. On file, Rice Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

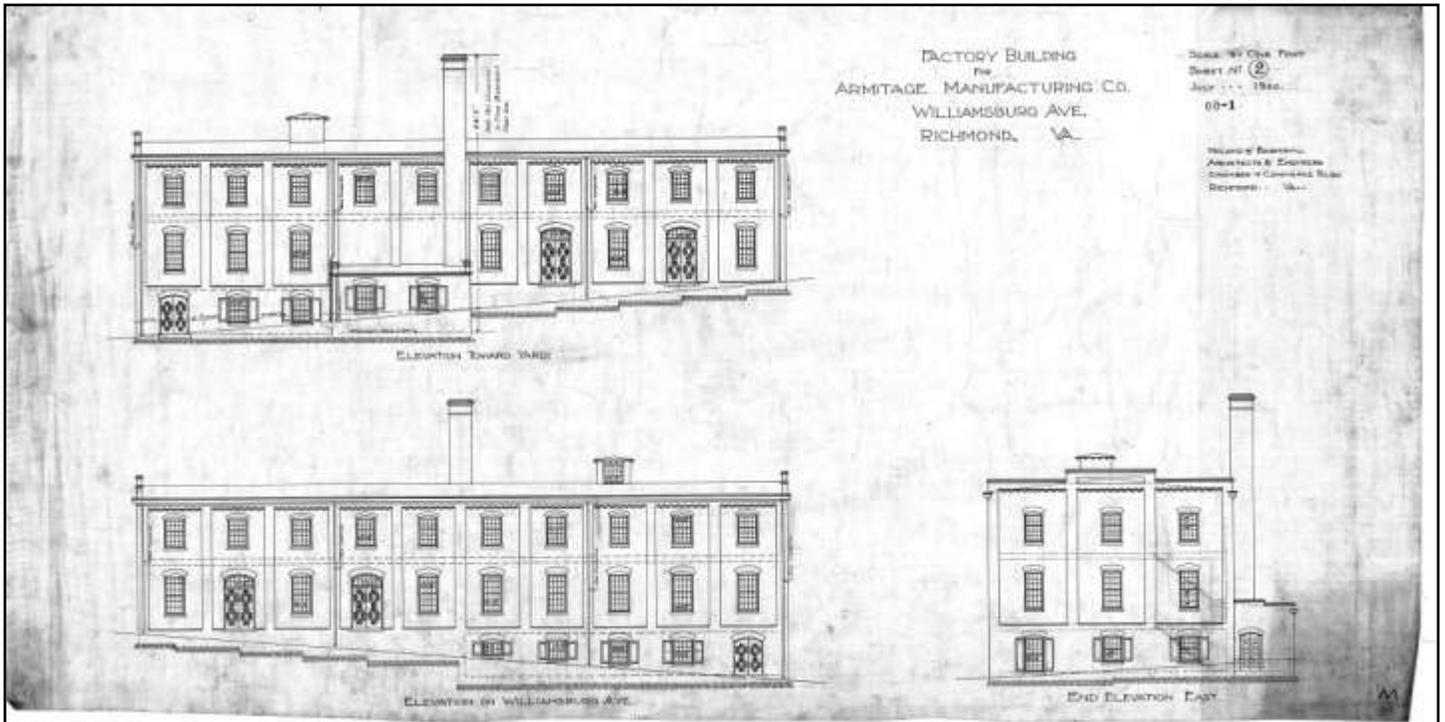


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Richmond, Virginia

Section number Additional Documentation Page 17

5. Elevations of Factory Building for the Armitage Manufacturing Building, Williamsburg Avenue, 1900, by Noland & Baskervill. Courtesy Baskervill & Son, Richmond, VA. On file at the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond. Used by permission.

