



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 127-6914

Purpose of Evaluation

Please use the following space to explain briefly why you are seeking an evaluation of this property.

Historic Tax Credits

Are you interested in applying for State and/or Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? Yes X No

Are you interested in receiving more information about DHR's easement program? Yes No X

1. General Property Information

Property name: Oliver Chilled Plow Works Warehouse (127-6914)

Property address: 908 Oliver Hill Way

City or Town: Richmond

Zip code: 23219-1623

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: Richmond

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building x Site Structure Object

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 0.685

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban X Suburban Town Village Hamlet Rural

Briefly describe the property's overall setting, including any notable landscape features:

The building faces east towards the former 17th Street (now Oliver Hill Way). All three of its parts have the same setback from the street and there is a small grassy area between the building and the public sidewalk. The CSX railroad tracks are located to the rear of the property. There is a semi-paved parking lot on the north end of the building that is enclosed with a tall chain-link fence. South of the building, the land is open with the Leigh Street viaduct looming overhead.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): _____

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: Bernard J. Black (2nd brick warehouse; Bernard H. Prack (reinforced concrete building

If the builder is known, please list here: _____

Date of construction (can be approximate): 1886, ca. 1916, 1919-1923

Narrative Description:

In the space below, briefly describe the general characteristics of the entire property, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the architectural style, materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions, remodelings, or other alterations.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The large three-story reinforced concrete Oliver Chilled Plow Works Building 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.

DESCRIPTION

EXTERIOR

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. Today, 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 openings between the two brick sections shown near the front on the Sanborn maps have been infilled with brick. Both openings have segmental arches.

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 motif centered in each bay. The third-floor walls sport rectangular strips with a diamond motif in the center. A ribbon of windows is located above the brick walls on each floor. The first floor probably originally had the same size and type of window found on the third floor and on the rear of the first floor. On the first-floor front and northern side, however, this space has been infilled with glass block with short one-over-one-light wooden sash windows, two per bay. All other windows are steel windows. The second floor has the largest windows with a row of three-over-three-light sash windows while the third floor has smaller four-light windows that pivot open. The second-floor sash windows extend across the front and all but the last three bays of the northern side, which have the smaller four-light pivot window. The rear (western side) features the four-light pivot windows on all floors. Most basement windows have been infilled with brick. There are three first-floor loading doors on the northern side and an entrance to the basement. The first three entrances are sheltered by a shed roof supported by steel structure. The building has a flat roof with a parapet on the northern, eastern, and western sides. The elevator and stair penthouse is brick with a six-light steel windows. There is also a brick chimney near the roof penthouse.

The southernmost bay on the façade houses the main entrance. The first floor of the entrance bay is divided by paneled pilasters into three bays with a recessed door flanked by windows now infilled with glass block. Panels above the door and windows are outlined in red brick as are the windows. The door is a modern glass-and-aluminum door with sidelights and transom. The wall above the entrance is taller than the wall in the remaining second-floor bays and has a centered diamond motif flanked by four rectangular concrete blocks. The windows in this bay of the second floor have the smaller four-light pivot windows.

INTERIOR

Built as a warehouse for the Oliver Chilled Plow Works, the interior features large open spaces with a centrally located elevator and stair. The front door enters a small foyer with stairs to the upper floors and basement and a door to the rest of the first floor. There is also a door to the second-floor apartment in the adjacent building to the south from the second-floor of the front stairwell. All stairs are concrete with metal pipe handrails. Offices are located across the front of the building. They have walls of windows above a solid wall with transoms above the windows and the doors. These walls only rise to a dropped acoustical-tile ceiling, which indicated they are not original. The office and hallway floors are currently covered with carpet. There are also two restrooms on the northern wall on each floor.

All three floors are mostly open and have concrete floors, exposed brick walls, and a concrete ceiling. The exterior walls have concrete pilasters with angled capitals while the remainder of the columns are round concrete mushroom columns. The basement walls, floor, and ceiling are concrete, and it has the same pilasters around the exterior walls and mushroom columns as the upper floors.

Briefly describe any outbuildings or secondary resources (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

There are no secondary buildings.

4. Property's History and Significance

In the space below, briefly describe the history of the property, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property. Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.)

If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

Oliver Chilled Plow Works Warehouse

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Oliver Chilled Plow Works Warehouse, 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 system by which the company founder, James Oliver, coordinated and ensured that smaller distribution facilities and retailers received his plows, related farm equipment, and parts. Under Oliver's guidance and that of his son and successor, James D. Oliver, the company expanded through its Warehouses 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 window 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 Warehouse 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 Warehouse, with a period of significance from 1885 to 1923, is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for Industry and Criterion C for Architecture.

