



# Preservation Month 2018

## Downtown: Upcycled

The term, upcycle, is a relatively new one that found traction in the early 2000s. It is the generation of new creations from unwanted or unneeded products. And while many think that “upcycling” is simply the more updated form of “recycling,” up-cycling tends to allow for the innovation of a product that is both creative and useful.

How does this relate to downtown Rock Hill? If you’ve taken a look lately, you will notice a surge in liveliness—both inside and outside the historic buildings. But it was not always this way.

Once a bustling hive of neighborhoods, textile mills, stores, banks, and offices, the downtown experienced a marked decline as Rock Hill’s limits expanded. Housing developments, decline in manufacturing, and the construction of the Rock Hill Mall and Galleria on the outer edges of the city limits caused the downtown to falter. Hope in bringing shoppers back came about in the form of the Town Center Mall, a roof structure built to create an interior walkable mall. Unfortunately, this idea did not gain any momentum: shoppers found the mall dark and uninviting, and retailers followed their clients to the newer buildings.

City of Rock Hill leaders did not give up on the downtown area. Taking insight from the Empowering the Community program in the 1980s, redevelopment of East Main Street surged. The mall roof was removed and incentives were offered for those willing to take a chance. Stores became offices; offices turned into restaurants; banks transformed as residences; courtrooms emerged as event spaces. Allowing for adaptive reuse enabled once empty storerooms to be transformed into art galleries and artist studios. Recently completed apartment buildings increased downtown residency from 15 units to more than 140.

The new upcycled Downtown has proven the concept that what was at one time useless and distressed can be recreated into a new and vibrant community, fostering pride, encouraging creativity with public art displays, and building new to complement established historic structures.

Information about the downtown area can be found online at [onlyinoldtown.com](http://onlyinoldtown.com). If you have any questions about preservation or the Rock Hill Board of Historic Review within the City of Rock Hill, please contact Janice E Miller, 803.817.5129.



Roddey Building  
East Main Street, 1895

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Information about the Board of Historic Review, the City’s locally designated historic districts, and preservation information is available online at [cityofrockhill.com/historic](http://cityofrockhill.com/historic). If you have any questions as to whether or not your structure is located within an historic district, or if you just general questions about historic preservation, feel free to contact Janice E Miller, [janice.miller@cityofrockhill.com](mailto:janice.miller@cityofrockhill.com) or 803.817.5129.

## Downtown's Cultural District

Arts is an integral part of the Rock Hill downtown area; so much so, that in 2015 it was named South Carolina's first state-recognized Cultural District. Making art easily accessible to citizens has been the Arts Council of York County's mission from its inception in 1977. Today, the Council oversees a number of public galleries in two separate historic buildings and City Hall, provides art instruction to all age groups, encourages public art installations, and supports studio space for many local artists. Live performances and concerts throughout the year entertain residents and visitors alike, and events such as Come-See-Me in early spring and ChristmasVille the first week of December draw visitors throughout the region to experience the downtown area.

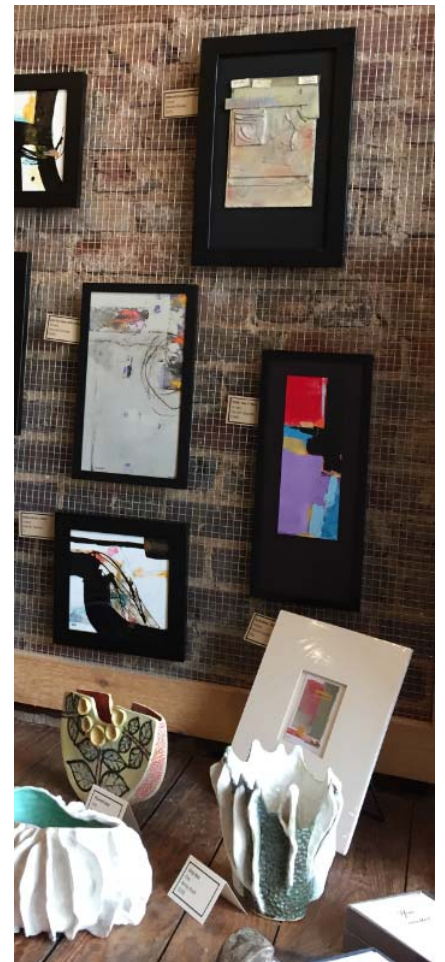
In addition to arts and entertainment, cultural districts contain businesses that provide public spaces for art displays as well as support for the community at large. Banks, restaurants, offices, government facilities, parks, and retail establishments partner to display sculptures, pottery, paintings, prints, photographs—the list is endless!

Finally, cultural districts recognize the value of the history of their particular area. In Rock Hill, there are a number of South Carolina historic markers detailing the evolution of the downtown area and include significant events, such as the Friendship Nine, a group of young men who stood up for Civil Rights by sitting at the McCrory's lunch counter in 1961.

More information about the Arts Council is available online at [yorkcountyarts.org](http://yorkcountyarts.org).

