

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

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

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
1		Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE

RESIDENTIAL

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Brick with painted concrete lintels & metal

roof: Composition

other: Timber columns and girders (interior)

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The building at 1091 Calcot Place, originally the California Cotton Mill addition, retains the key elements of the original design, such as the structure's expression, proportions, massing, architectural vocabulary, and architectural elements with limited demolition. At present, the building does not greatly differ from its original historic appearance. The building is presently used as a warehouse, specifically self service storage, a use that has a low impact on the original building fabric. The major change between the historical and current impression of the building has to do with the way the structure is viewed and the orientation of the building. The setting of the California Cotton Mill is densely built and industrial in character. The topography of the site is flat and the nearest natural feature is the Oakland estuary, location of shipyards and maritime industry. The approach has been altered by roadworks and a reconfiguration of the surrounding streets.

Narrative Description

EXPLANATORY NOTE REGARDING DIRECTIONS

With regard to the orientation of the building and compass direction references, we have identified the main façade (parallel to the railroad lines) as the northeast elevation, the rear elevation (looking toward the freeway) as the southwest elevation and the building sides as the northwest and southeast elevations. The four corners of the building correspond to compass directions with the east corner near the intersection of Calcot Place and East 11th Street, the north corner at the far end of the main elevation, the south corner farther along Calcot Place near the freeway, and the west corner is at the rear of the building in close proximity to the freeway. The north and east corners of the building are identifiable by a tower at each corner.

SETTING

The setting of the California Cotton Mill is densely built and industrial in character. The topography of the site is flat and the nearest natural feature is the Oakland estuary, location of shipyards and maritime industry. The feeling of the site is defined by transportation, light industry, and manufacturing with residential on the periphery. Transportation corridors, the Southern Pacific Railroad right of way, the elevated BART track farther northeast and the Nimitz freeway, edge the borders of the building site. Pockets of residential enclaves that pre-date the building's construction continue to convey the early character of the area.

In the 1880s the location of the manufacturing plant was determined based on proximity to rail and water connections. While the building remains set amidst a group of industrial and residential buildings that convey a sense of the original setting, the immediate surroundings were negatively impacted by the construction of the Eastshore Freeway (I-880), a portion of the Nimitz Freeway, formerly State Highway 17, in 1953 and later roadworks including a vehicular overpass above the railroad lines and the elevated BART tracks to the northeast. The freeway bisects the original parcel of the historic California Cotton Mills property at a diagonal, passing close to the west corner of the building. The freeway separates the subject building from the structures on the west side of the freeway that were once part of the original mill enterprise. The California Cotton Mill Building remains on the eastern corner of the historic parcel along with minimal remnants of 1880s historic fabric. In 1979 the demolition of a series of 1880s brick mill buildings that formed part of the California Cotton Mills negatively impacted the east side of the original site. These low-scale brick buildings in the immediate vicinity of the California Cotton Mill included a brick smokestack and a series of warehouses parallel to the rail lines. These buildings occupied the triangular portion north of the building, which is now a separate lot. One

wall fragment remains in use as part of the single-story structure adjoining the northwest elevation of the subject building.

The subject building is enclosed by chain link fencing on all sides except the southeastern, which is a solid building wall parallel to the sidewalk. Pedestrian circulation around the building is not possible due to the fencing. To the northeast of the building and running parallel with the main façade are active railroad tracks. The open space to the northeast of the building has a desolate, unkempt character and litter is found amid grasses and shrubs, which appear to be naturally occurring, as opposed to landscaped. Alongside active railway lines, there are additional tracks and railcars that appear to be abandoned. Immediately in front of the building's main façade, also on the northeast side, is a gated yard, industrial in nature, which retains its original configuration and allows for vehicle access to the site and acts as a loading bay.

The building is located within close proximity to a residential neighborhood known as "Jingletown". Also known as the Kennedy Tract, it was named for the area's local farm owner and later developer who built the first homes in the area in the 1880s on land previously cultivated as orchards and nurseries. Bordered by East 11th Street, the Nimitz Freeway, 23rd and 29th Avenues, the neighborhood is adjacent to the nearby district of Fruitvale. The construction of the California Cotton Mills at the corner of Railroad Avenue and Kennedy Street in 1883 must have been an impetus to development of the area as seventy houses were built on the Kennedy Tract by 1890.ⁱ Between the 1880s and 1940 the area shifted from agricultural uses and became an industrial cluster of canneries, factories and mills, with smaller adjacent streets lined with homes of the workers employed by these companies. Originally a predominantly Portuguese neighborhood, other early settlers were German or Italian. The tightly-knit community centered around the neighborhood school, Lazear School, the parish church, Mary Help of Christians, and the industrial enterprises that employed the locals. This area did not officially become part of the City of Oakland until annexation in 1909, which explains the still-palpable sense of a separate neighborhood identity.