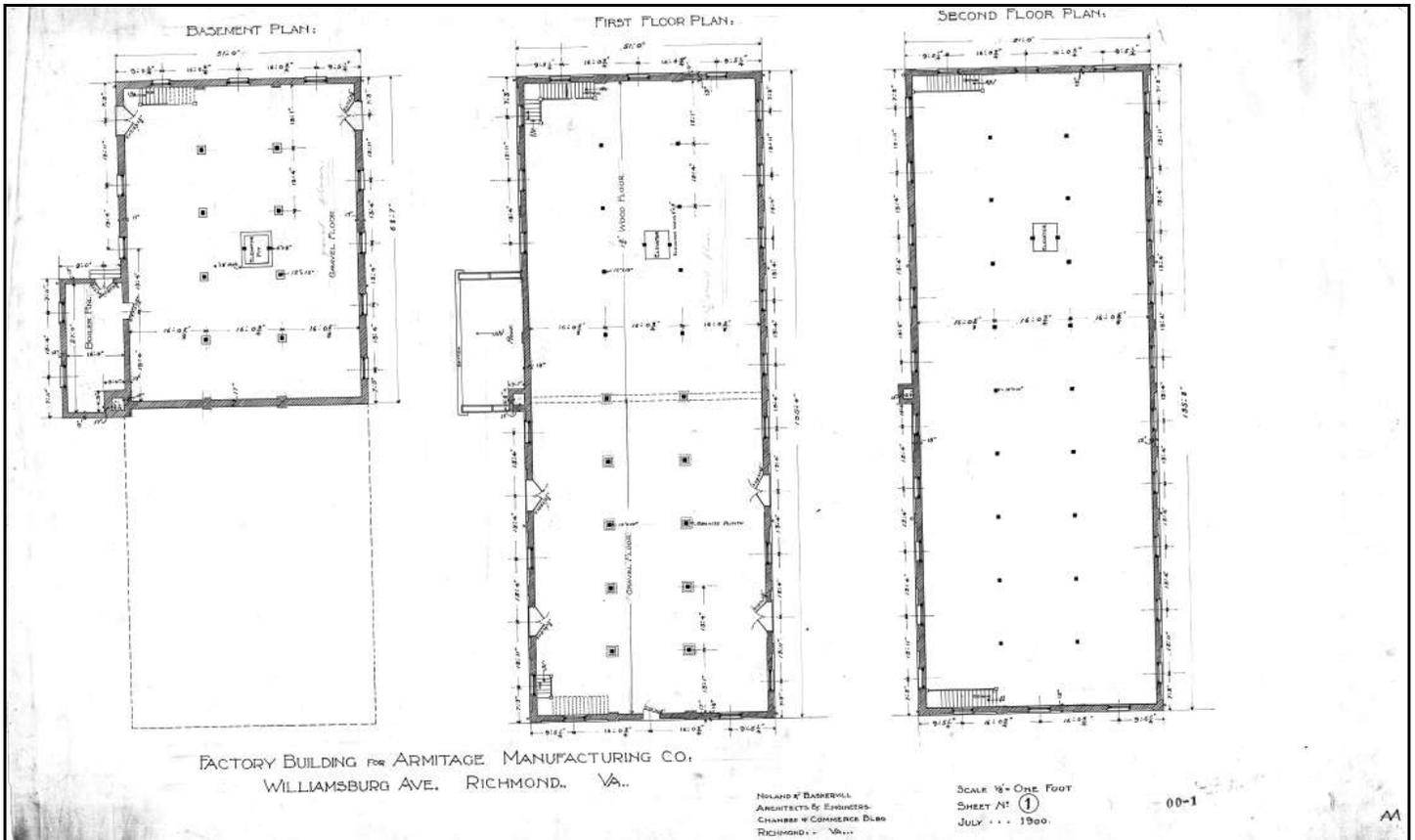


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Richmond, Virginia

Section number Additional Documentation Page 18

6. Basement, first, and second floor plan drawings of Factory Building for the Armitage Manufacturing Co., Williamsburg Avenue, 1900, by Noland & Baskervill. Courtesy Baskervill & Son, Richmond, VA. On file at the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond. Used by permission.

