



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Historic Resources

2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221

Molly Joseph Ward
Secretary of Natural Resources

Julie V. Langan
Director

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January 10, 2018

Kim Chen
Certified Local Government Coordinator
Planning and Preservation Division
900 East Broad Street, Suite 510
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House, City of Richmond

Dear Ms. Chen:

The Department of Historic Resources (DHR), Virginia's historic preservation office, is planning to present the **enclosed** National Register nomination for Virginia's State Review Board and Historic Resources Board for recommendation to the National Register of Historic Places and inclusion in the Virginia Landmarks Register.

Because this resource is within your Certified Local Government, the Architectural Review Board (ARB) is entitled to a sixty-day comment period during which the ARB may review the draft nomination and relay any comments or concerns to the DHR. I hope you will consider the enclosed nomination at your next meeting and relay your comments to us. All comments will be forwarded to the SHPO Director and the Boards for consideration along with the nomination. We have scheduled the nomination for presentation to our boards on **Thursday, March 15, 2018**, and would like to receive your comments by that time in fulfillment of the comment period. This letter serves as notification initiating the sixty-day comment period and no further action will be taken on the nomination until we have received your comments or the full sixty-day period has passed.

I look forward to receiving your comments. Should you have any further questions regarding the nomination or the register program, please call me directly at 804-482-6445.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Hare'.

James Hare
Director, Survey and Register Division

cc: Mayor Levar Stoney; Selena Cuffee-Glenn

Enclosure

Western Region Office
962 Kime Lane
Salem, VA 24153
Tel: (540) 387-5443
Fax: (540) 387-5446

Northern Region Office
5357 Main Street
PO Box 519
Stephens City, VA 22655
Tel: (540) 868-7029
Fax: (540) 868-7033

Eastern Region Office
2801 Kensington Avenue
Richmond, VA 23221
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Department of Historic Resources (DHR), 2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221

Key Points about the National and State Register Process for Property Owners

- Listing in the national and state registers is honorary. It recognizes a historic property's importance to its community, the State, and/or the Nation as well as encouraging good stewardship of the historic property.
- National and state register listings do not place restrictions on private property owners. Owners have no obligation to open their properties to the public, to restore them, or even to maintain them, if they choose not to do so.
- Under Federal and State laws, private property owners can do anything they wish with their Register-listed property, provided that no Federal or State license, permit, or funding is involved.
- If a listed property is destroyed or its integrity is greatly altered, it is removed from the registers.
- To ensure public participation in the nomination process, property owners and local officials are notified of proposed nominations to the National Register and provided the opportunity to comment. In addition, once a nomination is submitted to the National Park Service another public comment period is published in the *Federal Register*. Further details about the public participation process are available at http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/GuidanceMaterials/LegalNotificationForm_2016.pdf
- Federal agencies whose projects affect a listed property must give DHR (Virginia's State Historic Preservation Office) an opportunity to comment on the project and its effects on the property. Further details are provided below.
- Federal and State Investment Tax Credits for rehabilitation and other provisions are available, should a property owner choose to use them. Further details are provided below.
- Owners may also qualify for Federal grants for historic preservation when funding is available. Refer to the National Park Service web site for Federal grant information. Currently, Virginia has no grants available for privately owned properties.

National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

Established under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), as amended, the national historic preservation program is a partnership between the Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments; private organizations; and the public. The Act and its provisions establish the framework within which citizens plan, identify, evaluate, register, and protect significant historic and archeological properties throughout the country. Central to this framework is the NRHP--the Nation's official list of historic properties worthy of preservation, administered by the National Park Service (NPS), Department of the Interior. Properties listed in the NRHP include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture.

Historic places are nominated to the NRHP by nominating authorities: the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), appointed by the Governor of the State in which the property is located; the Federal Preservation Officer (FPO) for properties under Federal ownership or control; or by the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) if the property is on tribal lands. Anyone can prepare a nomination to the NRHP, at which time the SHPO, FPO or THPO reviews the proposed nomination, and notifies property owners and local officials of the intent to nominate. Nominations submitted through the State must first be approved by a State Review Board (SRB) before being reviewed by the NPS. The members of the SRB, who are appointed by the SHPO, use the same criteria as the National Register to evaluate properties and then recommend them to the NPS for listing in the NRHP.

The NRHP continues to reflect the desire of Americans, as expressed in the NHPA, that "the historical and cultural foundation of the nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people."

Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR)

In 1966, the Virginia General Assembly established the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, now the Department of Historic Resources (DHR). DHR is the State Historic Preservation Office responsible for managing

Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House, City of Richmond, DHR No. 127-6914

The large three-story reinforced concrete Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House was built 1919-1923 and served as the Richmond warehouse for the plow company. Attached to the southern wall are two earlier one-story brick warehouses, which served Oliver Chilled Plow Works as a warehouse prior to construction of the reinforced concrete building. Together, the three parts of the building show the evolution of building practices and technology over time from one-story, gable-roof buildings with load-bearing brick walls to a multiple-story reinforced concrete building that allowed for greater interior open space and larger and an increased number of windows. The building is also one of the few in this area that survived the widespread demolition of almost all of the buildings along 17th and 18th Streets and the numerous cross streets north of East Clay Street during the urban renewal period in Richmond. There are no secondary buildings.

The Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House is significant for its role in the storage and shipping of products to retailers throughout Virginia and beyond. It represents the efficient system that the company founder, James Oliver, established to ensure that his innovative plows, related farm equipment, and replacement parts were quickly shipped to smaller distribution facilities and retailers. Under Oliver's guidance and that of his son and successor, James D. Oliver, the company expanded through its branch houses to cover the nation as well as to reach the world market. The building also serves as an instructive example of the evolution in materials from brick to reinforced concrete to construct industrial buildings. The use of reinforced concrete early in the twentieth century allowed for larger interior spaces and more and larger windows than had the previous use of brick alone. The juxtaposition of this relatively new material as well as brick in the load-bearing walls of the two earlier attached warehouses adds to the interest of the building as a whole. The Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House is also one of the few in its neighborhood that survived the widespread demolition of such once-plentiful buildings during the urban renewal period in Richmond. Almost all of the similar buildings along 17th and 18th Streets, as well as on the numerous cross streets north of East Clay Street, were demolished at that time. The Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House has a period of significance from 1886 (construction date for the oldest surviving part of the building) to 1968 (fifty years ago, when the Oliver Corporation still owned and used the building). It is locally significant and eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for Commerce/Trade and Criterion C for Architecture.



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 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House

Other names/site number: 127-6914

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 908 Oliver Hill Way

City or town: Richmond State: VA County: Independent City

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

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B X C D

<p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>Virginia Department of Historic Resources</u> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
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<p>In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____ Signature of commenting official:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ Title :</p>	<p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House
Name of Property

Richmond, VA
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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE/Warehouse, Commercial Storage

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT

Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House
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Narrative Description

The earliest section of this three-part building is the southern section. It was built in 1886 as a tobacco warehouse but was later used as a warehouse by Oliver Chilled Plow Works. It is a one-story building constructed of brick laid mostly in five-course American bond. The southern side is parged with brick pilasters. Interestingly, the southern wall is not tied into to the rest of the building at least at the front. Originally, this building shared a common wall on the south side with an 1885 packing house that was demolished between 1959 and 1964. The demolition perhaps caused the southern wall of the existing building to be partially rebuilt, which may account for the lack of a tie-in to the remainder of the front wall as well as the parging and pilasters. The rear is also parged. The building has a gable roof with a stepped parapet on both the front and rear. There are two wooden, gable-roof ventilators on the roof's ridge. There is a brick chimney flue on the façade adjacent to the northern brick section. Original or early openings on the façade have been infilled with brick. They included two windows with segmental arches and concrete sills. There was a large rectangular central opening that is now infilled with brick with a pedestrian door inserted in the infill. Access to the only opening on the southern side of the building is by a concrete ramp and loading dock. A flat roof supported by metal poles shelters the loading dock.

The middle building was constructed around 1916 by Oliver Chilled Plow Works. Today, the front section is two stories tall, of brick laid in four-course American bond with a shed roof of standing-seam metal and an asymmetrical stepped parapet on the front that wraps around the southern side. The rear of the second story is sheathed with asphalt shingles over what appears to be lapped wooden siding. The remainder of the building has a gable roof with the same stepped parapet on the rear as the building to the south. All openings on the façade have been infilled with brick. The first floor of the façade originally had a large loading-sized opening on the southern end and two evenly spaced windows across the front. The second floor originally had four windows. The area on the second floor immediately adjacent to the three-story concrete building appears to be infill and explains the asymmetrical stepped parapet. This single-bay addition also had a window. All openings are topped with segmental arches.

