
PURPOSE

1.1 This manual has been developed to provide guidance for improvements made to properties located in the Beaumont Mill Village located in Spartanburg, South Carolina. They apply to property owners in the district as they plan to alter the exterior of their homes either by new construction, an addition or alteration. It will be used by the City of Spartanburg Staff and the Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) of Spartanburg when they review these plans and make decisions to approve the homeowner's proposed alterations and additions while evaluating the proposed changes.

These guidelines will help to protect the beauty of the Beaumont Mill Village and improve the quality of homes and streetscapes in the village. One goal of these guidelines is to preserve existing original materials, site and residential forms that reflect the heritage and history of this historic community.

These guidelines are to inform property owners and tenants about buildings in the village, to protect the distinctive characteristics of the buildings and how to maintain them. They will also assist property owners to understand how decisions should be made about repairs, rehabilitation, maintenance and new construction by the use of historically appropriate materials and practices. Ultimately, these guidelines will protect the qualities of the buildings to reflect the heritage of the Beaumont Mill Village thru the use of historically appropriate materials and practices.

The Beaumont Mill Village consists of 15 major types of houses over 3 time periods.



These areas were studied and provided the tools needed to develop this manual.

HISTORIC OVERVIEW OF BEAUMONT MILL AND VILLAGE

1.2 The Beaumont Mill and Village is one of many mills designed during the great boom period in the Southern Textile industry from 1890 to 1920. In 1890, J.H. Sloan set out to raise subscription on stock for a cotton mill that would provide additional employment for the inhabitants and would utilize the waste products for the mills already established by making them into ropes, bags, and cotton bats. In a few hours he secured more than the \$50,000 he had set as his goal. Beaumont Manufacturing Company was built in 1890 and originally equipped with 3,072 spindles, 640 twistlers, and 40 bag looms. Those who filed for the original charter included: J.H. Sloan (president), John B. Cleveland, Joseph Walker (original landowner), H.A. Ligon, C.E. Fleming, and Vardry McBee. Sloan told a newspaper in Charleston that he wanted to bring a "renewed prosperity and life to Spartanburg." The initial products produced included carpet warps, seamless bags that were used for grain and corn, and twine.



Photo courtesy of Libraryimages.net photostream

The new mill was built on Chiquapin Creek inside the corporate limits of Spartanburg. The original Beaumont Mill Village consisted of 15 homes that ran along North Liberty Street, and by 1920 the number of homes had increased to 142. The mill village was the heart of the cotton mill industry. The mill village proved useful for more than just keeping a workforce together. Because of the village, workers did not have to spend time and money getting to work, mill owners could offer inexpensive and flimsy houses as part of the wage, and their mill store could provide for almost all the needs of the mill villagers, including credit on the owner's terms. In addition, having workers live in mill housing gave owners and superintendents extra leverage to impose their own ideas of morality and behavior on workers and their families. The Beaumont village also had its own ball field and park.



During the early 1900's, children worked in the mill to help their families earnings. Children were not suppose to work if they were younger than 12, but families who needed or wanted money would lie about their children's ages in order to get them papers so they could work and bring in money. A photographer, Lewis W. Hine, working with the National Child Labor Committee came through Spartanburg in May 1912 to document this. He took photos of children cotton mill

workers at Beaumont, Saxon, Drayton, Arkwright, Arlington and Clifton.

Photo courtesy of Lewis Hine, National Child Labor Committee, Library of Congress, c. 1910

Following the death of Sloan, Dudley L. Jennings became President of the mill. Walter S. Montgomery Sr. acquired Beaumont Mill in 1941. Following the outbreak of World War II in 1941, Beaumont became one of the first textile plants in Spartanburg to receive government orders for a conversion to a wartime effort. Beaumont was also the first textile plant in the country to devote its entire production to the war effort. In 1941, Montgomery filed a necessity certificate with the War Department proposing machinery needed to devote all materials from Beaumont Manufacturing for Army and Navy use. The government allocated almost \$800,000 to equip the mill for the production of fabric that would be used for tents, rafts, ammunition belts, medical equipment and other miscellaneous needs of the armed forces.

