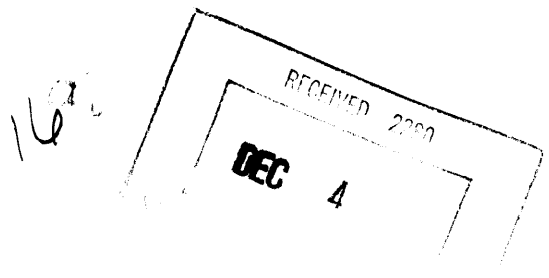


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

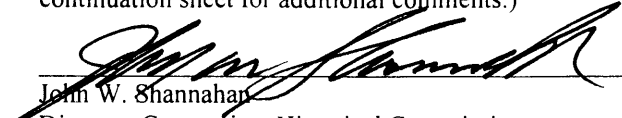
historic name _____
other names/site number Water Street Historic District

2. Location

street & number see continuation sheet 2:1 not for publication N/A
city or town Torrington vicinity N/A
state Connecticut code CT county Litchfield code 005 zip code 06790

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 _____
John W. Shannahan Date 12/02/02
Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

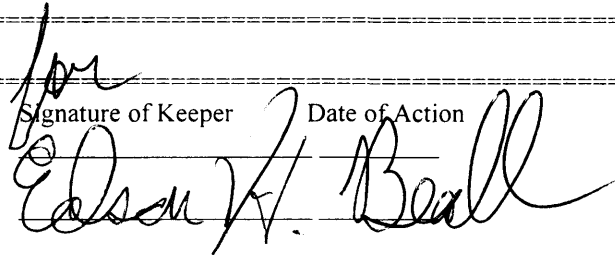
State or Federal agency and bureau _____
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the
National Register
 See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the
National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other (explain): _____

 _____
Signature of Keeper Date of Action 1.15.03

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Water Street Historic District, Torrington, Litchfield County, CT Section 2 **Page 1**

Church Street: 187, 206, 207, 229-35

John Street: 18

Migeon Avenue: 8

Railroad Square: 30

Water Street: 78-80, 82-90, 88, 116, 117, 122, 130, 131, 141, 147, 153, 168, 178, 179, 182, 190, 199, 235-37, 236-46

Railroad Trestle and bridge over the Naugatuck River

Water Street Historic District, Torrington, Litchfield County, CT

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>34</u>	<u>3</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	—	— sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	—	— structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	—	— objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>34</u>	<u>3</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing _____
 Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Cat: <u>DOMESTIC/single dwelling</u>	Cat: <u>DOMESTIC/single dwelling</u>
<u>BUSINESS/office building</u>	<u>DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling</u>
<u>WAREHOUSE</u>	<u>BUSINESS/office building</u>
<u>INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility; printing plant</u>	<u>WAREHOUSE/warehouse</u>
<u>BUSINESS/specialty store</u>	<u>INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility</u>
<u>TRANSPORTATION/railroad depot</u>	<u>BUSINESS/specialty Store</u>
<u>SOCIAL/meeting hall</u>	
<u>GOVERNMENT/fire station</u>	

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19TH CENTURY/Greek Revival
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Neo-Classical Revival
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival
LATE VICTORIAN/Renaissance Revival
LATE VICTORIAN/Second Empire
LATE VICTORIAN AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY MOVEMENTS/Commercial Style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone
brick

roof copper
slate
asphalt shingle
built up

walls brick
stone
weatherboard
corrugated metal

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Water Street Historic District, Torrington, Litchfield County, CT **Section 7** **Page 1**

The Water Street Historic District is located west of the downtown center of Torrington. The district encompasses approximately two blocks of upper Water Street, and is bisected by the right-of-way of the former New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad. The eastern boundary abuts Torrington's downtown center, and for a half block runs contiguously with the boundary of the Torrington Downtown Historic District. A section of the west branch of the Naugatuck River is included in the district, and forms the boundary on the south and west. On the north the district is bounded by Church Street. Of 37 buildings in the district, 34 are contributing buildings.