Now hemmed in by urban and industrial areas, Jingletown retains a small town character distinguished by Victorian houses and cottages with yards and trees. Until the 1960s the streetlights were fueled by gas.ⁱⁱ Over time, the ethnic composition of Jingletown changed as Latinos and African Americans arrived. The area now reflects primarily Hispanic influences, culture, and population.

Anecdotes referring to the origin of the name "Jingletown" vary, but all are based on a similar premise that the neighborhood was identifiable by the sound of jingling pocket change of the factory employees, who lived and worked in the area. The association of successfully employed immigrants and a prosperous California textile industry indicate the positive economic impact of the California Cotton Mills in the first half of the 20th century.

HISTORIC APPEARANCE OF THE CALIFORNIA COTTON MILL

The California Cotton Mill Company was established in Oakland in 1883 in a series of single-story brick buildings. The plant manufactured cotton from California's central valleys into burlap, twine, damask, napkins, towels, comforters, and batting and at one point employed a workforce of over 1000 people. The four-story mill building at 1091 Calcot Place (then the intersection of Railroad and Kennedy Streets) is an early 20th century utilitarian factory and warehouse that, upon its construction, was considered an addition to the existing single-story buildings, adding 105,000 square feet of floor space to the plant.ⁱⁱⁱ The lot upon which the new building was constructed was previously occupied by several dwellings and a 2-story building of flats, though other lots forming the parcel were vacant.^{iv} At

ⁱ Jingletown vertical file, Oakland History Room, Oakland Public Library.

ⁱⁱ "Jingletown," *The Catholic Voice*. August 19, 1971.

ⁱⁱⁱ Square footage stated in the article by the building's architect, "California Cotton Mills' New Building" Architect and Engineer. p. 71

^{iv} Sanborn Map of Oakland, 1902-1903. Volume 2, Sheet 223.

four stories, the building is a regular rectangular box in plan, measuring approximately 250' x 125'. The building has subtle but elegant brickwork and brick corbelling throughout, a flat roof concealed behind a masonry parapet and is distinguished by two prominent corner towers, one with a working clockface and intricate clockworks on the interior. The clockwork mechanisms remain in their original location and are in excellent condition and working order.

All four elevations are identical with regard to materials, organization of the facades, and arrangement of elements. The exterior walls are masonry with a high proportion of the wall plane given over to glazing, sometimes referred to as "engineer's glass wall" design. Strong horizontals are expressed by the bands of metal sash windows and concrete lintels painted white which contrast the red brickwork of the exterior wall planes. Vertically, corbelled brick pilasters divide the building into regular bays. Straight parapets run along all four sides with each tower terminating in a slightly gabled or peaked parapet with a painted wall surface within the gable. The dates "1917" and "1883" have been affixed to the northeastern face of each tower. Despite a strong pair of corner towers, glazing dominates the exterior conveying a generally lightweight feeling as opposed to that of a heavy masonry block.

Originally, the building had a single-story office block protruding from the main façade. More stylized than the larger utilitarian mill building, the office block differed in character and architectural style, as it was carried out in a gothic revival style with exterior elements of brick and stone and an elaborate recessed, arched entrance centered on the main elevation. The administrative office block was 3 bays deep and 9 bays wide with the entrance at the center. Just southeast of the office block, another single-story element projected from the main elevation at the eastern corner of the building. Smaller in size, and nearly square in plan, the employee entrance and time clock were housed in these extensions at the building front.^v Both these single-story elements have been demolished.

The main elevation was oriented toward the railroad tracks along the northeast property boundary, originally the most exposed and visible side to passersby. The original signage over the main elevation read "California Cotton Mills" in prominent capital sans serif lettering that spanned the top of the parapet. The building's distinctive architecture, prominence of the signage, and the building's 4-story height made this the centerpiece of the cotton-producing facility.