The interiors of each of these two sections are open with exposed brick walls and concrete floors and are open to the roof. There is a modern office across the front of the southern section created by less-than-full-height wooden stud walls covered with gypsum wallboard. The office has an acoustical-tile-on-a-grid ceiling and carpeted floors. The second floor of the middle building was apparently used as an apartment. The ghost of a stair rises along the northern wall at the front to the second story. The segmental-arched openings between the two brick sections shown near the front on the Sanborn maps have been infilled with brick. The buildings are now connected by modern rectangular openings.

By 1919, construction of the large three-story, reinforced concrete building with brick curtain walls had begun. On the exterior, the concrete structure subdivided the building into bays with five bays on the front and rear and six bays on the northern side. The height of the brick curtain walls is the same on the first and third floors with a shorter wall on the second floor, except above the entrance. The brick walls on the first and second floors feature a concrete diamond

Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House
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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.)

- 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

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House, a three-part storage and office building, is significant for its role in the storage and shipping of products to retailers throughout Virginia and beyond. It represents the efficient system that the company founder, James Oliver, established to ensure that his innovative plows, related farm equipment, and replacement parts were quickly shipped to smaller distribution facilities and retailers. Under Oliver's guidance and that of his son and successor, James D. Oliver, the company expanded through its branch houses to cover the nation as well as to reach the world market. The building also serves as an instructive example of the evolution in materials from brick to reinforced concrete to construct industrial buildings. The use of reinforced concrete early in the twentieth century allowed for larger interior spaces and more and larger windows than had the previous use of brick alone. The juxtaposition of this relatively new material as well as brick in the load-bearing walls of the two earlier attached warehouses adds to the interest of the building as a whole. The Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House is also one of the few in its neighborhood that survived the widespread demolition of such once-plentiful buildings during the urban renewal period in Richmond. Almost all of the similar buildings along 17th and 18th Streets, as well as on the numerous cross streets north of East Clay Street, were demolished at that time. The Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House has a period of significance from 1886 (construction date for the oldest surviving part of the building) to 1968 (fifty years ago, when the Oliver Corporation still owned and used the building). It is locally significant and eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for Commerce/Trade and Criterion C for Architecture.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House is located at 908 Oliver Hill Way (formerly named North 17th Street). Oriented north and south, the southern end of the street terminates on the north bank of the James River. The street runs along the eastern slope of Shockoe Valley, which was formed by Shockoe Creek, a tributary of the river.

The branch house consists of three parts: a colorful three-story building on the northern end at the former intersection of 17th Street and Washington Street, which no longer exists; a one-story brick addition with a two-story facade in the middle; and a one-story brick building on the southern end. The Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House was constructed at different times from south to north, beginning with a one-story building formerly attached to the south end of the present building. It was constructed by 1885 as a meat-packing house and was demolished between 1959 and 1965; the warehouse now on the southern end was constructed by 1886 for Oliver Chilled Plow Works; the middle building with the two-story facade was constructed between 1916 and 1923; and the three-story building on the northern end was constructed

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lots, as well as the southern lot on Concord Street, had buildings close to the streets as well as what appear to be a shared building straddling the lot lines. South of the Hunt lot, facing 17th Street, was a lot the width and depth of both the Hunt and Hagan lots combined. It was colored green, perhaps to indicate a lawn, and showed a large rectangular building near 17th Street labeled "Wesley Chapel."²

According to Mary Wingfield Scott, the noted authority on Richmond's architecture and old neighborhoods,

Wesley Chapel [was] started about 1849 on the west side of Seventeenth . . . Street. This chapel served through the 'fifties, and was probably the building on the same site used by a Negro congregation in the 'seventies.³

The *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, which published a list of "Colored Schools" on September 21, 1871, described Wesley Chapel as a primary school for both boys and girls. Mrs. A. E. Moore and Miss S. E. Birchett were the teachers. As of March 1876, Bishop A. R. Green, of the Independent Methodist Episcopal Church, used the chapel for "mission work." A "mission Sabbath school" was to be established there that month as well.⁴

Two lots labeled "R. H. Whitlock" were located to the rear of Wesley Chapel and fronted on Concord Street. The northern lot of the two was the same width as the chapel lot but vacant; the southern lot contained a building near Concord Street. South of the chapel, an irregularly shaped and unlabeled lot extended all the way across the block from 17th Street to Concord Street; it contained one building on the western end that straddled the line of the next lot south.⁵

At the northern end of the block, across Washington Street and extending for three blocks north of the future Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House site, were the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad yards. "Stock pens" or stockyards were located adjacent to the rail yards on the eastern side of the block north of William Street, the next street north of Washington Street.⁶

Eventually, all of the lots described above, south of Washington Street, would form the ground on which the various parts of the Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House were constructed over several decades.

