

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Pelzer Community Building
Other names/site number: Pelzer Skating Rink, Pelzer Community House, Pelzer Senior Citizens Center
Name of related multiple property listing:

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

2. Location

Street & number: 30 Pelzer Park Street
City or town: Pelzer State: SC County: Anderson
Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B C D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☐
Public – Local ☒
Public – State ☐
Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒
District ☐
☐

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Structure

☐

Object

☐

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

1

Noncontributing

0

buildings

sites

structures

objects

1

0

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL/meeting hall

SOCIAL/civic

RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility

RECREATION AND CULTURE/music facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL/meeting hall

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: vernacular

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: Brick, Concrete

Walls: Wood

Roof: Metal

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Pelzer Community Building is a single-story wood frame building with a rectangular footprint, approximately fifty by seventy feet in size. Originally constructed by the Pelzer Manufacturing Company as an open-air roller-skating rink by 1908, the pavilion was later enclosed c. 1924 as its function shifted towards a community meeting space. It sits in the southern portion of Monkey Park, at 30 Pelzer Park Street in the historical mill village of Pelzer. The immediate surroundings of the building include a 1992 grocery store, a cemetery, and the park, with former mill village housing nearby. Concrete block infills the building's original brick pier foundation. Its half-timbered beadboard walls feature angle braces at the building's corners. The framing, combined with its beadboard infill layer, suggest the possible influence of the Late Victorian Stick style. Six-over-six wood sash windows, now boarded up, fenestrate the front and rear elevations. A hipped metal roof with a wide eave overhang protects the building. The open interior boasts a large maple floor, intended for skating. The Pelzer Community Building retains historic integrity to its period of significance, which spans from 1937 to 1975.

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Narrative Description

The Pelzer Community Building was constructed by 1908, originally as an open-air pavilion containing a roller-skating rink.¹ The Pelzer Manufacturing Company constructed the pavilion as a mill village amenity, and it remained an open-air structure through at least 1920 (Figure 1).² The pavilion was likely enclosed c. 1924. As the popularity of roller-skating waned, the building's function shifted to meet a need in the mill village for a meeting and dining space. A 1924 article boasts how the rink was "converted into a great banquet hall," and because of the banquet's date being so near St. Patrick's Day, the "green of Ireland was used as a color scheme."³ The building retains remnants of green paint (Photo 5). Additionally, Pelzer's 1925 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map does not depict the building as open air, and lists the rink's fire liabilities as heat, stoves, lights, and electric (Figure 2).⁴ While the pavilion had lighting since at least 1910, it is unlikely that all of these features would be exposed to the elements.⁵ Additionally, in the late 1920s, descriptions of the building as a rink include adjectives like "old" or "former," indicating a change in use.⁶ "Entertainment hall" and "banquet hall" are also used to describe the space at this time.⁷ Based on all available evidence, the date of the enclosure is estimated to be c. 1924.

The single-story building sits on a hillside in Pelzer's Monkey Park, adjacent to a 1992 grocery store to the west and the Wilson Family Cemetery to the east. The building sits atop a foundation of brick piers and concrete masonry unit (CMU) infill. While the date of the infill is unknown, it appears to postdate the bathroom addition (which also features brick piers) and may have been added after the 1979 fire. The rectangular footprint of the building is approximately fifty feet by seventy feet. The painted wood walls are half-timber frame infilled with tongue-and-groove beadboard. Angle braces, beginning at the chair rail, hug each corner. All windows are currently boarded over with plywood. The east (front) facade is approximately seventy feet in length. It features eight six-over-six wood sash windows, two steel doors, and a brick chimney (Photo 1). The knee wall between the two doors is clad in painted plywood. The west (rear) elevation has nine six-over-six windows and a chimney, although this chimney is truncated by the roofline (Photo 2).

The south elevation, which has particle board siding instead of beadboard, features two small louvered vents (Photo 3). The plywood and particle board likely postdate the period of significance and may indicate sites of repair after the 1979 fire. The north elevation has the same two small louvered vents and no windows. An addition, thirty feet in length but only half the

¹ "Pelzer," *The State*, April 26, 1908, 12.

² A.D. Oliphant, "The Pelzer Manufacturing Company Has Made Textile History at Its Mills," *Greenville Daily News*, February 29, 1920, Industrial Section, 3.

³ "Pelzer Folk Enjoy Dinner Given By Textile Company," *The Greenville News* March 16, 1924, 11.

⁴ Open-air elements, such as porches, are usually indicated on Sanborn maps using a dashed line. The outline of the building is solid on the 1925 map.

⁵ "Pelzer," *The Greenville News*, June 1, 1910, 4.

⁶ "District Red Men to Meet Saturday," *The Greenville News*, March 12, 1928, 3; "K. Of P. At Pelzer To Have 'Lumpkin Night'," *The Greenville News*, February 13, 1927, 1.

⁷ "Almost 250 Attend Annual Banquet of Pelzer Company," *The Greenville News*, April 10, 1927, 9; "Austin Elected District Deputy," *The Greenville News*, April 22, 1929, 2.

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height of the building, juts out about five feet from the north elevation (Photo 4). The addition contains the building's bathrooms and, based on its materials, likely dates to the 1930s or 1940s. The existing bathroom doors are visible in an undated interior photo, likely taken in the 1950s or early 1960s (Figure 3). This addition's exterior is composed of painted wood weatherboard siding. The addition's shed roof is the same 5v crimp metal material as the main component of the building. The main roof is hipped, with a wide eave overhang and exposed rafters.