SUMMARY

The Oliver Chilled Plow Works Warehouse 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 Warehouse consists of three parts: a colorful three-story building on the north 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 Warehouse 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 current building 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 between 1919 and 1923. The building as it is currently configured occupies approximately a dozen small lots that were bought and sold frequently between the late 1870s until 1989.

POSTWAR BACKGROUND

The waters of Shockoe Creek historically flowed south through the valley and entered the river downtown at Shockoe Bottom near 17th Street; now the creek near its mouth is underground. The Central Railroad, later the Chesapeake and Ohio, built its tracks along the Shockoe Creek bottomland to a terminus on Broad Street before the Civil War. The valley's eastern and western slopes, which generally were too steep for dwellings and commercial buildings of the better sort, were covered during the Civil War and Reconstruction eras with small (mostly frame) houses, shanties, saloons, shops, and grocery stores. North of Broad Street, the area was called Butchertown for its meat-packing and related businesses. The occupants of this racially mixed Shockoe Valley neighborhood lived among noxious odors and refuse as well as the smoke and noise of passing trains.

Many of the lots in this neighborhood, although small, were relatively long or deep in relation to their narrow widths, fronting on one street and extending in the opposite direction, where they abutted similarly configured lots behind them. Lot widths of 23 feet and lengths of 125 feet were typical. Dwellings and commercial buildings alike generally were located in the fronts of the lots close to the streets. Kitchens and sheds usually were positioned behind the principal buildings, deep in the lots, sometimes straddling the boundary lines of the lots to the rear.

The Oliver Chilled Plow Works Warehouse is located in Shockoe Valley about .4 mile north of Broad Street on the western side of the former 17th Street (now Oliver Hill Way), which runs northeast from the river and then turns abruptly north two blocks above Broad Street. Late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century maps show the future Warehouse site located on the northern end of a long block on the western side of 17th Street; there were three blocks opposite that block on the eastern side of the street, and the building site essentially filled an area equivalent to the northernmost block on the eastern side. The site was thus bounded by 17th Street on the east; the no-longer-extant Washington Street on the north; the similarly vanished Concord Street on the west, down the middle of which ran the railroad tracks; and an imaginary line drawn on the south from Cedar Street, which is also gone and which dead-ended into 17th Street from the east. The remainder of this long block extended south the equivalent of two more short blocks to Brown Street, and on each side about twenty of the narrow, long lots fronted Concord and 17th Streets respectively.

The 1877 F. W. Beers *Atlas* of Richmond was the earliest map of the postwar era that showed this pattern of lots and buildings in the northern third of the block in which the Oliver Chilled Plow Works Warehouse is located today. Most of the lots extended halfway across the block from either Concord or 17th Street, and the principal buildings faced those streets. The northernmost two lots on the 17th Street side were labeled "S. T. Bayly's Est[ate]." No buildings were noted in them, or in the single large lot behind them that took up about the same amount of space as the pair. Just south, two narrow lots extended west from 17th Street were labeled "Hagan" and "Hunt" respectively, with the street number "768" assigned to the Hagan lot. Each lot abutted a similarly shaped lot to the west on Concord Street. The Hagan and Hunt 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."

According to Mary Wingfield Scott, the noted authority on Richmond architecture and 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.

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.

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.

At the northern end of the block, across Washington Street and extending for three blocks north of the future Oliver Chilled Plow Works Warehouse 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.

Eventually, all of these lots described above, south of Washington Street, would form the ground on which the various parts of the Oliver Chilled Plow Works Warehouse 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 determined 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 included a saloon on 17th Street and a kitchen behind it; the building fronting Concord Street in 1877 was gone, presumably a victim of the spur. Just south, the Wesley Chapel had been replaced by a brick building that occupied the chapel lot, the unlabeled lot just south of the chapel, and most of the Whitlock lots, which also had lost the 1877 building to the spur. A platform at the rear of the new building extended to the spur. The new brick building was labeled “Old Dominion Pack[in]g Ho[use]” and it included an “ice box & cellar.” If it were still standing, this building, completed by 1885, today would form the southern end of the Oliver Chilled Plow Works Warehouse. Aerial photographs, however, show that it was extant in 1959 but demolished by 1964.