Most of the buildings in the district were built between 1885 and the mid-1920s and were constructed of masonry or frame for industrial or commercial purposes; few houses are included within its boundaries. Late nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century maps of the neighborhood show mixed use; frame boarding houses and residences were interspersed with commercial and industrial structures. Most of these houses are now demolished or transformed into commercial structures. The eastern section of the district consists mainly of commercial buildings; the earliest of these were constructed close to Prospect Street and are nearest to the downtown center. The west side of the district is largely industrial; on the south side of Water Street is the Hotchkiss Brothers complex, a group of frame and brick factory buildings, dating from the mid-1880s to the mid-1920s, occupying nearly an entire city block. Just east of the Hotchkiss Brothers industrial complex is the remains of the Coe/American Brass (and later Anaconda) Company. This industrial complex once straddled the east and west banks of the river. The part of the complex on the west bank, located on lower ground, and outside of the district boundaries, was badly damaged in the 1955 flood, but afterwards resumed operations. The whole facility was closed in 1961 and was thereafter rented out and used for various industrial purposes. In 1973 the part of the complex on the west bank of the river burned in the largest fire in Torrington's history.

Two of the earliest buildings in the district are in the Second Empire style; the Coe/American Brass office building (#179 Water Street) stands northwest of the road which joined the east and west sides of the complex. Built in 1881, and renovated in 1888 and 1911, it was designed by Robert W. Hill, and built by Hotchkiss Brothers. The granite two-story office building has a mansard roof punctuated by pedimented dormers with dentils and a fan in each tympanum; each pediment is supported by engaged turned pilasters on the outside edge of the surround, with bases that curve outward. The original slate roof has been resheathed with asphalt shingles, but the original copper standing seam roof caps the mansard. The cornice has scroll modillions, and a single bay section projects to the east. The east entry has a Colonial Revival portico with the original pediment. (Photographs #11 and #12) Another large Second Empire style building is Pythian Hall (82-90 Water Street; Photograph #3). Designed by local architect C.D. Janssen, and built by Hotchkiss Brothers in 1888, the three-story frame structure was originally named the Odell Block. The mansard roof caps a brick façade added in 1928, but the original façade boasted bow windows, a second-floor balcony, a tower, and a double storefront (Photograph #2). The 1920s buff brick façade, with an inset panel bearing the Knights of Pythias insignia, is ornamented with keystones over the windows and has a central arched entry on the first floor. The storefronts flanking the entry have large plate glass windows.

Revival styles which were popular in the late nineteenth century, the period in which many of the commercial structures in the district were built, are well represented in the district; the Renaissance Revival New York, New Haven and Hartford Passenger Depot (Railroad Square; 1898), a one-story buff brick building, is a good example of the style. The hipped roof has overhanging eaves and a cross-gable pavilion housing the ticket window in the center of the long side. Windows and doors are capped with segmental arches. Brick quoins ornament the corners of the building and stringcourses unite window and doorway lintels and sills. A frame gable is set above the round arched

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Water Street Historic District, Torrington, Litchfield County, CT **Section 7** **Page 2**

ticket window and the window itself rests on a base of rusticated granite which is rounded at the level of the counter. Flanking the window are slender, fluted columns. Doors throughout are paneled and appear to be original. On the north side is a shed-roof section with paneled sides. Brackets support the overhang. The original slate roof has been replaced with asphalt shingle and the platform roofs have been demolished (Photograph #7). Like the passenger station, the Palmer House (#122 Water Street) was built in the Renaissance Revival style. Constructed in 1901, it was first christened the New Century Hotel. The larger of the two hotels within the district, it was designed by Charles Palmer, and like the train station, it was built by Hotchkiss Brothers (Frank Fuller was the masonry contractor). Piers, each terminating in a capitol, separate the banks of windows. The building has a wide frieze and bracketed cornice of galvanized iron. On the third story the banks of quadruple windows are united by a straight marble lintel and granite sill. The second story has banks of triple windows with similar lintels and sills. The main entrance, on the Water Street façade, is formed by a two-story round arch with scroll keystones of marble which are echoed in the paired first-floor windows. There is a balcony on the second floor level. The main doors are partially glazed above decorative panels. The round-arched entries are compound, their intrados formed by molded brick and impost of marble bands. There is a marble threshold and mosaic tile entry panel. Storefronts flank the entrance. Another storefront on the John Street elevation near the rear has been filled in (Photographs #1 and #4).