Originally, the building's two distinguished corner towers served a variety of purposes, heralding the presence of the successful textile company and using architecture to make a statement. The company was identifiable from a distance and from the trains that ran on the parallel tracks. In addition to being pleasing aesthetically, the clockface was positioned at the top of the eastern tower, the point of the building closest to, and within the sightlines of, the employee homes in Jingtown. However, the towers were primarily designed to serve fully utilitarian purposes, housing stairwells, a service elevator shaft at the north tower, restrooms, and men's and women's locker rooms on each floor level. A third stairwell located off center at the rear elevation is smaller and less decorative, but part of the original construction. Automatic fire doors, manufactured by the Yager Sheet Metal Company of Oakland, and brick fire walls separated the towers from production spaces at each opening.^{vi} By moving services and circulation into the towers, the architect was able to maximize the open span and leave a clear floor space for manufacturing and production. The second and third floors were originally identical in plan, as was the 4th floor, though the columns on this floor are more slender.

^v Sanborn Map of Oakland, 1912-1952, updated. Volume 2, Sheet 223.

^{vi} Griewank, A.C. "California Cotton Mills' New Building" Architect and Engineer. p. 71

The original manufacturing functions that took place on each floor were as follows: the first and second floors were for weaving; the third floor was for spinning and twisting; and, the fourth floor was the location of the carding and drawing functions.^{vii}

Noteworthy interior elements are heavy timbers, tongue and groove walls in the stairwells, the suspended rolling fire doors, and the clockworks on the top floor of the east tower. The building was originally equipped with a sprinkler system.^{viii} The towers have always been topped by flagpoles, as was the now-demolished office block at the center of the main elevation.

In November 1917, the Architect and Engineer published an article titled “California Cotton Mills’ New Building,” written by the building’s architect, A.C. Griewank. The article gives excellent information about the building at the time of its completion and provides insights into the architect’s intent and concern for aesthetics for a strictly utilitarian building:

A pleasing exterior effect was obtained without extra cost by the use of concrete lintels over the windows and concrete coping on top of the parapet wall, which were painted white after being placed. Brick pilasters and the utility towers at the front corners, in which a clock and medallion are inset, add greatly to the appearance of the building.... One of the important features of the building is the abundance of light. Nearly the entire wall area on the four sides are Fenestra solid steel sashes with ribbed glass, which gives the maximum possible light for the openings. The interior surfaces are painted white with a final coat of egg-shell gloss which makes the light ideal.^{ix}

Prior to the freeway construction, the rear of the building was the location of a number of ancillary structures, housing the separate functions of a crate shop, dye shop, boiler and machine shop.

CONSTRUCTION HISTORY OF THE CALIFORNIA COTTON MILL

Structurally, the building is masonry with wood post and beam construction and consists of a four-stories. Building materials are a concrete foundation, timber columns and girders, brick exterior walls measuring 16” and 12“, and solid 8” wood floors on the interior, finished with 1” maple finish flooring. The first floor is concrete on earth fill.^x Roof is composition.

The concrete lintels were pre-cast, as was the concrete coping. The balance of the top of the parapet was poured in place. The girders run in one direction and at the columns are knee braces at right angles to girders bolted into the 8” solid floor leaving the ceiling between the girders clear for the full length of the building which gives a minimum number of heads in the sprinkler system.^{xi}

The concern for fire safety is evident in the use and construction of the towers, each having suspended fire doors, a fireproof stairway and a direct exit. Two sets of stairs lead to the roof, making the circulation of entrances and exits from floor to floor and for fire escapes, “exceptionally fine.”^{xii} The floor and stairs of the rear are built of reinforced concrete and wind around a concrete conduit measuring 4’ x 3’, in which electric wires are brought to each floor. The total construction cost of the building including the sprinkler system, elevator, plumbing, electric wiring, etc., amounted to approximately \$90,000.^{xiii}

^{vii} Sanborn Map of Oakland, 1912-1952, updated. Volume 2, Sheet 223.

^{viii} Griewank, A.C. “California Cotton Mills’ New Building” Architect and Engineer. p. 71

^{ix} Griewank, A.C. “California Cotton Mills’ New Building” Architect and Engineer. p. 71-74

^x Griewank, A.C. “California Cotton Mills’ New Building” Architect and Engineer. p. 71

^{xi} Griewank, A.C. “California Cotton Mills’ New Building” Architect and Engineer. p. 74

^{xii} *ibid.*

^{xiii} *ibid.*

MODIFICATION HISTORY OF THE CALIFORNIA COTTON MILL

Modifications to the California Cotton Mill include the removal of two single-story elements from the main elevation, the block that housed the administrative offices and the employee entrance at the east corner at an unknown date. In the place of the office block is a somewhat makeshift, flat-roofed overhang supported by five tall poles to allow for covered parking. Over the main elevation, the original signage reading California Cotton Mills was removed. The main elevation is perhaps the most changed from its original appearance. Ground floor windows on the southeastern side have been filled in with brick.