1886 WAREHOUSE/WAREHOUSE

The Circuit Superior Court of Richmond divided the real estate of Charles Ellis, recently deceased, among his heirs in 1842. His daughter Jane Ellis received a lot on the western side of North 17th Street. Its boundaries began 138 feet south of the Washington–17th Street intersection, ran 48 feet south, and then extended west from each of these two 17th Street points 125 feet toward Concord Street. (The southern boundary line of the lot ran along the future site of the northern wall of the 1885 packing house). Years later, after Jane Ellis had married N. Beverly Tucker and moved to Berkeley Springs, West Virginia, she and her husband sold the lot to William Isaac Johnson on June 26, 1883. Johnson, in turn, sold the lot on February 1, 1884, to Isaac Davenport Jr., Griffin B. Davenport, and Junius A. Morris, principals in the firm of Davenport and Morris. The men were involved in several enterprises, with a grocery business located at 120–124 S. 17th St. They also were stock brokers (Davenport & Co.) with offices at 1115 E. Main St., and Isaac Davenport Jr. was president of First National Bank and Union Bank. He lived at 508 E. Grace St. (now the Miller & Rhoads building), while Griffin B. Davenport lived at 1 W. Main St. (Ellen Glasgow House).

In 1886, Davenport and Morris constructed a brick and stone tobacco warehouse that adjoined the 1885 warehouse along its northern wall. Bernard J. Black was the architect. The one-story warehouse had a “tin and glass roof,” cost \$25,000, and filled the lot. By July 1886, the work was reported “under way.”

In 1889, Davenport’s 1886 warehouse appeared in G. William Baist’s *Atlas of the City of Richmond*. Similar in design to the 1877 Beers *Atlas*, Baist’s work is more schematic and less detailed than the Sanborn Insurance Company maps. It does, however, show Davenport’s new brick “Tobacco Ware Ho[use]” just north of and abutting the “Packing Ho[use]” that appeared by itself on the 1885 Sanborn map. After the pre-1964 demolition of the meat-packing house, Davenport’s warehouse constituted the southern end of the present-day Oliver Chilled Plow Works Warehouse.

On March 18, 1892, the Davenport and Morris partners sold their “warehouse and other improvements” to the South Bend Iron Works Company. James Oliver had founded the company in 1853. Born in Liddesdale, Scotland, in 1823, he immigrated to the United States with his brothers in the 1830s, eventually settling in Indiana. There he lived in a one-room log cabin and labored on farms and at an ironworks, where he learned to cast iron. Obsessed with inventing a stronger, more-efficient plow, he experimented until he achieved success with a 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 “Warehouses” 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.

The company’s purchase of the Davenport warehouse in 1892 suggested that the demand for its plows was strong in Virginia and nearby states that were connected to the Richmond warehouse, now the Oliver Warehouse, by the rail line that adjoined it. (The manager of the Richmond Warehouse 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.”) 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 Warehouse to its successor company, the Oliver Chilled Plow Works, which had been created in 1901.

The two adjoining buildings—the packing house and the plow company Warehouse—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 eastern ends of the lot, which was labeled “Richmond Co-Operative Fuel Co.” for the Richmond Coöperative Fuel, Lumber, Feed and Ice Co., chartered on December 1, 1892. The otherwise empty lot just north of the Oliver Warehouse contained a small frame building in the middle, perhaps one of the earlier kitchens.

The 1905 Sanborn map showed few changes from 1895. The American Linseed Oil Company occupied the 1885 warehouse as a “tank station,” while the Oliver Chilled Plow Works used the 1886 building as a Warehouse. Both still were of one story and the 1885 building still had a basement. The former Hagan and Hunt lots just north of the Oliver Warehouse were vacant. The northern lot, which had no name attached to it, contained a large woodshed.

1916–1923 WAREHOUSE

In 1877, Oliver first established its Warehouses in numerous cities around the country. The Warehouses typically occupied multistory buildings, mostly given over to Warehouse space but with a few small offices for sales and shipping functions. The company also established what it called “transfer stocks” in smaller cities and towns. These were primarily used for the storage of plows and other equipment as well as for the parts needed for equipment repairs. Products and parts were shipped by rail from the South Bend factory to the Warehouses, and from there to the transfer stocks in response to demand, closer to the farmers they served. Parts and products then were moved as needed from the transfer stocks to the farm equipment retailers, who sold them to their customers. An article published in 1918 in *Motor Age* magazine described the Oliver distribution and service system in some detail:

In working out this plan of service the Oliver Chilled Plow Works has covered the agricultural portion of the United States with Warehouses[,] and in the territory of each of these branches maintains as many subsidiary transfer stocks as the importance of the territory will justify in each particular case. For instance, the company has twenty-one Warehouses located strategically in the chief distributing centers of the country. Each branch has a manager, and assistant manager, a full corps of blockmen and salesmen, and at each branch is carried a complete stock of plows and spares. Then with a view to making the possibilities of service more immediate and prompt[,] transfer stocks are carried at lesser centers so that celerity in handling both completed machines and repair parts may be assured. The effect is that throughout the country the need never can be more than a short distance or a few hours away from the supply.