The interior includes a large maple floor for skating, painted half-timber beadboard walls, and exposed roof trusses. The trusses show signs of smoke damage, most likely from a 1979 fire (Photo 10).⁸ A couple of stud walls in the southern portion of the building remain, as well as a small partition in the northeast corner (Photo 11 and Photo 12). Two non-historic beams span between the north and south elevations, supported by square wood columns (Photo 13). The stud walls, non-historic beams, and partition were all likely added after 1979, since they possess no signs of smoke damage.

The building's most prominent alteration is the c. 1924 enclosure of the pavilion, though this change occurred prior to the start of the period of significance in 1937. The c.1908 open-air skating rink with a bandstand featured timber frame construction with a knee wall wrapping the perimeter.⁹ While its date of construction is unknown, a later addition to the south elevation existed through the 1970s. This could have been the location for the building's first kitchen facilities, which boasted the addition of new electric appliances in 1964 (Figure 4).¹⁰ It appears to be the origin of the 1979 fire in a photograph: perhaps the fire damage prompted its demolition.¹¹ 5v crimp metal replaced the standing seam roof metal roof and steel doors replaced original six-panel wood doors, both possible reactions to the 1979 fire. The small parking lot on the eastern side of the building was likely first paved in the late 70s or early 1980s, since it is absent on a 1975 plat.¹² Renovations in 1992 included the addition of vinyl siding, which was later removed in 2022.¹³

Historic Integrity Assessment

The Pelzer Community Building retains integrity to convey its historic significance as the community meeting space of a once thriving mill town. The building retains its historic character from its period of significance of 1937 to 1975 and has changed little since its enclosure c. 1924. The building is in its historic location in Pelzer's Monkey Park. The loss of several other early 20th century resources in the park and the 1992 construction of a grocery store to the west have

⁸ "Pelzer Building Damaged," *The Anderson Independent*, May 7, 1979, 1.

⁹ "Pelzer," *The Greenville News*, June 1, 1910, 4.

¹⁰ "Community Building Used By Many," *The Pelzer News*, February 27, 1964.

¹¹ "Pelzer Building Damaged," *Anderson Independent*, May 7, 1979, 1.

¹² "Community House Park Off Lebbby Street," prepared by Dalton and Neves Company, June 17, 1975. Recorded in the Office of the Clerk of Court for Anderson County, South Carolina, Plat Book 80, Page 456.

¹³ Cindy Landrum, "Monkey Park community building improvements begin," *The Greenville News*, January 22, 1992, Extra, 1; Town of Pelzer, "Have you driven by the Community Building in the Monkey Park recently and wondered what was going on?," Facebook, December 14, 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1AKJb4eZ7x/>.

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diminished some of the historic character of the property's setting.¹⁴ Lost portions of the park include animal cages once used for the zoo, a small bandstand northeast of the Community Building, and a swimming pool located where the current grocery store sits. The Community Building's setting is near mill workers' housing and the Saluda River, where Pelzer citizens went to work for the near century that the mills were in operation. The building's design is reflective of its historic roles as both a skating rink and community meeting space: its open layout and large maple floor suit both functions. The c. 1924 enclosure of the building occurred prior to the period of significance and supported the property's change in use to a community building. Features including the maple floors, beadboard walls, and wooden roof trusses contribute to the building's integrity of materials and workmanship. The Pelzer Community Building evokes the feeling of an early twentieth century community building through its simplistic footprint, timber framing, beadboard walls, and exposed rafters. Situated amongst Pelzer homes and other institutions constructed by the mill, the building retains its feeling and association as a community space for mill employees. Its simple interior layout is recognizable as a space intended for public assembly.

¹⁴ Cindy Landrum, "Shopping center construction begins in Monkey Park," *The Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Nov. 1, 1991. 1C.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1937 - 1975

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

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

The Pelzer Community Building is located in the town of Pelzer, South Carolina and is significant at the local level under Criterion A: Social History as a company-built social space for use by the employee-residents of the Pelzer Manufacturing Company textile mill village. During the textile manufacturing boom of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the mill village model allowed for the mill company to become intertwined with every facet of their employees' lives. Mill paternalism manifested in the built environment of mill villages as the manufacturing concerns constructed churches, schools, meeting spaces, and recreational facilities for their workers. The Community Building, constructed by the Pelzer Manufacturing Company, served for decades as an important multipurpose gathering space for Pelzer mill workers. Its period of significance begins in 1937, when the former roller-skating rink became the de facto community meeting space after a fire destroyed the town's original community building. The Community Building acted not only as a meeting space for civic organizations, family reunions, church events, and political rallies, but also as an extension of the mill, as a space for company banquets and mill safety club meetings. In 1975, Kendall Mills sold the building to the Town of Pelzer, ending the building's association with the local history of mill paternalism. While it continued to host community events in subsequent years, its use as a social gathering space during that time is not exceptionally significant, and its period of significance therefore ends in 1975.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Criterion A: Social History

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, many businessmen were attracted to cotton manufacturing opportunities in the Piedmont region of western South Carolina.¹⁵ One location on the Saluda River, named Wilson's Bridge after Congressman John Wilson (1773-1828), caught the attention of entrepreneurs Captain Ellison Adger Smyth, Francis Pelzer, and William Lebby.¹⁶ They purchased 500 acres of land and formed the Pelzer Manufacturing Company. In 1881, they broke ground for the first mill building alongside the Saluda River in the newly formed Pelzer, with Captain Smyth acting as the company's president.¹⁷ Smyth, a Confederate

¹⁵ The Piedmont region is the second largest of South Carolina's six landform regions. It encompasses almost a third of the state's total area. It spans across the state in a northeast to southwest band, which is bounded by the Blue Ridge and Sandhills regions. As constant farming worsened its agricultural output, the Piedmont region shifted towards industry. By the early twentieth century, nearly all the region's significant streams and regions were dammed up to power textile mills or for the creation of hydroelectricity. Caroline Foster, "Piedmont," South Carolina Encyclopedia, updated August 22, 2022, <https://www.sccencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/piedmont/>.