The rapid pace was such that by 1942, two-thirds of the machinery was new, the plants capacity had doubled, the number of workers had risen from 750 to 1,430, and the company added 135 new village houses. Demand increased so much, mill management developed carpool and bus routes to get people from the surrounding area into the mill as workers. Like most other industries during the war, women were taking a more active role than they had ever done previously. Due to the shortage of male workers, women were placed in jobs that had previously been deemed inappropriate. Beaumont Mill management declared that "today women of Beaumont are running almost half of the jobs in our plant with the certainty that they will run more. We cannot overestimate the importance of the work done by them. There is no question that Beaumont could never have accomplished what it has for Uncle Sam." For the Beaumont workers that were now fighting in Europe and the Pacific, a newspaper was produced, called "The Beaumont E", named this after the award the plant received for war production. The goal was to keep the soldiers up to date with mill happenings and rally the mill workers to keep up the hard work. Every month the newspaper was sent to soldiers all over the world. The soldier's responses were overwhelming. "[I] was very proud to know that the friends of mine at Beaumont haven't forgotten me and that everyone is doing fine...I will be happy when the day comes that we boys can take our jobs back at Beaumont," was from Private Dorsey dated March 08, 1944. On October 03, 1942, Walter S. Montgomery Sr. accepted the community's first "E" Award for excellence in war production. Beaumont Mill would earn five "E" awards.



The World War II era saw a wave of consolidations in the textile industry. Many mills in the Upstate were swept up in mergers with J.P. Stevens or Reeves Brothers. In the late 1940's the Montgomery and Milliken interest disentangled their holdings and the Montgomery's ended up with the Beaumont Mill. The Mill began to sell the homes around 1950.

In the early 1960s, Beaumont Mill was thrust into the judicial spotlight. Adell Sherbert was a mill operator and a devout Seventh Day Adventist. The mill changed their work policy and implemented a six day work week. Due to her beliefs, she refused to work on Saturdays, and was promptly discharged from her position. She then applied for unemployment insurance, but was denied because she left her job willingly. She then sued for compensation and continually appealed her case all the way to the Supreme Court. Her arguments were based on the Beaumont Mill violated her First Amendment right when they fired her. The case appeared before the courts in 1963, and the Justices ruled in Sherbert's favor, 7-2. They issued what was deemed the *Sherbert Test*. The person has a claim involving a sincere religious belief, and whether the government action is a substantial burden of the person's ability to act on that belief. If these elements are established then the government must show that it is acting in furtherance of a compelling government interest and it is using the least restrictive means to pursue that interest. In the years that followed, the *Sherbert Test* was narrowed through other decisions, but *Sherbert v. Verner* is still viewed as a landmark case for the First Amendment.

Many mills thrived until the late 1990's in the upstate of South Carolina. Beaumont closed its doors in 1997 and in 2000, machinery was sold off to manufacturers elsewhere in the world, crews pulled out the valuable heart pine beams and shipped them all over the world, and bricks were sold at a premium and the building was partially dismantled in 2002.

The Beaumont Mill Village still stands today as a reminder of a golden age that has come and gone. The village exists not as an artifact, but as a place that is still evolving. Originally designed as a place for mill workers to have everything at hand and not worry about their homes upkeep, today the village is an interesting mix of old and new. As new residents move in, those who worked in the mill fondly remember the days that they knew all the neighbors and were not afraid to leave their doors open. This village can certainly regain its charm of yesterday, with the help of city administrators, preservationists and the pride of each homeowner.

Beaumont resident Sarah R. Whitlock sums living in this mill village best "...there were no people like Beaumont people. You had to know what it was like. Our people came from the land to go to work in the mill and move into the village. They were good, proud, happy people...how great it was to be Beaumont Mill people."