The “blockmen” mentioned in the article were also salesmen, but their primary function was to assess the needs of retailers and farmers, and presumably of the transfer stocks as well, for equipment and parts. In Texas in 1918, there were one branch and nine transfer stocks; one branch and ten transfer stocks in Kansas; and one branch and six transfer stocks in Nebraska.

In Virginia, however, there was only the Warehouse in Richmond, and no transfer stocks elsewhere in the state, according to a 1920 directory of such services. Nationwide, Oliver had seventeen Warehouses and sixty-four transfer stocks. 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 thick network of rail lines. At the Oliver Chilled Plow Works Warehouse on North 17th Street, a loading dock opened directly onto a rail spur. From there, plows and parts could be transported virtually directly to any retailer in Virginia and North Carolina. There was, therefore, no pressing commercial need for a Warehouse in North Carolina or for transfer houses either there or in Virginia. The Richmond Warehouse likely served these purposes, and was effectively a regional office.

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 Warehouses 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.”

The lot just north of the Davenport warehouse changed hands in 1878, 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. 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.

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.

In 1892, then, South Bend Iron Works had acquired these two lots in order to expand its Warehouse 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 Sanborn map gives the number of the existing Oliver Chilled Plow Works Warehouse as 762. The adjoining lots on which the addition was to be constructed had no number in 1905 because they were vacant. They were assigned 766-768 because they were across 17th Street from the store at 767.

In March 1915, Oliver Chilled Plow Works joined with other firms located near the rail line to request more frequent service, suggestive of the continuously growing demand for Oliver plows. Advertisements in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* in 1918 promoted the Oliver Tractor Plow No. 78 and the Oliver Sulky Plow No. 11. The former was tractor-pulled, the latter horse-drawn. Although James Oliver had resisted manufacturing gas-powered tractors, the company nonetheless produced plows that tractors could pull.

No new building was constructed for several years, however, perhaps because of financial or design issues. On June 7, 1916, the city issued a new permit, number 5411-A, for alterations to the Oliver Chilled Plow Works warehouse at 762 North 17th Street. It does not appear that the addition was built immediately but instead construction may have been delayed until the three-story Warehouse was built at the corner of Washington and 17th Streets.

1919–1923 WAREHOUSE AND OFFICE

By April 15, 1919, the Oliver company’s need for expanded Warehouse space had grown desperate because of the increasing demand for tractors and plows after World War I ended. The company undertook a massive expansion campaign that year, including the expansion of its branch offices. Although plans were in the works for new buildings adjacent to its existing Warehouse in Richmond, an advertisement in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* evidenced the immediate need:

Warehouse Wanted. Wanted, for possession prior to June 1 brick warehouse or mill constructed building with trackage. Building wanted should have a

capacity of from 10,000 to 60,000 square feet floor space. Must be able to stand 150 pounds per square foot. Quick action necessary.

The Richmond Warehouse likely served retail outlets in states farther south, shipping Oliver's products from the Warehouse via the rail lines to North Carolina and perhaps beyond. In 1895, Brown, Rogers and Company in Winston, North Carolina, published an advertisement for Oliver plows, "the best general purpose plows in the world," and warned farmers from purchasing "bogus" Oliver plows. The Sullivan Hardware Company, with branches in Anderson, Belton, and Greenville, South Carolina, published a similar warning against "spurious" Oliver's in 1914. "The Oliver Chilled Plow is the best in the world and has the largest sale," Sullivan proclaimed. Oliver's Richmond branch office touted patriotism in a 1918 advertisement for its products: by visiting the company's exhibit at the state fair and buying its equipment, farmers could "Do Your Utmost for Your Country and the Boys in France!" The postwar decline in farm product prices resulted in a matching reduction in the prices of Oliver's product lines, at least according to an advertisement by the Monroe (North Carolina) Hardware Company in 1921. The widespread and increasing demand for Oliver's products made larger Richmond Warehouse facilities necessary.

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 Warehouse 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.

Several announcements related to the construction of the new building appeared as construction 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."

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 a 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."

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.

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 Sales Company. The new company acquired other farm-equipment companies until the 1950s, and expanded its operations into the defense industry during and after World War II.