¹⁶ "Pelzer: Values From a "Buy-Gone" Era"; "Wilson, John," Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, accessed March 2, 2025, <https://bioguide.congress.gov/search/bio/W000597>.

¹⁷ "Pelzer: Values From a "Buy-Gone" Era."

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veteran and paramilitary captain who opposed Reconstruction, came to Pelzer from his native Charleston.¹⁸

The first mill was finished in 1882 and was so successful that construction of the second mill quickly followed without the proprietors raising any additional capital.¹⁹ Homes were quickly constructed in bulk to house the new workers.²⁰ These homes made up the original Pelzer Mill Village, which was located along Lebby Street, between the bounds of Hale Street and the Saluda River, as well as along Anderson Street.²¹ The Pelzer Manufacturing Company operated four cotton mills in the mill village by 1896. Pelzer became one of the largest textile communities in the South. By 1907, Pelzer Manufacturing Company had more employees and residents than any other mill company in South Carolina.²²

Pelzer is one of many South Carolina textile towns that sprung up during the cotton mill craze of the late nineteenth century.²³ For the first time following the Civil War, professionals and merchants had extra money to invest in business opportunities. Mills were made possible by technology from the northern U.S. plus the South's excess of cotton supply, waterpower, and cheap white labor. For northern mills, built near urban areas, it was cheaper to have employees commute to the mill for work. In a less densely populated South, however, drawing workers from agricultural areas into a purpose-built mill village granted the best return on investment. Southern mill owners also realized that hiring entire families provided more laborers and a more stable workforce.²⁴

Many southern mill owners used an ideology of paternalism to justify their control. Under their leadership, the mill was "one big family," which emphasized the workers' dependence on the owner and discouraging unionization.²⁵ Pelzer's paternal figure was their president, Smyth, who was "careful that outside influence which might tend to contaminate the community be barred

¹⁸ Captain Ellison Adger Smyth was born in Charleston, SC in 1847 and joined the Confederate Army at the age of 16. During the Reconstruction period after the Civil War, Smyth became involved in what were socially known as "rifle clubs." These were white paramilitary groups formed with the purpose of intimidating Black freedmen and voters. He earned the title captain at the Washington Artillery Rifle Club in 1876 and led his group in the seizure of rifles and ammunition from a Black militia. When his wholesale business in Charleston failed, he turned to cotton manufacturing in the Upstate. "Captain Smyth, At 87, Has Had Full Life, But Would Not Live Time Over Again," *The Greenville News*, October 13, 1935, Section 4, 1-2; Virginia Theerman, "'Waving the Bloody Shirt': Reconstruction Era Violence and Political Identity," The Charleston Museum, July 2024,

[https://www.charlestonmuseum.org/news-events/waving-the-bloody-shirt-reconstruction-era-violence-and-political-identity/#:~:text=The%20Library%20of%20Congress,local%20freedmen%20and%20White%20sympathizers](https://www.charlestonmuseum.org/news-events/waving-the-bloody-shirt-reconstruction-era-violence-and-political-identity/#:~:text=The%20Library%20of%20Congress,local%20freedmen%20and%20White%20sympathizers;);

"Capt. Smyth, On His 90th Birthday, Works As Usual," *The Greenville News*, October 27, 1937, 7.

¹⁹ Oliphant, "The Pelzer Manufacturing Company Has Made Textile History."

²⁰ "Pelzer," *The Intelligencer*, May 27, 1886, 3.

²¹ Caroline Wilson, "Pelzer Manufacturing Company and Mill Village Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 2017), Section 8.

²² August Kohn, *The Cotton Mills of South Carolina* (Charleston, SC: Daggett Printing Company, 1907), 88.

²³ Stephen Wallace Taylor, "Mill villages," South Carolina Encyclopedia, updated August 15, 2022, <https://www.sceencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/mill-villages/>.

²⁴ Elizabeth Bilderback, "Women Welfare Workers in South Carolina Textile Mills, 1890-1935," Master's thesis, University of South Carolina, 1993, 5.

²⁵ Margaret Crawford, "Earle S. Draper and the Company Town in the American South," in *The Company Town: Architecture and Society in the Early Industrial Age*, ed. John Garner (New York: Oxford, 1992), 146.

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from it all times.”²⁶ The mention of “outside influence” likely refers to unions, which were increasing in popularity among South Carolina textile mill workers in the 1920s.²⁷ Smyth also indulged personal prejudices in his governance of the mill village, like restricting after-dark activities and banning dogs.²⁸

When asked in 1899 if there were any African Americans in town, a resident responded “no, we don’t want them.”²⁹ Given Smyth’s political history and racial prejudices, it is likely African Americans were not welcome as residents or mill laborers in Pelzer, at least during his forty-three years as company president.³⁰ In 1899, a Pelzer resident stated that the few African Americans in the area “live outside,” and that they were allowed to “cook and wash for us.”³¹ The scattering of newspaper articles referencing African Americans “from Pelzer” in the early and mid-twentieth century indicate they were living outside of the understood bounds of the textile mill village.³² Racial discrimination in textile mill employment took place across the state: South Carolina’s Segregation Act of 1915 made it illegal for textile manufacturing operatives of different races to work together in the same room. However, this law had clauses which excluded many non-operating jobs, establishing a tradition of African Americans working menial or janitorial positions in mills. Although Black employment in South Carolina’s textile mills surged after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, no Black residents were living in Pelzer by 1970.³³