1885 PACKING HOUSE (DEMOLISHED CA. 1959–1964)

In 1885, the Sanborn Insurance Company published a map of Richmond that included details about the buildings standing in the western block of 17th Street south of Washington Street, as well as the changes that had occurred since 1877. No lot lines were shown but the lots can be identified by comparing the shapes and locations of the remaining buildings from 1877. The rail yard had been extended south and had essentially obliterated Concord Street with new rail spurs. On the northern end of the block, the former Bayly lot was still devoid of buildings except for a small frame "office" near the new rail spur on the western side of the lot. The Hagan and Hunt lots still possessed their earlier frame buildings. The Hagan lot included a dwelling next to 17th Street, a kitchen behind it, and a "shanty" on the western side near the spur. The Hunt lot

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process that involved sand-casting and rapid cooling (“chilling”) of the metal. He first sold his new plows, fifty in all, in 1857. By early in the 1870s, after years of further experimentation and enlarging the foundry, his company was selling 300,000 plows a year and had expanded into the international market. He also established what he called “branch houses” in other states and cities, including Richmond, to sell and deliver plows to retailers. Oliver’s factory, located in South Bend, Indiana, closed early in 1885 when the mostly Polish workers struck for increased wages and better conditions. Oliver briefly thought about moving his operations and building a new factory elsewhere. The president of the Merchants’ and Manufacturers’ Association of Staunton, Virginia, contacted the company to encourage the move to Staunton. Once the strikers were suppressed, however, Oliver decided to reopen the South Bend factory instead.¹¹

Oliver’s plows were famous for their strength and efficiency. In 1911, Oliver and the M. Rumely Company staged a plowing event near South Bend under the auspices of Purdue University. Fifty Oliver plows were attached to three Rumely Oil-Pull tractors to plow a twenty-acre field with stubble. After the event concluded, the Purdue scientists calculated that one acre had been plowed every four minutes and fifteen seconds. Farmers who witnessed the event recalled that fifty years earlier it had taken two men, an ox, and a single walking plow ten hours to turn one acre, and the farmer had to walk ten miles to do it. In 1918, an advertisement for an Oliver riding (tractor-drawn) “tractor plow” with three “bottoms” (plow blades) claimed that a farmer who used it could plow two acres in two hours versus one acre in ten hours with a traditional three-horse single-bottom “walking plow.” The savings in energy and time were obvious, and the demand for Oliver plows was high as a result.¹²

The company’s purchase of the Davenport warehouse in Richmond in 1892 suggested that the demand for its plows was strong in Virginia and the nearby states that were connected to the new Oliver branch house by the rail line and spur adjoining it. (The manager of the Richmond branch house must have been suffering a panic attack in December 1904, when he placed an advertisement in the *Richmond Times Dispatch*: “LOST—BUNCH OF KEYS AND CHAIN. One dollar will be paid for their return to OLIVER CHILLED PLOW WORKS.”) James Oliver died in his South Bend mansion in 1908, leaving the company to his son Joseph D. Oliver, who soon began acquiring other farm-equipment companies. He also expanded the company’s international reach, even into Russia, and doubled the footprint of the South Bend plant. In 1911, he opened a second factory, in Ontario, Canada, to tap into the lucrative mid-western Canadian farm market. Bernard H. Prack, who would design the Richmond branch expansion in 1919, was the architect of the new factory. In May 1913, South Bend Iron Works sold the lot and branch house to its successor company, the Oliver Chilled Plow Works, which had been created in 1901.¹³

The two adjoining buildings—the meat-packing house and the plow company branch house—appeared on the 1895 Sanborn map. Each was one story high. The 1885 “packing house,” which had a basement and a “gas eng[ine],” was labeled “National Linseed Oil Co. Ware Ho[use]” in 1895. It also had a monitor on the roof. The 1886 building was labeled “Plow Ware Ho[use],” for the South Bend Iron Works. The northernmost lot on Washington Street, which was vacant on Baist’s map, was shown as a single lot with a rail spur penetrating its center from the north. Beside the spur was the word “coal,” and small buildings stood on the western and