In 1960, White Motor Company acquired Oliver Farm Equipment Sales Company and changed its name to Oliver Corporation. The new corporation operated henceforth as an independent, wholly owned subsidiary of White, which specialized in truck and bus manufacturing. Oliver focused largely on tractors and combines. On October 31, 1960, Oliver Farm Equipment Company conveyed five parcels on North 17th Street (the same that were conveyed to Oliver Farm Equipment Company from Oliver Farm Equipment Sales Company on October 31, 1941) to White Motor Company. White then conveyed the parcels to the new Oliver Corporation. The parcels comprised the ground on which the completed Oliver Chilled Plow Works Warehouse stands.

On November 25, 1964, the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) sold its property south of and adjoining the Oliver Chilled Plow Works Warehouse to the Oliver Corporation. The property consisted of the southern portion of the block bounded by the ca. 1919–1923 Warehouse on the north; 17th Street on the east; Brown Street on the south; and the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad property on the west. The RRHA tract, in other words, included the warehouses (1886; ca. 1916–1923) adjoining the ca. 1919–1923 Warehouse. Oliver Corporation sold the RRHA property to Saunders Oil Company on June 24, 1969. Then, on June 30, 1969, Oliver Corporation sold the ca. 1919–1923 building and lot to Dewbo Company, which in turn sold it to William M. Walker on July 26, 1979.

The entire building was sold to William M. Walker (1979), who sold it to BELWA Company (1979). Norman E. Herod acquired it in 1989 (he had established Herod Seeds Inc. in 1979). Herod Seeds Inc. later relocated to a warehouse at 1400 Ingram Avenue in Manchester, South Richmond. It has since gone out of business.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Two of the three parts of this building were architect designed. Bernard L. Black was the architect for the earliest part of the building, the southern brick warehouse. 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 around 1870 and practiced in Petersburg. By 1871, he was listed as an architect in Richmond and in 1874 he was a partner in the firm Black & Robosson. He designed a variety of building types include houses, stores, churches, and a hotel. He also submitted an unsuccessful design for Richmond's new city hall in 1886.

The reinforced concrete building was designed by Bernard H. Prack and as far as is known, this was Prack's only Virginia commission. Bernard Prack (1881-1962) was a member of the Prack family of industrial architects and engineers and with his brothers, Arthur E., Frederick, and Walter Prack, he helped establish both their American firm and two Canadian branches. Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1881, he began his career there as Engineer of Works with the Westinghouse Electric & Mfg. Company in 1903. He first formed a partnership with R. B. Perrine in 1911 and opened an office in Hamilton, Canada. There he completed twenty large commissions for industrial buildings, many of them constructed with the newly developed reinforced concrete techniques with wide expanses of windows to light manufacturing and warehouse areas. He left Perrine in 1917 and continued to live and work in Hamilton for ten years. In 1919, he opened a branch office in Toronto. In 1927, he formed a partnership with his brother, Prack & Prack, and moved back to Pittsburgh. His best-known commission in Canada was the Pigott Building, an eighteen-story stepped skyscraper modeled on the American Radiator Building in New York City. At the time of its completion in 1929, it was the tallest building in Hamilton, Canada. In addition to his industrial buildings, Bernard Prack also designed several schools, hospitals, and residences but most of his works were factories

and industrial facilities. In 1912, he designed a warehouse for Oliver Chilled Plow Works in Hamilton, Canada. His work for the Oliver Chilled Plow Works then extended to Richmond. He continued to be active in Pittsburgh through the 1950s.

Reinforced Concrete Construction

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. One 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.

Oliver Chilled Plow Works Warehouse in Richmond is significant as an example of the relatively new use of reinforced concrete with brick curtain walls for industrial buildings. This allowed for larger open interiors and more and larger windows for natural light and ventilation. Its architect, Bernard Prack, was skilled in the use of this technology and created a light and airy building that is distinctly different from the earlier smaller warehouses with load-bearing brick walls and few openings that are attached to the southern wall of the larger building. The juxtaposition of these two different types of building technology illustrate the evolution of building practices in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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5. Property Ownership (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: X Public\Local _____ Public\State _____ Public\Federal _____

Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title: Norman E. Herod

organization: _____

street & number: 1501 Willingham Road

city or town: Richmond state: VA zip code: 23238

e-mail: sdherod@aol.com. telephone: 804-839-4076

Legal Owner's Signature: _____ Date: _____

•• Signature required for processing all applications. ••

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: _____

Daytime Telephone: _____

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

name/title: Zachery R. Frederick

organization: Crescent Preservation & Development Co.

street & number: 600 Ridge Top Road

city or town: Richmond state: VA zip code: 23229

e-mail: _____ telephone: _____

6. Notification

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator or City Manager.

name/title: Levar Stoney, Mayor

locality: City of Richmond

street & number: 900 East Broad Street, Suite 201

city or town: Richmond state: VA zip code: 23219

telephone: 804-646-7987