On the interior, lightweight interior partitions have been installed as individual storage units. The partition walls do not extend to the ceiling and each unit is roofed with mesh over simple wood framing. Original steel sash windows remain but in some areas panes of opaque yellow fiberglass replace the original wired glass. The replacement panes detract from the building's integrity.

Modifications to the site after the construction of the freeway in 1953 include the removal of nearby mill buildings to the north of the subject building in 1979.

CURRENT APPEARANCE OF THE CALIFORNIA COTTON MILL

The building at 1091 Calcot Place, originally the California Cotton Mill addition, retains the key elements of the original design, such as the structure's expression, proportions, massing, architectural vocabulary, and architectural elements with limited demolition. At present, the building does not greatly differ from its original historic appearance. The building is presently used as a warehouse, specifically self service storage, a use that has a low impact on the original building fabric. The major change between the historical and current impression of the building has to do with the way the structure is viewed and the orientation of the building. The approach has been altered by roadworks and a reconfiguration of the surrounding streets.

The brick building is four stories, rectangular in plan with enlarged corners at the location of the towers. The building has a flat roof concealed behind a straight masonry parapet. Each of the building's four elevations has distinctive brickwork and corbelled brick pilasters, bands of metal sash windows and concrete lintels painted white which contrast the red brickwork of the exterior wall planes. Non-descript signage stating "Business Storage" and a telephone number has been affixed to all four elevations. Flagpoles above each of the two towers are original. On all four elevations yellow fiberglass panes have been replaced, set into steel sash windows, forming a random pattern of replacement.

The northeast or main elevation is parallel to the railroad tracks and is perhaps the most changed from its original appearance as signage and other elements have been removed. At the center of the main elevation is a flat-roofed overhang supported by five tall poles. The row of window openings along the ground floor of the main elevation are filled in with the end openings used as access to the interior. The northeast-facing sides of the towers display important dates in the history of the California Cotton Mills; the date "1883" appears on the northeast face of the north tower, while the date "1917" appears on the northeast face of the east tower. Below the dates on each tower are circular elements, a clock on the east tower and a plain round brickwork medallion on the north tower. Telephone antennae located on the roof are visible above the northeast and northwest elevations.

The southwest side, or rear, elevation overlooks the freeway and is now one of the building's most exposed and visible elevations, although this was not the case when at the time of construction. The rear elevation is the location of an extruded stairwell, square in plan, that protrudes from the wall plane. The

extended stairwell is not centered on the rear elevation; it is smaller and less decorative than the building's two distinguished corner towers but was also part of the original construction. On the rear elevation a roll-down grate has been installed in one of the original window openings near the south corner. The open triangular space in between the rear elevation and the freeway is now devoid of structures and is used as a paved vehicle yard.

The southeast, or side, elevation looks toward parts of Jingletown with a mix of residences and light industrial buildings. The southeast elevation is consistent with the other elevations and retains its historic appearance, except at the ground floor where all window openings have been filled in with brick. The third bay from the northeastern side was once a door opening but it too has been filled in with brick; the door surround, painted white, remains. The adjoining bay to the northeast, originally a window opening, has been converted to a door opening; a red awning has been installed over the door.

The northwest elevation is consistent with the other elevations. Like the southeast elevation, the northwest elevation retains its historic appearance, except at the ground floor where an alteration, early in the building's history, filled in the open passage along the side of the building by roofing over the space to create a warehouse for finished materials.^{xiv} After the demolition of historic fabric north of the building in 1979, most of the structures dating to the 1880s were removed with the exception of the wall fragment parallel to the 1917 building, which still serves as the exterior wall of this appendage building. The space is used as a garage and workshop. It has a clear span interior, a series of wood roof trusses, and skylights along both edges of the low-arched roof. The rear, or southwest, wall is angled and has six fixed multi-lite windows. The northwest wall dates to the 1880s and has a series of corbelled pilasters in between arched window openings with hoods, now bricked in. The brick has been painted white. On the northeast end, the opening to the exterior is wide and provides the only access to the space; a flat canopy of wood framing provides an overhang at the main entrance.