**May is Preservation Month**  
**Check out the National Trust for Historic**  
**Preservation page,**  
**[savingplaces.org](http://savingplaces.org), to learn more.**

*Photo: City of Rock Hill*



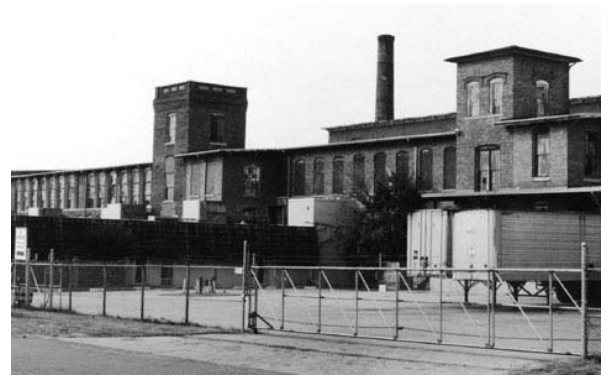
*Photo: City of Rock Hill*

## Freedom Walkway

Behind the walls of the Woolworth building was a partially painted canvas, just waiting to be completed. But before the walls came down, an idea for a public art display had been taking shape. Once completed, the partnership of artists, students, and community input provided the color palette that became the Freedom Walkway. The public alleyway leads to an exhibit established to honor those Rock Hill citizens who have become heroes thanks to their efforts for justice and equality. Nominations are accepted beginning in June of each year, and honorees are selected for community recognition in the fall. For more information and to nominate an individual, go to [freedomwalkway.com](http://freedomwalkway.com).

# Rock Hill's National Register Transformations

Rock Hill has a number of properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places—and several of these have gone through expansive renovations and restoration in order to convert manufacturing operations into residential housing. The Highland Park Manufacturing Plant was built in 1888-89, the second major textile mill built in Rock Hill following on the success of the Cotton Factory. Investment came by way of stock sales to all citizens of the City. Schoolchildren pooled their funds to invest in the building of the mill. The mill remained in operation until the mid-1980s.



1992

2018

*Photo & Descriptions: National Register of Historic Places Nomination*



The property was listed on the National Register in June 1992 (top). Developers in 2001 provided a modification plan to convert the existing vacant mill into senior housing. With appropriate renovations to accommodate this population group, the mill was transformed from a gigantic open space into 129 apartments.

*Photo: City of Rock Hill*

The Rock Hill Body Company building was originally built in 1890 as the Globe Mill, becoming the Victoria Yarn Mill #2 textile operation in 1915. As textile industry stalled during the Depression, in 1938 John Hardin transformed the facility into The Rock Hill Body, remaining in operation as one of the largest producer of truck and school bus bodies in the Southeast until 1986.

*Photo & Descriptions: National Register of Historic Places Nomination*

2018



2008

The property was used mainly for storage until listed on the National Register in March 2008 (top). By then, developers were working to convert the former mill and manufacturing plant into apartments. The transformation complete, additional houses were built reminiscent of mill housing to the rear of the property, further adding to the architectural character of the area. Today, the complex is home to approximately 37 families.

*Photo: City of Rock Hill*

## For More Information...

The South Carolina Department of Archives & History has photographs and nomination forms of all South Carolina's National Register properties and districts online at [scdah.sc.gov](http://scdah.sc.gov). For a list of properties throughout the United States, visit the National Park Service website at [nps.gov/nr/](http://nps.gov/nr/).

## Historic Rock Hill Events

During May, Historic Rock Hill will host a number of events at the White Home (258 East White Street) in honor of Preservation Month. Contact Historic Rock Hill at 803.329.1020 for event pricing and more information.

**Friday—May 4, 4:30-7:30 PM:**  
The River History Ride  
Parks, Recreation & Tourism

**Saturday—May 19, 6-9 PM:**  
White Home Wine Trail



### Ongoing Exhibition

**World War I: Lessons and Legacies** organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and the National Museum of American History

City of Rock Hill

PO Box 11706  
Rock Hill, SC 29731-1706

For information on historic properties located in Rock Hill, please contact Janice E Miller, Historic Preservation Specialist, 803.817.5129, email [janice.miller@cityofrockhill.com](mailto:janice.miller@cityofrockhill.com).

Additional information and research available online at [cityofrockhill.com/historic](http://cityofrockhill.com/historic)



## Historic Rock Hill Update

*Mission: To preserve and protect the historic resources of Rock Hill, SC, and enhance the livability of its historic areas through offering educational programs, hosting special events and community activities, and by leading preservation initiatives.*

Historic Rock Hill is a membership-based 501(C)(3) historic preservation organization. Because the organization does not receive any public funding, HRH depends solely on the donations of individuals and businesses in the private sector. Due to the ongoing support from our donors, we are able to teach others about the value and importance of historic preservation and to keep the history of Rock Hill alive through teaching programs, hosting special events, and maintaining the White Home – a cornerstone in downtown Rock Hill - as a premier educational and event rental venue.

*Vision: To create a thriving venue for social engagement while preserving Rock Hill's rich heritage.*

In recognizing significant historic preservation projects within the boundaries of the Rock Hill School District, Historic Rock Hill has established the Historic Rock Hill Preservation Award. This award is open to all properties (residential, commercial, institutional, religious, parks, etc.) provided the properties are at least 50 years old. Individuals or organizations may nominate their own projects for this award and the work must have been substantially completed within the past year.

Nomination criteria includes:

- Extensive and appropriate restoration of an existing structure
- Adaptive reuse that maintains the architectural integrity of the structure
- Leed certification or extensive use of green building technologies in preservation projects

Additionally, any individual or organization promoting excellence in preservation practice may be nominated for the award.

Information about the criteria for the award, which is presented each May, may be found online at [historicrockhill.com](http://historicrockhill.com), or by calling 803.329.1020.

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