Another notable building in the same style is the 1901 Fire House (#117 Water Street). The two-story brick building was designed by Charles Palmer, and built by Hotchkiss Brothers. The three-bay façade is surmounted by a cornice carried on corbelled brackets with a balustrade-like relief and a stepped, paneled crest above. At the northeast corner is the three-story bell tower. The tower has a battlemented parapet with round-arched openings on the third floor. Its design is enriched by a brick corbel table and quoins. On the second floor of the main block the façade is divided into three sections by paired round arches. Three overhead doors are at the first floor. The building is set on a fieldstone foundation trimmed on the outside with a coping of broken-faced ashlar (Photographs #2 and #15).

The Batters Building (#187 Church Street) is the best example of the Neo-Classical Revival style in the district (Photograph #6). This commercial structure was built in 1897 and was designed by C.D. Janssen and built by Hotchkiss Brothers. The Church Street façade is richly ornamented and original. The gable is shingled with a bank of three small double-hung sash windows. The upper façade is divided by six brick piers terminating in capitols. The end bays have narrow round arched windows surmounted by rondels. The storefront has a molded cornice, and a broad frieze supported by quoined piers in the end bays. The foundation is rusticated granite blocks.

The Hotel Raymond (#178 Water Street), built in 1900 in the Italianate style still boasts its original bracketed metal cornice surmounting segmentally arched windows with freestone sills (Photograph #14).

The district also includes commercial buildings of a more vernacular style. These buildings, built around the turn of the century of brick, often for office or commercial purposes, are distinguished by their clean, simple design and well preserved facades. The Torrington Register Citizen (#190 Water Street) and the Hotchkiss Brothers Office (#199 Water Street) are two examples of this type of construction. The Register Citizen Building was built as a single-story structure in 1905 and was raised to two stories in 1914. Designed by Griggs & Hunt, and built by the Torrington Building Company, it is five bays wide by three deep. It has a stepped parapet with a tile cap, and articulated piers enclosing segmentally arched metal windows with two-over-two sash. The upper end of each bay is built out with corbelling, recessing the bays below. The foundation of the main block is rusticated granite blocks. Attached to the rear are the long, single-story brick buildings of the printing plant (Photographs #10 and #14). The Hotchkiss Brothers Office

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Water Street Historic District, Torrington, Litchfield County, CT Section 7 Page 3

(Photograph #16) is a single-story building built in 1906. Its corbelled cornice is built up in four layers from an entablature that in its turn is formed by corbelled brick. A raised brick panel carrying the company's sign is in the center below the pediment. On the interior the reception area is paneled in quarter sawn oak and the president's office in mahogany. Doors have shouldered architraves, and a concave crown molding runs around the ceiling.

Two commercial structures built in much the same style are the Benjamin Garage (#190 Water Street) and the commercial building at 235-37 Water Street. The turn-of-the-century Benjamin Garage was originally set closer to Water Street (Photograph #1), but was moved back from the street to provide a forecourt for gas pumps. The two-story gable-roofed building has segmental arched windows and one-story extensions have been added to the front and rear (Photograph #10). The commercial building is united by a party wall with the Hotchkiss Brothers Factory, and the earliest section is three bays wide and dates from 1907. Two years later it was extended by one bay. It has a simple corbelled cornice set above double-hung windows with rusticated brownstone lintels and sills. Both storefronts share a structural I-beam and the northernmost has two large display windows flanking a central recessed entrance. The southern storefront has a side entry paired with a narrower display window. Both sections share a granite foundation and steps.