Due to transportation works, the rear (southwest) and northwest elevations have become the building's most prominent and visible, though this was not the architect's intention.

INTEGRITY

Integrity involves several aspects, including location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Location

The California Cotton Mill remains in its original footprint located southwest of the Southern Pacific Railroad right of way. The main or northeast elevation is parallel to the railroad right of way and faces a curved elevated ramp, or overpass, for vehicles. The southeast elevation faces Calcot Place, characterized by low-scale industrial buildings and residences. The northwest elevation overlooks the freeway and a triangular parcel that was once part of the California Cotton Mill property, but is now used as a yard for parked vehicles. The rear or southwest elevation looks to the Nimitz Freeway; the building is nearly adjacent to it at its west corner. All four elevations remain largely intact and convey their original expression. Though the surroundings have changed significantly since the building's construction, the structure itself has been altered only minimally.

Design

Originally designed by A.C. Griewank as an addition to the California Cotton Mill, this four-story building with prominent corner towers and a parapet is intact with the exception of the single-story

^{xiv} Sanborn Map of Oakland, 1912-1952, updated. Volume 2, Sheet 223.

administrative offices and employee entrance (now demolished) that were located off the main elevation. An overhang now occupies the area where the office block once stood. Though pedestrians use a side entrance on Calcot Place, the main elevation remains the principal entrance to the building for people arriving by car and serves as a loading bay. Apart from the office block and employees' entrance, the California Cotton Mill retains all the key elements of the original design, such as the structure's expression, proportions, massing, architectural vocabulary, and architectural elements. The rear and north elevations are, at present, the most prominent, though this was not the architect's intention.

Setting

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property, constituting topographic features, vegetation, manmade features, and relationships between buildings or open space. The California Cotton Mill remains in an industrial setting with adjacent residential neighborhoods much like the character of the area at the time of the building's construction. The railway to the northeast borders the site as does the freeway to the southwest and northwest. The Jingtown neighborhood is closely associated with the building. The freeway bisects the site of the California Cotton Mills at a diagonal, passing close to the west corner of the building but not impinging upon it. The original setting of the building has been significantly impacted by the Nimitz Freeway and other roadworks and by the 1979 demolition of brick mill buildings from the 1880s belonging to the California Cotton Mills. Looking at the building's setting on a wide scale, it is currently set amidst a collection of industrial and residential buildings that give a sense of what the building was but the immediate surroundings are negatively impacted by the freeway that severs the building from the former related buildings on the west side of the freeway.

Materials

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. Exterior building materials are original and include brick, concrete lintels and coping, metal sash windows. The architect's intent was to construct the California Cotton Mill for primarily utilitarian purposes and additional floor space, but the architect was also conscious of the exterior design statement while remaining within a budget. The concrete lintels and coping were painted white for "pleasing effect...without extra cost."^{xv} On the interior original timber columns and girders remain. The building retains a large amount of original materials and historic fabric.

Workmanship

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture, people, or artisan during any given period in history or pre-history. The original construction epitomizes early 20th century "fire-proof" building technologies, construction techniques, and noteworthy craftsmanship all of which contribute to a high degree of workmanship.

Feeling

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historical sense of a particular period of time. The California Cotton Mill is an excellent example of an early 20th century utilitarian warehouse. Due to its industrial setting, large amount of historic fabric and character defining features, and excellent condition, the building retains its original feeling.

Association

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. Locally significant, not only for its architecture, but also for its emblematic role of the development of

^{xv} Griewank, A.C. "California Cotton Mills' New Building" Architect and Engineer. p. 71

industry in the City of Oakland, the building remains largely unchanged from its 1917 appearance. The building continues to convey its historic associations.

The building is in excellent condition. The integrity is high as an individual building. As a part of the historic California Cotton Mills, the integrity has been impaired due to the removal of significant 1880s building and the re-configuration of the parcel.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry

Architecture

Period of Significance

1917-1954

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Griewank, A.C., C.E.