In addition to housing, mills also constructed schools, churches, and other amenities for their employees. Every aspect of the employee’s life, including worship, education, and recreation, were done in an environment maintained and controlled by the mill. Schools taught children how to become ideal mill employees, while church sermons often focused on the importance of hard work and order. Pelzer’s amenities, like its savings bank, lyceum, and recreational facilities, were considered unusually extensive for textile mill towns at the time.³⁴ Through mill paternalism, commonly known as “welfare work,” mill companies aimed to produce a compliant

²⁶ “Town of Pelzer: A Unique Place,” *The Greenville News*, August 9, 1923, 2.

²⁷ Bruce Baker, “United Textile Workers of America,” South Carolina Encyclopedia, updated August 15, 2022, <https://www.sccyclopedia.org/sce/entries/united-textile-workers-of-america/>.

²⁸ Crawford, “Earle S. Draper and the Company Town in the American South,” 147.

²⁹ “Bill Arp’s Letter,” *The Anderson Intelligencer*, November 22, 1899, 3.

³⁰ “Captain Smyth Rated Dean of Dixie Cotton Mill Men,” *The Greenville News*, April 4, 1937, 39.

³¹ “Bill Arp’s Letter,” *The Anderson Intelligencer*, November 22, 1899, 3.

³² In a 1901 account titled “The Pelzer Affair,” an African American boy touches a white woman’s shoulder, but it is specified that the event took place *near* Pelzer. A 1957 report of a car accident mentions that the African American driver resides on a white man’s farm. A 1964 accident victim lived off Route 2, as did a 1968 shooting victim. “The Pelzer Affair,” *The Greenville News*, November 9, 1901, 8; “Pelzer Man Held In Hit-Run Case,” *The Greenville News*, June 16, 1957, 6D; “Pelzer Negro Is Apparent Wreck Victim,” *The Greenville News*, January 6, 1964, 12; Margaret Williams, “Pelzer Negro Slain in Wild Rink Melee,” *The Greenville News*, January 1, 1968, 14.

³³ Timothy Minchin, *Hiring the Black Worker: The Racial Integration of the Southern Textile Industry, 1960-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 12, 14, 46; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population: 1970, Vol. 1, Characteristics of the Population, Part 42, South Carolina* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973), 83.

³⁴ Crawford, “Earle S. Draper and the Company Town in the American South,” 145, 147.

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and loyal workforce. However, in many cases workers resisted dependence on the mill by relying on traditional support networks, often while still taking full advantage of the offered amenities.³⁵

Green spaces and baseball fields cost almost nothing for the mill owner to provide, but increased employee quality of life. The Pelzer Manufacturing Company constructed two parks flanking S.C. Highway 20, which spans the Saluda River between Anderson and Greenville counties. In the northern part of the park, a baseball field and racetrack were constructed. The Pelzer Athletic Association was created to operate the park and manage textile baseball, which became a popular and highly competitive sport between various Southern mill towns. The Pelzer Athletic Association also organized the town's annual Fourth of July celebration, an event drawing thousands of people from across the state each year.³⁶ South of Highway 20, a skating rink, bandstand, and swimming pool were constructed by 1908.³⁷ This section also contained a zoo that housed monkeys, which is the origin of the name Monkey Park.³⁸

First constructed as a site for recreation, the skating rink soon also became a place for community gathering. Located roughly half a mile from the Saluda River, the rink was conveniently located near the mill village and Pelzer's four textile mills. The skating rink pavilion served as a venue for musical performances.³⁹ Throughout the 1910s, it hosted a variety of speeches and meetings.⁴⁰ The open-air pavilion was likely infilled c. 1924, as explained above in Section 7. In 1937, the former skating rink replaced Pelzer's original community building, which was next to the lyceum and destroyed by a 1936 fire.⁴¹ As 1937 marks the point at which the building became the mill village's primary community gathering space, it also serves as the beginning of the period of significance. Also in 1936, the Pelzer Manufacturing Company plant was sold to the Boston-based Kendall Company, who stated that operations would continue without change.⁴²

Throughout the middle decades of the twentieth century, the Community Building, also often referred to as the Community House, was the setting for fairs, rallies, church events, family reunions, political speeches, and square dances.⁴³ Some of these events served dual roles for local residents, such as a 1966 country music concert by Tex and His Tune Twister, organized as

³⁵ "Mill Village and Factory: Introduction," American Historical Association, June 1, 2017, <https://www.historians.org/resource/mill-village-and-factory-introduction/>.

³⁶ "Baseball At Pelzer On July Fourth," *The Greenville News*, June 29, 1900, 5.

³⁷ "Automobile Trip Last Wednesday," *The Laurens Advertiser*, Oct 20, 1909, 10.

³⁸ "New Arrival At Pelzer- Baby Monkey," *The Greenville News*, May 9, 1914, 4.

³⁹ "Pelzer," *The Greenville News*, August 27, 1911, 12.

⁴⁰ "Will Tell Farmers How to Save Trees," *The Greenville News*, August 13, 1911, 5; "Additional Meetings At Which the Candidates May Address the Mill People," *The Intelligencer*, July 25, 1914, 6.

⁴¹ "Pelzer Community House Is Destroyed By Flames," *The Greenville News*, January 10, 1936, 9; "Pelzer Fellowship Club Holds Meeting," *The Greenville News*, September 7, 1937, 12.