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In Virginia, however, there was only the branch house in Richmond, and no transfer stocks elsewhere in the state, according to a 1920 directory of such services. Nationwide, Oliver had seventeen branch houses and sixty-four transfer stocks in that year. Virginia's neighbor to the south, North Carolina, had neither a branch nor transfer stocks. What Virginia and North Carolina had that the wide-open states of Texas, Kansas, and Nebraska lacked, however, was a dense network of rail lines. At the Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House on North 17th Street, a loading dock opened directly onto a rail spur. From there, plows and parts could be transported directly to almost every retailer in Virginia and North Carolina. There was, therefore, no pressing commercial need for a branch house in North Carolina or for transfer houses either there or in Virginia. The Richmond branch house likely served these purposes, and was effectively a regional office.¹⁸

In July 1912, the branch managers attended a conference in South Bend, Indiana, at the company headquarters, the high point of which was a banquet at the Oliver Hotel. Langdon Wall, the Richmond office manager, and Ray N. Wall, the cashier, attended the conference. The branch houses in Billings, Chattanooga, Cedar Rapids, Dallas, Harrisburg, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Louisville, Minneapolis, Nashville, Portland, Rochester, San Francisco, and St. Louis were also represented, as well as managers who covered Michigan, New England, Northern Illinois, and Northern Indiana. The wide distribution of the offices gave credence to the company slogan, "Plowmakers to the World."¹⁹

In 1878, the lot just north of the future Oliver branch house changed hands when Lucien H. Holloway, as trustee for his wife Dora Holloway, bought it on February 20 from Dominick McDonough. Holloway sold it on May 20, 1887, to Clara Holloway. On April 29, 1892, she and her husband William B. Pearce sold it to South Bend Iron Works, which had just bought the Davenport warehouse. Unlike the other lots, this one only had a 23-foot front on 17th Street instead of 46 feet, and only extended west from 17th Street 80 feet, instead of the usual 125 feet. The deeds also referred to a house on the lot.²⁰

The next lot to the north was also 23 feet wide but extended the full 125 feet west from 17th Street. Clarissa H. Hagan, a widow, sold it to South Bend Iron Works, Oliver's parent company, on April 28, 1892. She had acquired it on March 29, 1887, from Charles H. Hagan and other Hagan family members. The property had been in the Hagan family since 1850.²¹

In 1892, then, South Bend Iron Works acquired these two lots to expand its recently purchased branch house northward because of the popularity of its products and the need for more storage space in Richmond. There existed a difficulty in merely adding to the existing warehouse, however, because the next-door lot was only 80 feet deep instead of 125 like the others. The problem arose apparently because no one actually owned the difference: the piece of land west of the Holloway/Pearce tract that measured about 23 feet from north to south and 40 feet from east to west. Oliver Chilled Plow Works solved the problem by obtaining a land grant on April 30, 1909, from Governor Claude A. Swanson acting on behalf of the Commonwealth of Virginia. This enabled the company to obtain a building permit from the city of Richmond (a requirement for new construction or a substantial addition or repair since 1907). Permit number 1168 was issued on July 2, 1909, to construct a warehouse at 766-768 North 17th Street. The 1905

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The widespread and increasing demand for Oliver's products made larger Richmond branch house facilities necessary.²⁶

On August 8, 1919, the city issued building permit number 6785 to Oliver Chilled Plow Works, which was in the midst of designing the new branch house to be erected at the corner of Washington and North 17th Streets. Bernard H. Prack, architect, drew up the plans and specifications. He was familiar with Oliver and its operations, have already designed a warehouse for the company in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. The extant blueprints are dated June 16, 1919, with revisions dated September 2, 1919. The blueprints are for the building now standing at the former corner of the two streets.²⁷

Several announcements related to the construction of the new building appeared as the work began. The midsummer 1919 issues of the trade publication *Manufacturers Record* summarized the changing approaches to the new building, which was described on July 31 as a "3-story warehouse addition, brick & steel, 92x125 ft." The August 7 issue noted that the builder "contemplates 4-story warehouse addition instead of 3 stories." The edition of August 14 reported a "\$90,000 warehouse addition, 4 stories, fireproof, built-up roof, steam heat, electric lights." (As constructed, however, the building is clearly of three stories, as the blueprints illustrate.) Likewise, the September 1919 issue of *Hardware & House Furnishing Goods*, in its "Trade Notes" column, mentioned "Oliver Chilled Plow Works erecting \$90,000 warehouse addition" in Richmond. Finally, on September 12, 1919, the mayor of Richmond signed an ordinance that the city Board of Aldermen passed on September 9 "granting Oliver Chilled Plow Works [a] permit for [a] concrete loading platform at Seventeenth and Washington Streets."²⁸