Period of Significance (justification)

The year 1917 marks the period of architectural significance. The year 1954 marks the date of the closing of the California Cotton Mills.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

The California Cotton Mill is significant in two discrete areas. The California Cotton Mill is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion A in the area of industry. The California Cotton Mill is emblematic of the industrial development of Oakland and was, in large part, responsible for the development of the cotton industry in California. As part of the larger California Cotton Mills complex, it is important as a catalyst to the growth of the cotton industry in the Imperial Valley and San Joaquin Valley and the early industrial development of Oakland. The 1917 building is significant in the context of both and the wartime industrial expansion along the East Bay waterfront. The California Cotton Mill is significant at the local level under Criterion C in the area of architecture. The California Cotton Mill is an excellent example of an early 20th century utilitarian warehouse. Exterior architectural treatments, such as corbelled brickwork, expanses of steel sash windows below painted lintels, the paired towers and working clock make this building unique within the industrial idiom.

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

The California Cotton Mill is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion A in the area of industry.

The California Cotton Mills were inaugurated on August 22, 1883, and were considered one of the pioneering local industries at the vanguard of Oakland's tremendous industrial growth in the 20th century. The founding of the California Cotton Mills occurred at a transitional time in California history as the state was emerging from an economy based on gold-mining into an era of agriculture and eventually manufacturing.

In the early 1880s California farmers were beginning to establish cotton crops. In 1883, William Rutherford, a Scotsman with experience in the linen and cotton industries immigrated to Oakland seeing the potential of a cotton industry on the West Coast and recognizing Oakland's rail and water connections as ideal for establishing a cotton milling plant. The California Cotton Mills were founded as a cotton, flax, hemp and jute manufacturing enterprise by Rutherford who became the superintendent of the plant, John Center, A.W. Beaver, V.D. Moody, E.C. Sessions, A. Chabot and John Yule Millar, Rutherford's brother-in-law. The plant was set up at its present location and it became the largest cotton mill west of Chicago.

The initial success of the California Cotton Mills and the impressive quality of the cotton coming from Bakersfield prompted the mill owners to offer cotton seed free of charge to farmers for cultivation.^{xvi} By 1930, the cotton industry in the Imperial Valley and San Joaquin Valley totaled 319,000 acres; this growth was attributed to the California Cotton Mills. As conditions in the West changed, the plant altered its products to remain profitable and in later years no longer manufactured hemp, jute, or flax, but was solely a cotton-producing concern. During World War I and World War II, the plant played a role in the war effort, producing comforters, canvas, tents, toweling, and parachutes. At various periods in its history it employed as many as 1,000 workers and its products included towels, damask, and expensive patterned drapery cloth for distribution in the West, the Pacific Rim, New Zealand and

^{xvi} Bagwell, Beth. "Inside Those Brick Walls," *The Montclairion*, February 14, 1979.

Australia. Other items were cotton and wool batts, table padding, upholstery felts, and comforters filled with cotton, wool, and down with silk, rayon, or cotton coverings. At its peak, it turned out a greater variety of cotton wares than any other plant in the United States. California cotton growers were unable to supply all the cotton the plant required. Subsequently, cotton was imported from Texas, Oklahoma, Arizona, Java, China and India to supply the California Cotton Mills.^{xvii}

In 1928, the California Cotton Mills, which by then had three mills in Alabama, also expanded into the business of cotton products for automobiles forming a new company, National Automotive Fibres, Inc. National Automotive, founded by John Rutherford Millar, the son of founder John Yule Millar, was eventually headquartered in Detroit, but the Oakland Division was housed in the buildings on the west side of the freeway across from the California Cotton Mill. From four plants in 1928 the new company grew to include a total of 10 plants, including three in Canada. Although National and California Cotton Mills merged in 1949, the National Automotive was not affected when the mill closed in 1954. By that time the plant employed approximately 200 workers.^{xviii}

While the California Cotton Mills were active, they provided economic stability in the Fruitvale neighborhood, at times employing over 1,000 people. At the start, the company brought skilled textile workers from Scotland to train the locals. The *Oakland Tribune* reported in 1888 that the majority of the mill employees were girls and young women who were gaining expertise in operating mill machinery.^{xix} During the Depression, the company maintained a payroll of over \$1.5 million.

The report prepared for the City of Oakland at the time the building received local landmark status states that the mill and its employees were holders of numerous patents for new processes and textile machinery designed, developed, and entirely built on the floor of the mill, including the world's largest dryer felt looms ever manufactured with a width of (later used by Crown Zellerbach paper company which converted them for use in producing paper products). Mill products were distributed world wide under trade names including "Imperi" and "Seine Twine."^{xx}

The year before the closure of the mill, the construction of the Nimitz Freeway bisected the original mill site, leaving the 1917 building and fragments of the original plant of the east side of the freeway and other parts on the west. In 1979 the 1880s mill buildings on the east side were demolished leaving only a fragment wall parallel to the northwest side of the 1917 building which is roofed over and serves as a garage and workshop. The small building at the far northern end of the property remains. Records in the City of Oakland Planning Department indicate that the remaining fragments of the mill buildings that date to 1883 on both the east and west sides of the freeway may be among the earliest industrial buildings remaining in Oakland. The 1917 building has been used as self-service storage since the 1970s.