⁴² "Boston Firm to Operate Large Textile Concern," *The Greenville News*, November 17, 1936, 2.

⁴³ "Pelzer Fair Is Set Oct. 7-9," *The Greenville News*, September 10, 1954, 36; "Colonel Speaks At Pelzer Rally," *The Greenville News*, September 19, 1943, 9; "Fellowship Club to Meet At Pelzer," *The Greenville News*, September 29, 1944, 36; "Reunions," *The Greenville News* August 8, 1965, 33; "Dates Given For Speeches," *The Greenville News*, May 25, 1958, 2; "Square Dance Will Be Held in Pelzer," *The Greenville News*, January 6, 1950, 8.

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fundraiser for the West Pelzer Fire Department.⁴⁴ The Community Building was also the designated regular meeting space for organizations like the American Legion and the Pelzer Community Lions Club.⁴⁵ Even local youth used the building for meetings, such as a Youth Center which met there on Thursday nights in 1951 and was sponsored by the Pelzer Woman's Club.⁴⁶ The Anderson County chapter of the American Red Cross took advantage of the building's status as a well-known local landmark in 1947, designated it as one of their community supply points in the case of disaster.⁴⁷

Like the rest of the mill-constructed amenities, the Community Building also hosted events directly associated with the mill business itself. These included mill Safety Club meetings as well as the company's perfect attendance banquets.⁴⁸ The building was available to be reserved by mill employees and Pelzer residents free of charge.⁴⁹ In terms of use, the only extant comparable building in Pelzer is the c. 1885 Lyceum at 112 Lebbby Street, which historically housed a library, hospital, reading room, and game room. While the Lyceum also provided a place for residents to gather, its functions were largely geared toward intellectual pursuits, rather than general community use.⁵⁰

In 1952, the Town of Pelzer incorporated in a unanimous decision, gaining the ability to handle its own water, sewage, trash collection, and sale of mill houses.⁵¹ However, the Community Building remained under the ownership of Kendall Mills. It was not until 1975 that the Town of Pelzer acquired the building, ending its role as the town's mill-owned and operated primary community space.⁵² The sale of the building by Kendall Mills represents mill divestment and the end of the mill paternalism era that characterized the building's construction and historic use. While the building continued to be used by the wider community for a few more years before its conversion into a senior center, the building's history within the last fifty years is not considered exceptionally significant, and its period of significance therefore ends in 1975.

As the textile industry declined domestically, Pelzer's Kendall Mills were soon subjected to layoffs and downsizing.⁵³ The Kendall Company sold the mills to Gerber in 1986. Around this time, the mills produced about 75% of cloth diapers made in the United States.⁵⁴ In 1992, Gerber closed most of the plant, laying off 400 people in the process.⁵⁵ By early 2003, all Gerber

⁴⁴ "Country Music," *The Greenville News*, August 30, 1966, p. 3.

⁴⁵ "Pelzer Legion Will Celebrate At Rally," *The Greenville News*, May 6, 1948, 13; "To Give Charter to Pelzer Lions," *The Greenville News*, August 21, 1945, 2.

⁴⁶ "Leaders of Pelzer Youth Center," *The Greenville News*, December 22, 1951, p. 12.

⁴⁷ "Iva, Pelzer Disaster Committees Set up," *Anderson Intelligencer*, August 27, 1947, 2.

⁴⁸ "Pelzer Host To Safety Group," *The Greenville News*, May 30, 1951, 1; "Perfect Attendance At Pelzer Mills Saluted," *The Greenville News*, February 2, 1947, 14.

⁴⁹ "Community Building Used by Many," *The Pelzer News*, February 27, 1964.

⁵⁰ Wilson, "Pelzer Manufacturing Company and Mill Village Historic District," Section 8; Oliphant, "The Pelzer Manufacturing Company Has Made Textile History at Its Mills," 3.

⁵¹ "Pelzer Voting is Set March 11," *The Greenville News*, February 27, 1952, 13.

⁵² Anderson County Register of Deeds, Deed to Community Building, Deed Book 18A, Page 551.

⁵³ "Kendall Mills Sets Layoff," *The Greenville News*, August 30, 1974, 43.

⁵⁴ Jim DuPlessis, "Environmental awareness revives cloth diaper sales," *The Greenville News*, May 21, 1990, 1C, 3C.

⁵⁵ Cindy Landrum and Loyd Little, "400 Layoffs Rock Pelzer," *The Greenville News*, January 14, 1992, 1.

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operations in Pelzer ceased.⁵⁶ The Community Building's use became almost exclusively associated with the town's senior citizens after a 1979 fire damaged the building.⁵⁷ In 1991, the building and surrounding park came to attention as a real estate development project was proposed on park land. The area west of the Community Building was sold to create a BI-LO grocery store, sparking controversy among many Pelzer residents.⁵⁸

The Pelzer Community Building is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Social History as the primary community meeting space for the mill village of Pelzer from 1937 through 1975. The Community Building's history is intertwined with the evolution of Pelzer as a mill company town. The Community Building is a relic of the welfare work model, where the mill company supplied housing and amenities to placate their workforce. The Pelzer Manufacturing Company was involved in all aspects of its employees' lives. By overseeing employee educational, religious, and recreational affairs, the mill exerted control and supports its own economic interest. Employer involvement in mill village recreation extended to the Community Building. First built by the mill as a roller skating rink in 1908, it became town residents' de facto meeting space in 1937, hosting banquets, family reunions, church events, and more. As an extension of the mill, the Community Building also provided space for company banquets and mill safety club meetings. It is representative of mill welfare work and the extent of company involvement in mill village life. It continued to host community social events after the Town of Pelzer assumed ownership in 1975, however its use during that period was not exceptionally significant, and its official period of significance therefore ends in 1975.