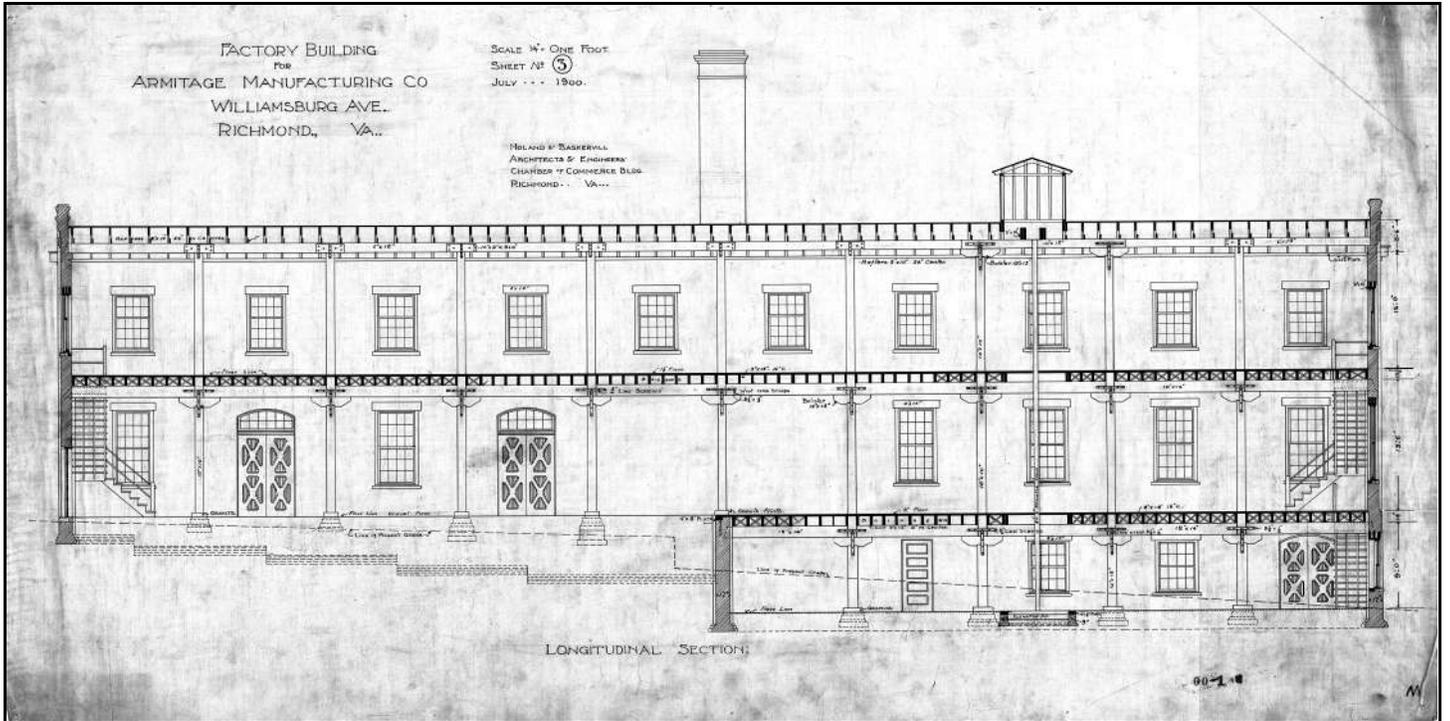


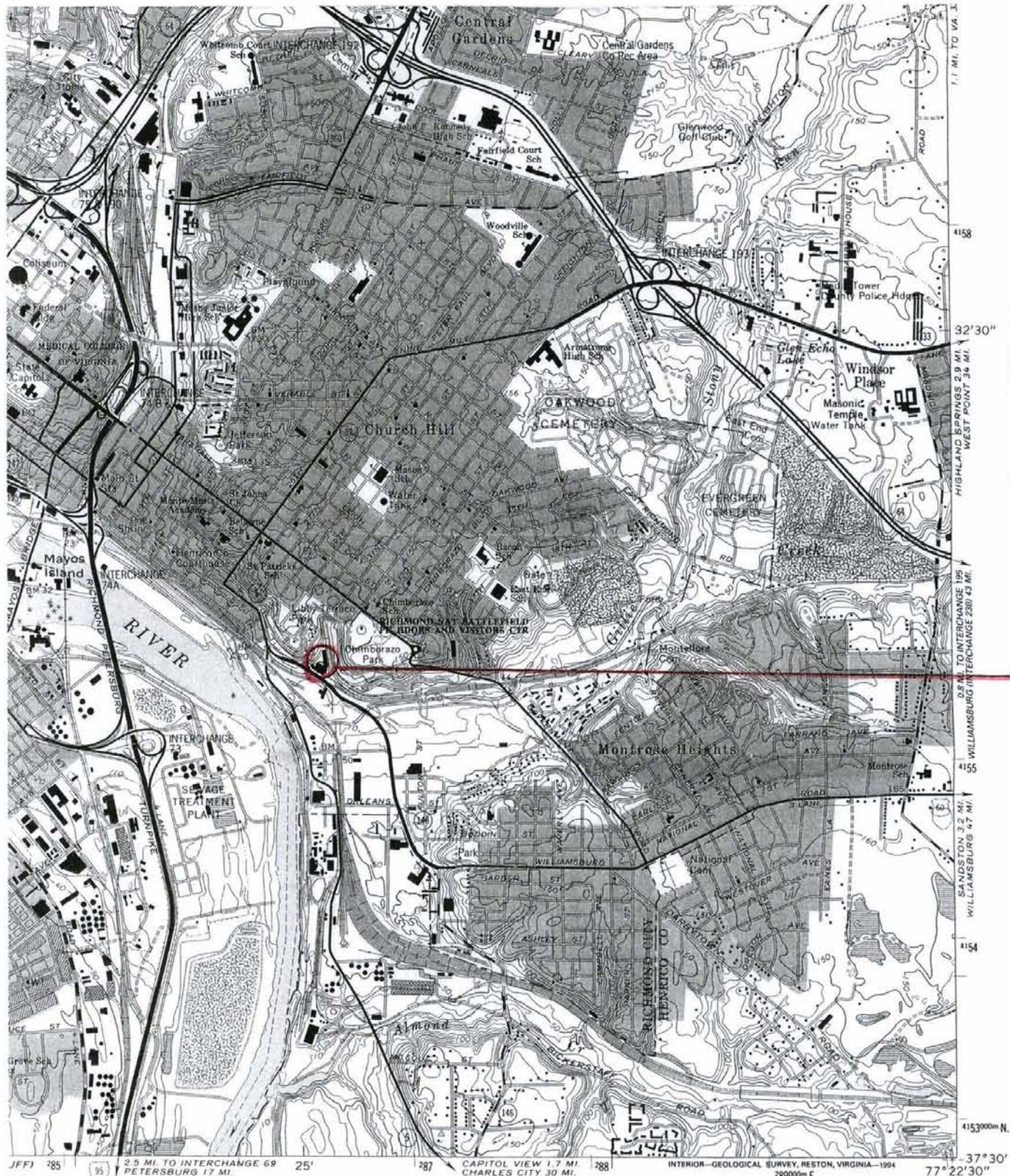
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Armitage Manufacturing Company
Richmond, Virginia

Section number Additional Documentation Page 19

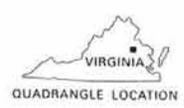
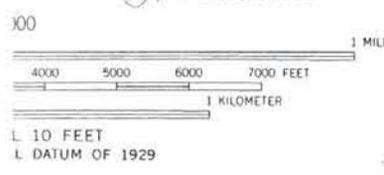
7. Longitudinal section drawing of Factory Building for the Armitage Manufacturing Co., Williamsburg Avenue, 1900, by Noland & Baskerville. Courtesy Baskerville & Son, Richmond, VA. On file at the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond. Used by permission.





Armitage Manufacturing Co. DHR # 127-6693
 3200 Williamsburg Ave., Richmond, VA
 Northing 4155825
 Easting 286533

Zone 19



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty	—————	Light-duty	—————
Medium-duty	—————	Unimproved dirt
○ Interstate Route	○ U. S. Route	○ State Route	

DUTCH GAP
 1:50,000
 1958 IV NE

MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
 LORADO 80225 OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092.
 ES, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903
 SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with Commonwealth of Virginia agencies from aerial photographs taken 1989 and other sources. This information not field checked. Map edited 1994
 Information shown in purple may not meet USGS content standards and may conflict with previously mapped contours

RICHMOND, VA.
 37077-E4-TF-024
 1964
 REVISED 1994
 DMA 5559 III SW - SFRIFR V834