^{xvii} Information in the above paragraphs on the California Cotton Mills is summarized from "California Cotton Mills to Close Historic Plant," *The Oakland Tribune*. June 30, 1954.

^{xviii} Information in the above paragraphs on the California Cotton Mills is summarized from "California Cotton Mills to Close Historic Plant," *The Oakland Tribune*. June 30, 1954 and "A Cotton Pickin' Bit of History," *The Oakland Tribune*. March 27, 1965.

^{xix} Bagwell, Beth. "Inside Those Brick Walls," *The Montclarion*, February 14, 1979.

^{xx} Landmark status report on 1091 Calcot Place prepared by the City of Oakland, 1979.

The California Cotton Mill is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion C in the area of architectural significance. The 1917 building is a fine example of early 20th century “engineer’s industrial” construction with large expanses of glass wall on the exterior and heavy timber or mill construction on the interior. The building was designed by a civil engineer, A.C. Griewank, a prolific engineer and architect who worked locally through the 1940s.

ARCHITECT

The architect of the California Cotton Mill was Arthur C. Griewank, C.E., a civil engineer with offices in San Francisco. At the time of the construction of the California Cotton Mill Building, Griewank was a resident of Oakland but worked for the Harbor Commission in San Francisco.^{xxi} By the early 1920s Griewank had moved to San Francisco and was residing at 1746 Bush Street, remaining a resident of the Lower Nob Hill / Western Addition neighborhood at various addresses throughout the 1940s.^{xxii} In 1928 Griewank was listed as a building contractor and real estate agent working from offices at 46 Kearney Street.^{xxiii} In 1942 Griewank was listed in the City Directory was a civil engineer with offices at 870 Market Street.^{xxiv}

As an engineer working for the Port of San Francisco, Griewank was responsible for several waterfront projects, including Pier 3 and the shed building (1918), Pier 26, the bulkhead, façade and shed (1912 and 1915), and Pier 35, the bulkhead, pier and shed (1916).^{xxv} In 1930 Griewank designed an impressive Art Deco office building, the Eng-Skell Company Building at 1035 Howard Street. The building displays dramatic Art Deco detailing in the form of pylons emerging from the pilasters above the roofline. Griewank was the architect of various apartment buildings in San Francisco including the Graymoor Apartments at 970 Geary Street (1922).

The California Cotton Mill Building was built under the direction of owner John Rutherford Millar, Jr. A.S. Mitchell acted as the superintendent of construction.

^{xxi} R.L. Polk City Directory, San Francisco, 1917-1918.

^{xxii} R.L. Polk City Directories, San Francisco, 1920-1942.

^{xxiii} R.L. Polk City Directory, San Francisco, 1928.

^{xxiv} R.L. Polk City Directory, San Francisco, 1942.

^{xxv} Architectural Resources Group. *Port of San Francisco Historic Resources Data Base*. November 1996.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

“A Cotton Pickin’ Bit of History,” *The Oakland Tribune*. March 27, 1965.

Architectural Resources Group. *Port of San Francisco Historic Resources Data Base*. November 1996.

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“California Cotton Mills to Close Historic Plant,” *The Oakland Tribune*. June 30, 1954.

Carley, Rachel. *Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture*. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1994.

“Cotton Mill Aids Growth of Oakland,” *Oakland Tribune*, January 18, 1931.

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McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000.

“Oakland’s Jingletown Has Its Own History, Identity,” *The Oakland Tribune*. March 2, 1997.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 2.64 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 _____
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

Beginning at a point on the westerly line of Calcot Place 190 feet northerly of the intersection of said line with the northerly line of Livingston Street, thence at right angle westerly 203 feet, thence at right angle southerly to point of intersection with the easterly line of California State Highway 17, also known as the Eastshore Freeway (I-880), a portion of the Nimitz Freeway, thence southerly along the last named line to its point of intersection with the northerly line of Livingston Street, thence easterly along the last named line to its point of intersection with the westerly line of Calcot Place, thence northerly along the last named line to point of beginning.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundary for the historic property encompasses the building footprint of the California Cotton Mill.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Francis M. Rush III, Managing Member,

organization 1091 Calcot, LLC

date May 2009

street & number 2200 Adeline Street, Suite 350

telephone _____

city or town Oakland, CA 94607

state CA

zip code 94607

e-mail francis@rushproperty.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: California Cotton Mills