By the next edition of the Sanborn map in 1924, several changes had occurred that created the unified building as it exists today. Oliver Chilled Plow Works now occupied the northern lot with its new three-story building, including a basement, of fireproof construction. Reinforced concrete was used throughout, with curtain walls of brick. It had electric lights and steam heat. Adjoining the old Oliver building to the south, a new, one-story building with a two-story facade filled the vacant next-door Hagan and Hunt lots. It had a slate roof "full of skylights." Universal Motor Company used both it and the 1886 building next door to the south as an "implement" warehouse. American Linseed Company used the 1885 building, whose monitor was noted as "raised 3" feet, for "oil storage."²⁹

By 1950, as recorded on the Sanborn map for that year, the only change was to the occupancy of the southern and middle buildings. Virginia-Carolina Laundry Supply Corporation used them as a "supply" warehouse.³⁰

SUBSEQUENT OWNERSHIP

During the decades following the completion of the building by 1923, Oliver Chilled Plow Works underwent mergers and changes in ownership. In 1929, it merged with the Hart-Parr Tractor Company (established 1897), the American Seeding Machine Company (1848), and the Nichols and Shepard Company (grain separating machinery, 1848), to form the Oliver Farm Equipment Company. The new company acquired all of the lots and buildings on North 17th Street from Oliver Chilled Plow Works. It also continued to acquire other farm-equipment

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The development and use of reinforced concrete allowed relatively small columns to support large loads, and the exterior walls were no longer required to be load bearing. The exterior walls, therefore, could be much lighter and more open than masonry load-bearing walls. Reinforced concrete construction for mills or large manufacturing facilities began in the first quarter of the twentieth century and allowed for large open spaces, multistoried buildings, and large windows that provided light and ventilation and fireproof construction. An engineer wrote in 1922, "It is almost impossible to obtain satisfactory large timbers and modern practice has adopted reinforced concrete construction as standard for practically all buildings." At only a marginal cost over the traditional slow-burning construction of brick with wooden support members, reinforced concrete had been adopted by this point as the preferred construction method for mills, warehouses, and industrial facilities.³⁵

This design was both functional and practical. This building type was used for any function that required open space unencumbered by closely set support posts. Most examples of this building type are plain but they could include elements of stylistic influences. It has been argued that the style of twentieth-century American industrial buildings influenced European Modernism and the International style. These buildings emphasized form and function rather than style, and the term "form (ever) follows function" coined by Louis Sullivan became an important theme for modernist architects in the early twentieth century. The expressed concrete structural frame of the Oliver buildings fits this philosophy.

The Oliver Chilled Plow Branch House is one of a collection of buildings in Richmond with an expressed concrete structural frame with brick curtain walls. In Richmond this building type housed tobacco factories, wholesale grocers, coffee processing plants, and garages. Elsewhere, textile factories also used this type of construction. Most buildings with this type of construction identified in the Richmond area were built between ca. 1912 (2009 E. Grace Street) and 1937 (part of the Philip Morris Stockton Street Plant); however, most were constructed in the 1920s. The Richmond firm of Carneal & Johnson several examples of this building type in the city, while Bernard H. Prack designed the Oliver building.

There are two individually listed reinforced concrete buildings with brick curtain walls in Richmond. The Meter Repair Building (ca. 1926), which is part of an eight-building complex in the Richmond Department of Public Utilities Howard Road Facility (127-6148), is a good example of this type and is the only one with a gable roof instead of a flat roof. The other individually listed building is the E. M. Todd Company building (127-5978), which has a 1920s addition with an expressed concrete frame; the remainder is of brick. The other buildings of this type are contributing resources in the Manchester Industrial Historic District (four buildings), the Shockoe Slip Historic District (one), and the Shockoe Valley and Tobacco Row Historic District (seven).