Like many commercial centers, the district shows examples of attempts to modernize storefronts, or to add storefronts to buildings which previously had been used for other purposes. Pythian Hall, mentioned above, is one building with a rebuilt storefront. The Polish National Home/Gruber and Hogan Saloon (#131 Water Street; Photograph #15) was originally a frame dwelling built c. 1880 to which some fifteen years later a large brick extension was added on the street side housing a saloon. In 1935 the current buff brick façade was added. Its parapet bears the name of that fraternal organization, and the storefronts were modernized in 1978. The frame Ganem Building (#182 Water Street; Photograph #14), the first home of the Torrington Register, was built in 1889 with an Italianate brick façade and an ornamental bracketed wooden cornice is still visible above later storefront additions.

The Colonial Revival style is best represented in the district by a pair of brick commercial buildings at the intersection of Water and Church streets. The block at 236-46 Water Street (1902, with an addition c. 1911) originally consisted of a single storefront, and the balance of the structure was added about ten years later. It boasts a dentil cornice of formed metal with a limestone entablature. Second-story windows have sills and splayed lintels with limestone keystones. Corners of the building are quoined in corbelled brick. The storefront cornice is pressed metal, and with the frieze, is carried by pilasters at each entry. The entries have recessed mosaic tile entries above granite slabs. Large plate glass windows with transoms above rest on paneled bases. Several doors are original and are paneled below the glazed section. One storefront retains its original hinged cellar windows, a rare survival. A frame porch spans the rear elevation on the second floor. Apartments are located above the commercial space (Photographs #1 and #8). The Khoury Block, built in the same style c. 1912, is likewise a two-story structure, and its distinctive curving façade enlivens the intersection at Church and Water streets. It has a typical feature of this period; a pressed metal cornice and frieze. The windows on the main façade are ornamented by keystone, splayed

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limestone lintels and sills. Windows on side elevations are segmentally arched. The three storefronts are separated by brick piers capped with limestone bands. A metal band unites all the storefronts in lieu of a cornice. Large plate glass display windows rest on wooden bases (Photographs #1 and #8). Another interesting example of the style is the E.J. Kelley Co. Garage (#30 Railroad Square). Built by the Torrington Building Company c. 1912, and featured in the contractors' brochure, the two-story brick garage is topped by a large shaped gable with a rusticated parapet and a large rectangular panel above the second story windows. The original overhead doors on the main floor are glazed above panels (Photograph #5).