⁵⁶ "Gerber closing Pelzer plant," *The Greenville News*, November 24, 2002, 3B.

⁵⁷ Terry Cregar, "Ceramics in full swing at Pelzer center," *The Greenville News*, November. 8, 1983, 14.

⁵⁸ Cindy Landrum, "Monkey Park debate heats up," *The Greenville News*, July 2, 1991, 1B.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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- ☒ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested⁵⁹
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.14

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 34.644297 | Longitude: -82.463493 |
| 2. Latitude: 34.644086 | Longitude: -82.463212 |
| 3. Latitude: 34.643219 | Longitude: -82.463805 |
| 4. Latitude: 34.643370 | Longitude: -82.464486 |

⁵⁹ Part 1 approved for "Pelzer Roller Skating Rink" NPS Project #46789, on October 23, 2023.

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

The nominated boundary is indicated by the blue line on the attached NRHP Boundary Map. The boundary runs along Pelzer Park Street on the north, the property line with the adjacent grocery store to the west, SC highway 8 on the south and the boundary of the Wilson Family Cemetery on the east.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The Pelzer Community Building was constructed as part of Monkey Park. However, Monkey Park is a very large property and, as a whole, does not retain its historic character. Therefore, the selected boundaries include the Community Building and its immediate surroundings, between the streets to the north and south and the grocery store and cemetery to the east and west. This boundary was selected in consultation with National Register and Technical Preservation Services staff at the National Park Service during review of the HPCA Part 1 for this property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kyle Campbell and Ellis McClure
organization: Preservation South, LLC
street & number: PO Box 1595
city or town: Greenville state: SC zip code: 29602
e-mail: preservationsouth@bellsouth.net
telephone: 770-894-2981
date: 3/4/2025

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to

Pelzer Community Building

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the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Pelzer Community Building

City or Vicinity: Pelzer

County: Anderson

State: SC

Photographer: Ellis McClure

Date Photographed: November and December 2024; and February 2025

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

- 1 of 13: East (Front) Elevation, November 2024
- 2 of 13: West Elevation from Food Lion parking lot, November 2024
- 3 of 13: South Elevation, December 2024
- 4 of 13: North Elevation, from Food Lion parking lot, November 2024
- 5 of 13: Remnants of green paint on east elevation, December 2025
- 6 of 13: Interior, looking west, February 2025
- 7 of 13: Interior, looking north from center of room, February 2025
- 8 of 13: Interior, looking east at front entrances, February 2025
- 9 of 13: Interior, looking south from center of room, February 2025
- 10 of 13: Smoke damage on roof trusses, February 2025
- 11 of 13: Partition in south portion of interior, February 2025
- 12 of 13: Partition in northeast corner, December 2024
- 13 of 13: Non-historic beams spanning from north to south, February 2025

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Figure 1 of 4: Skating Pavillion, from A.D. Oliphant, "The Pelzer Manufacturing Company Has Made Textile History," Greenville Daily News (Greenville, SC), Feb. 29, 1920, Industrial Section, page 3.

Figure 2 of 4: 1925 Sanborn Map illustrating fire liabilities, from Charleston County Public Library.

Figure 3 of 4: Undated group photo at banquet in front of restrooms at the Pelzer Community Building, likely 1950s or 1960s, from Pelzer Heritage Commission collection at Anderson County Museum, accessed November 19, 2024

Figure 4 of 4: Screenshot by Ellis McClure, November 20, 2024, of "Community Building Used By Many," *The Pelzer News* (Pelzer, SC), Feb. 27, 1964, accessed through Facebook post by Dianne Stone Eskew in Town of Pelzer group, originally posted August 8, 2010, post since removed.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