City or Vicinity: Oakland

County: Alameda

State: California

sdfsdf

Photographer: Francis Rush (all photos)

Date Photographed: December 21, 2005, January 16, 2006, March 27, 2007, March 30, 2007

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of 5. Black and White, 8" x 10"

001. Northwest and Southwest Elevations looking east from across Hwy 880, taken from the roof of a two-story building that was once part of the California Cotton Mills. Taken December 21, 2005.
002. Northeast Elevation looking west from the 23rd Avenue overpass. Taken January 16, 2006
003. Northeast Elevation looking southwest from across the Southern Pacific tracks. Taken March 27, 2007
004. Northeast and Northwest Elevations looking south from across the Southern Pacific tracks. March 27, 2007

005. Southwest and Southeast Elevations Looking north from Calcot Place. Taken March 30, 2007

1 of 53 . Color, 5" x 7"

006. Suite 304	November 20, 2005
007. Suite 207, looking west	November 22, 2005
008. Lobby, with framed historical photos of California Cotton Mills	January 6, 2006
009. Lobby, with framed historical photos of California Cotton Mills	January 6, 2006
010. Southwest Elevation, looking north	January 16, 2006
011. Southeast Elevation, looking northwest	January 18, 2006
012. Southeast and Northeast Elevation, looking west	January 18, 2006
013. Northeast Elevation, looking west	January 18, 2006
014. Clocktower Southeast Elevation, looking west	January 18, 2006
015. Suite 305	February 10, 2006
016. Suite 307, looking northwest	February 10, 2006
017. Suite 405	February 10, 2006
018. Detail, floors of Suite 414	February 10, 2006
019. Suite 116	February 10, 2006
020. Window detail, Suite 116	February 10, 2006
021. Southwest Elevation, looking north	March 24, 2007
022. Southwest Elevation, looking north	March 24, 2007
023. Southeast Elevation, looking north	March 24, 2007
024. Entrance Southwest Stair Tower	March 24, 2007
025. Southwest Stair Tower	March 24, 2007
026. Detail, interior of Southwest Stair Tower	March 24, 2007
027. Entrance to Suite 115	March 24, 2007
028. Clock Tower	March 24, 2007
029. Northeast Elevation and Clock Tower, looking South	March 24, 2007
030. Garage Entrance	March 24, 2007
031. Northeast Elevation	March 24, 2007
032. Second floor hallway	March 24, 2007
033. Frieght Elevator door at second floor	March 24, 2007
034. Fourth floor hallway	March 24, 2007
035. Detail, Clock Tower	March 24, 2007
036. Detail, Frieght Elevator Tower	March 24, 2007
037. Suite 205	March 24, 2007
038. Suite 205	March 24, 2007
039. Main Entrance	March 27, 2007
040. Rear Entrance	March 27, 2007
041. Ground level, Frieght Elevator Tower	March 27, 2007
042. Northeast Elevation, looking southwest across SP tracks	March 27, 2007
043. Fire Door, Suite 216	March 30, 2007
044. Fire Door, Suite 316	March 30, 2007
045. Fire Door, Suite 316	March 30, 2007
046. Post and Beam construction, Suite 309	March 30, 2007
047. Fire Door, Suite 416	March 30, 2007
048. Interior, Clock Tower and Clock Mechanism	April 4, 2007
049. Detail, Interior, Clock Tower and Clock Mechanism	April 4, 2007
050. Hallway, Fourth floor	April 16, 2007
051. Hallway, Third floor	April 16, 2007
052. Post and Beam construction, Suite 306	April 16, 2007
053. Post and Beam construction, Suite 306	April 16, 2007
054. Hallway, Third floor	April 16, 2007
055. Detail, Suite 408	June 14, 2007
056. Suite 408	June 14, 2007

057. Detail, floors in Suite 408
058. Suite 107

June 14, 2007
June 14, 2007

Property Owner:

(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Francis M. Rush III, Managing Member 1091 Calcot, LLC

street & number 2200 Adeline Street, Suite 350

telephone 510-763-7165

city or town Oakland

state CA

zip code 94607

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

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