The district includes two outstanding industrial complexes; Hotchkiss Brothers Factory (#199 Water Street; Photographs #1, #9, #10, #12, #13, and #16), and the remnants of the Coe/American Brass Company complex (#153 and #179 Water Street; Photographs #11, #12, and #13). The Hotchkiss Brothers Factory includes several different styles of industrial construction; the late nineteenth-century frame mill building type exemplified by Building #4 was built in 1895 by Hotchkiss Brothers Co., the contracting arm of the company. This two-story building is angled to conform to the curve of Water Street (Photographs #1 and #10). The street façade is ten bays wide with paired 12-over-12 windows. A single bank of four windows in the second story is located near the center of the façade. The soffit is carried by wooden modillions and corner brackets. There is an overhead door near the north end and a loading door in the second story in the northernmost bay. Corrugated metal siding (added c. 1955) covers the building, but the original clapboards and a layer of asbestos shingles are still intact beneath the metal. In the rear, the building extends to Building #5. The building was extended 18' on either side, probably c. 1924, when Buildings #2 and #3 were constructed. The first floor was used for door manufacture and the second for sash and blinds and a carpenter shop. The current office area was originally a drafting room and sawing operations were carried out in the basement. A similar structure in brick is Building #1 of the same complex (Photographs #1 and #10). Built in 1885 by the Torrington Building Co., it is a hybrid, a mill structure with a commercial storefront. It is four bays wide with storefronts on the ground floor, and the corbelled cornice is topped by a parapet. The frieze has a central terracotta swag, and it rests on an entablature of corbelled brick with a row of bricks set on end suggesting dentils. Other terracotta panels with egg and dart moldings around the edges flank the central swag. The original large central round-arched window on the second floor was replaced by a band of four windows with lintels of rusticated granite and a common sill course of the same material. The storefront is cast iron with large display windows separated by paneled pilasters. A row of dentils is located above the windows. Originally housing the factory office, this building was likely remodeled after the new office (built in 1906) was constructed. At one time it housed a building supply store. The section south of the driveway housed offices and the north section was the factory floor for sash assembly and storage areas. A covered walkway leads to the second floor of Building #2. Both buildings #2 and #3 were built in 1924 by the Torrington Building Company of brick, and front on Water Street. Building #2 is six bays wide on the second floor. The horizontal bands of corbelling above the windows and the continuous window lintels lead the eye horizontally, despite the vertical piers on the corners and between the storefronts. A driveway leading to the loading dock at the rear is located in the southernmost bay. A monitor roof is set back from the street so that its façade matches that of Building #1. The monitor top connects the third floor with that of Building #3 (Photographs #1, #10, and #12). Building #3 is three stories high and eight bays wide, the two northernmost bays being later additions. These two bays house a pair of entrances on grade. Ten-over-ten double-hung sash windows are used on the façade. These are enhanced by flat-arched lintels and rusticated granite sills. Building #5, constructed in 1912 behind Building #4, and joined to it, is on the river side of the property (Photograph #9). Like Building #4, its original clapboard sheathing has been covered with

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asbestos shingles, and then with corrugated metal. A brick firewall divides the structure, probably due to the location of the paint shop on the top floor.

Industrial buildings of quite a different style are exemplified by the American Brass Company Blacksmith and Machine shops (#153 Water Street). Built in 1907 according to the Ransome patented system, these reinforced concrete buildings are early examples of a style which became enormously popular. Their smooth skins, broken only by piers and large expanses of glass, were the height of modernity when they were constructed. These flat-roofed buildings are relatively small examples of this type of construction. The machine shop was cantilevered out over the Naugatuck River, spanning both banks, and connecting both sides of the industrial complex (Photograph #13).

The section of the river included in the district is lined with large rustic blocks of granite that form steep retaining walls on both banks. These walls date c. 1900. The river is narrow between Church Street and the site of the former dam (originally located behind the Hotchkiss Brothers Factory complex). The river is spanned not only by the Coe/American Brass Company Machine Shop, but by a railroad trestle built in 1918 by the American Bridge Company. This deck girder bridge consists of three spans which originally held two sets of tracks. It replaced the 1907 two-span deck girder bridge constructed by the King Bridge Company of Cleveland, Ohio, and the ironwork from the earlier bridge was utilized to create the center span. Another deck girder bridge, dating c. 1920, crosses the river upstream from the railroad trestle. It allows traffic from Water Street to use the right of way through the former brass mill holdings on the north bank to have access to the present shopping center on the south bank.

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Inventory

C=contributing NC=non-contributing

<u>Address</u>	<u>Name/Style/Date</u>	<u>C/NC</u>	<u>Photo #</u>
<u>Church Street</u>			
187 [map 117 block 4 lot 2]	<u>Batters Building/Torrington Building Co. Office</u> Neoclassical Revival; brick (1897; with additions c. 1905); designed by C.D. Janssen, built by Hotchkiss Bros.	C	6
206 [map 117 block 5 lot 5]	<u>Scoville/Haight House</u> Greek Revival; frame (c. 1836; ell added in 1897; renovated c.1983)	C	
207 [map 117 block 4 lot 3]	<u>Hogan-Ryznewicki House</u> Late Victorian; frame (c. 1875)	C	
229-35 [map 110 block 19 lot 2]	<u>Khoury (Minetto) Block</u> Commercial; brick (c. 1912)	C	1, 8, 14
<u>John Street</u>			
18 [map 117 block 8 lot 10]	<u>House</u> Colonial Revival frame duplex (c. 1910)	C	
<u>Migeon Avenue</u>			
8	<u>Former Devaux's Service Station</u> Colonial Revival; brick (1947); designed by Joseph Cravanzola, built by the Torrington Building Co.	C	
<u>Railroad Square</u>			
30 [map 117 block 4 lot 1]	<u>E.J. Kelley Co. Garage</u> Colonial Revival; brick(c. 1912); built by the Torrington Building Co.	C	5
30a [map 117 block 4 lot 1]	<u>Kelley Co. Warehouse</u> Commercial; frame (c. 1895)	C	5