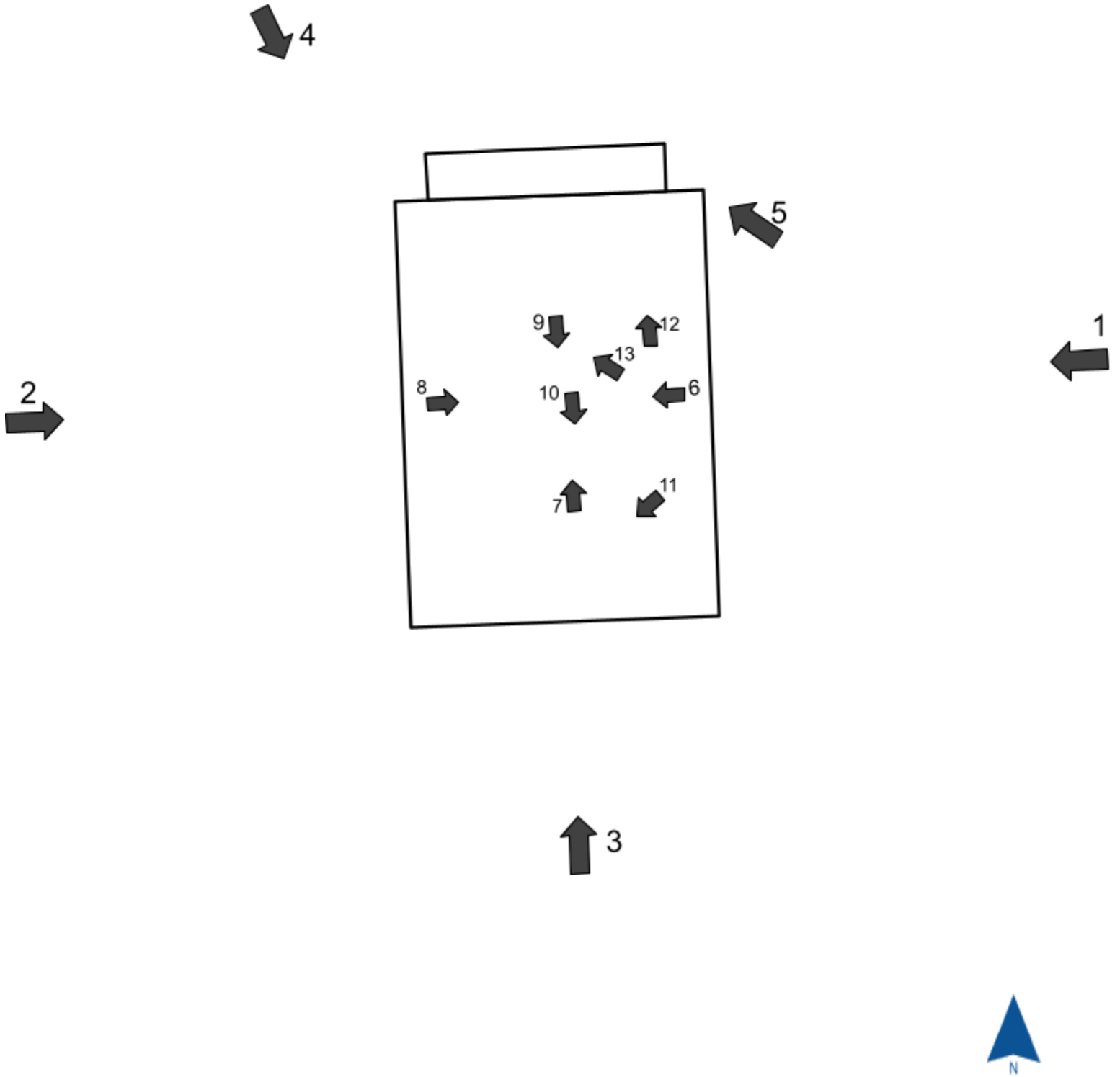
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

Pelzer Community Building
30 Pelzer Park Street

Photo Key
(Not to Scale)



Pelzer Community Building

NRHP Boundary Map
Pelzer, Anderson Co., South Carolina

Lat/Long Coordinates		
1.	34.644297°	-82.463493°
2.	34.644086°	-82.463212°
3.	34.643219°	-82.463805°
4.	34.643370°	-82.464486°