Architects

Architects designed two of the three parts of this building. Bernard L. Black was the architect for the earliest extant part, the southern brick warehouse completed in 1886. Black studied in Baltimore between 1851 and 1857 and was active between 1851 and 1892. One of his earliest Virginia projects is dated 1858. He also worked in Burlington, Iowa, but returned to Virginia

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

SECTION 9

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Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary for this property is described as City of Richmond tax parcel E000027600.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This parcel was historically associated with the Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House and is all the land currently associated with this building.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Ashley Neville & John Salmon
organization: Ashley Neville LLC
street & number: 11311 Cedar Lane
city or town: Glen Allen state: Virginia zip code: 23059
e-mail: ashleyneville@comcast.net
telephone: 804-307-4601
date: November 26, 2017

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House

City or Vicinity: Richmond

County: State: Virginia

Photographer: Ashley Neville (June 2017) and Richard MacDonald (October 2017)

Date Photographed: June and October 2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 15 Front, view to the southwest. Ashley Neville, photographer, June 2017
- 2 of 15 Front and north side, view to the southwest. Ashley Neville, photographer, June 2017
- 3 of 15
- 4 of 15 Aerial view of north and eastern side (rear), view to the southeast. Richard MacDonald, photographer, October 2017
- 5 of 15 Aerial view of east side (rear), view to the west. Richard MacDonald, photographer, October 2017
- 6 of 15 Interior of southern section, view to the west. Richard MacDonald, photographer, October 2017
- 7 of 15 Interior of southern section, view to the east. Richard MacDonald, photographer, October 2017
- 8 of 15 Interior of middle section, view to the east. Richard MacDonald, photographer, October 2017
- 9 of 15 Interior of middle section, view to the west. Richard MacDonald, photographer, October 2017
- 10 of 15 Interior of first floor, northern section, view to the east. Ashley Neville, photographer, June 2017

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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. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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.

¹ Gregg D. Kimball, *American City, Southern Place: A Cultural History of Antebellum Richmond* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 75; Mary Wingfield Scott, *Old Richmond Neighborhoods* (Richmond, Va.: William Byrd Press, 1984), 77.

² Frederick W. Beers, *Illustrated Atlas of the City of Richmond* (Richmond, Va.: Southern and Southwestern Surveying and Publishing Co., 1877), plate G.

³ Scott, *Neighborhoods*, 77.

⁴ *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, Sept. 21, 1871, and March 4, 1876, on Chronicling America Web site, www.chroniclingamerica.loc.gov, accessed July 26, 2017.

⁵ Beers, *Illustrated Atlas*, plate G.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Richmond, Virginia* (New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., 1886), plate 28; Commonwealth Environmental Associates, Inc., *Findings Report, Environmental Site Assessment, Former Herod Seeds Company Property, 904, 908 & 1020 Oliver Hill Way, Richmond, Virginia 23219* (Richmond, Va.: Commonwealth Environmental Associates, Inc., 2017), 80–81.

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¹² "All the World's Plowing Records Broken," *The Implement Age*, Vol. 38, No. 18 (November 4, 1911): 24–25; *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 26, 1918, on Chronicling America Web site, www.chroniclingamerica.loc.gov, accessed November 14, 2017.

¹³ James Oliver biography on Wikipedia Web site, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Oliver_\(inventor\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Oliver_(inventor)), accessed July 30, 2017; Oliver Farm Equipment Company on Wikipedia Web site, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oliver_Farm_Equipment_Company, accessed July 30, 2017; *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, December 23, 1904, on Chronicling America Web site, www.chroniclingamerica.loc.gov, accessed July 30, 2017; "The Oliver Chilled Plow Works," on The History Museum Web site, <http://historymuseumsb.org/the-oliver-chilled-plow-works/>, accessed August 18, 2017; Deed Book 225B, pp. 446–447, South Bend Iron Works to Oliver Chilled Plow Works, May 20, 1912, recorded February 28, 1914, JMCB; James Oliver biography on Indiana Historical Society Web site, http://www.indianahistory.org/our-collections/reference/notable-hoosiers/james-oliver#.WZNb_SXD9ok, accessed August 15, 2017.

¹⁴ *Richmond, Virginia* (New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., 1895), plate 40; *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Commonwealth to the Governor and General Assembly of Virginia for the Year Ending September 30, 1903* (Richmond, Va.: J. H. O'Bannon, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1903), 241.

¹⁵ *Richmond, Virginia* (New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., 1905), plate 24.

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