Pelzer Community Building - Context Map

30 Pelzer Park St., Pelzer, Anderson Co., South Carolina

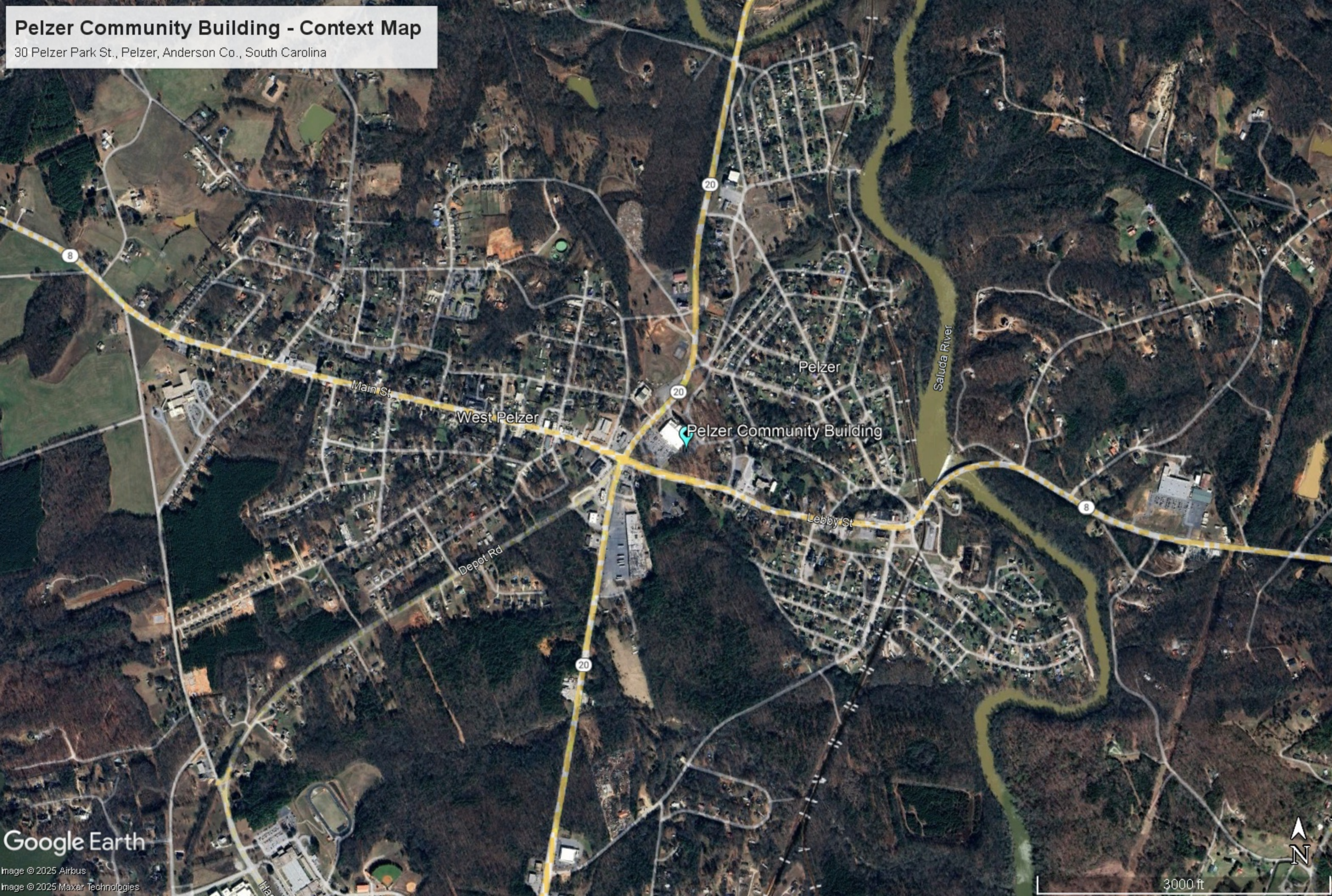


Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12



Photo 13



Figure 1



Figure 2

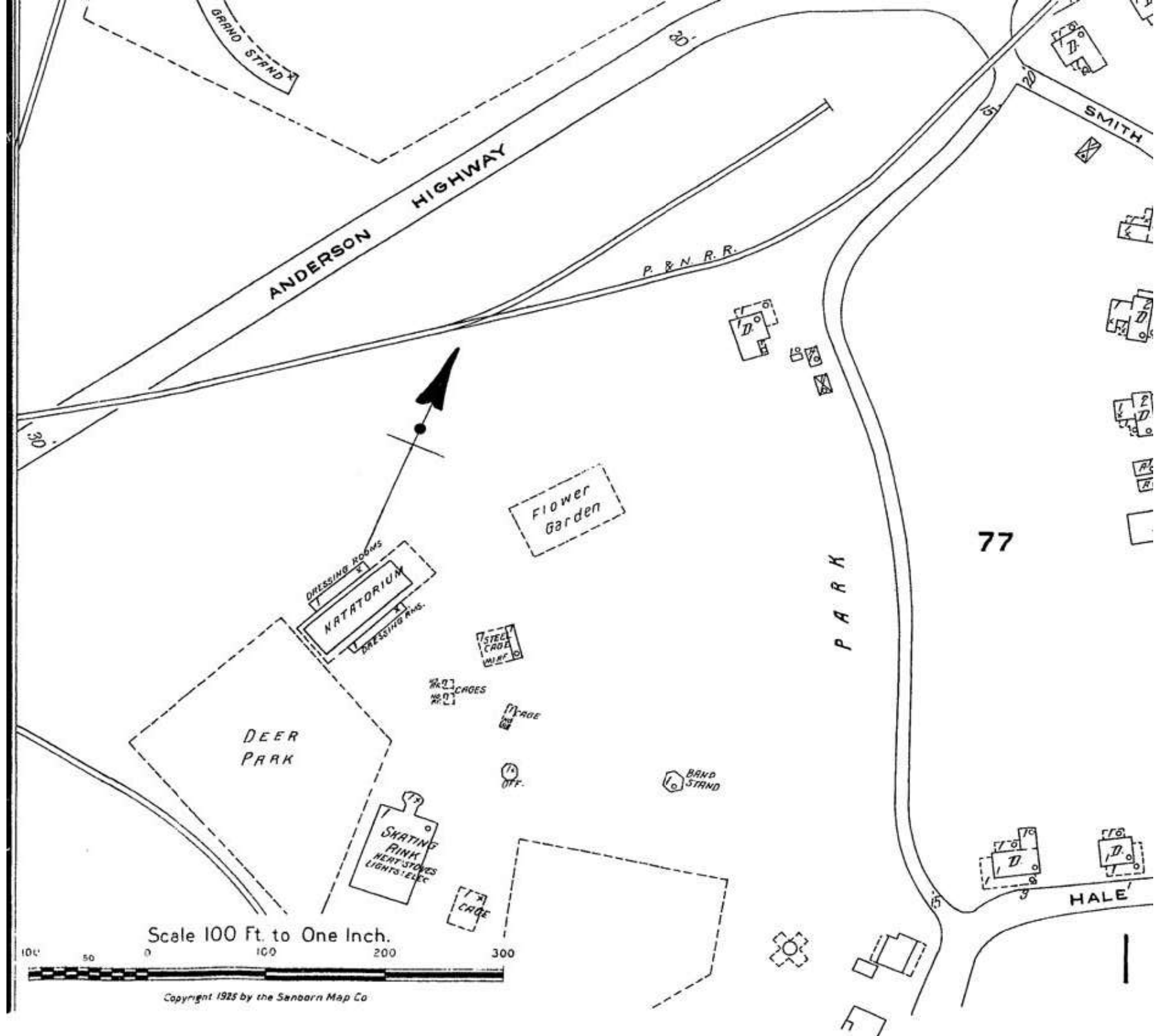


Figure 3





Figure 4



Dianne Stone Eskew

August 8, 2010 · 🌐



1



6



Dianne Stone Eskew

tearing down of old grand stand february 7th 1964

14y Like Share



Shirley Priest

Diane thanks so much for sharing all of this , i have sat here most of the day remembering!! love it.

14y Like Share



Sherry Eskew Ford

I REMEMBER THE OLD WOODEN GRAND STRAND,BUT DIDN'T REMEMBER THE YEAR THEY TORE IT DOWN.THANKS FOR SHARING.



Write a public comment...