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Railroad Square cont'd

30b [map 117 block 4 lot 1]	<u>Kelley Co. Garage</u> Commercial; brick (c. 1929)	C	6
30c [map 117 block 4 lot 1]	<u>New York, New Haven and Hartford Passenger Depot</u> ; brick; Renaissance Revival (1898)	C	7
<u>Water Street</u>			
78-80 [map 117 block 8 lot 16]	<u>Holley Block</u> Commercial; frame (1888)	C	2, 3
82-90 [map 117 block 8 lot 15]	<u>Pythian Hall</u> (Former Odell Block) Second Empire commercial bldg.; frame (1888; new brick façade added late 1928); designed by C. D. Janssen; built by Hotchkiss Bros.	C	2, 3
88 [map 117 block 8 lot 17]	<u>Commercial building</u> 1-story masonry;(1930)	C	3
116 [map 117 block 8 lot 12]	<u>McElhone Furniture</u> 1-story brick commercial bldg. (1917)	C	
117 [map 117 block 9 lot 7]	<u>Fire House</u> Renaissance Revival; brick (1901); designed by Charles S. Palmer; built by Hotchkiss Bros.	C	2, 15
122 [map 117 block 8 lot 11]	<u>Palmer House (former New Century Hotel)</u> Renaissance Revival brick hotel (1901); designed by Charles S. Palmer; built by Hotchkiss Bros.; Frank Fuller, masonry contractor	C	2, 4
130	<u>Railroad Square Salvage</u> 1-story brick commercial bldg. (1956)	NC	
131 [map 117 block 9 lot 8]	<u>Polish National Home/ Gruber and Hogan Saloon</u> Frame house with 2-story brick commercial bldg. addition(c. 1880, renovated in 1895, 1935, and 1978)	C	15
141 [map 117 block 9 lot 9]	parking lot		

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Water Street cont'd

147 [map 117 block 9 lot 10]	<u>Hotchkiss Brothers Loading Dock</u> Steel bldg. Constructed by United Construction and Engineering, Inc., Torrington (1970)	NC	
[map 117 block 9 lot 11]	rear (vacant) lot		
153a [map 117 block 2 lot 1]	<u>American Brass Company</u> <u>Blacksmith Shop</u> 2-story reinforced concrete bldg. in the Commercial Style (1907); constructed according to the Ransome patent	C	13
153b [map 117 block 2 lot 1]	<u>American Brass Company Machine Shop</u> 3-story reinforced concrete bldg. in the Commercial Style (1907); constructed according to the Ransome patent.	C	13
168 [map 117 block 4 lot 7]	<u>The Albert Hotel and Lucheonette</u> 2-story brick commercial bldg. (1968)	NC	
178 [map 117 block 4 lot 6]	<u>The Place (Former Hotel Raymond)</u> 3-story brick Italianate commercial bldg.(1900)	C	14
179 [map 117 block 3 lot 1]	<u>Former Coe/American Brass Mill Office</u> Second Empire stone office bldg. (1881; renovated in 1888 and 1911); designed by Robert W. Hill, built by Hotchkiss Bros.	C	11, 12
182 [map 117 block 4 lot 5]	<u>Ganem Building (Former Torrington Register Building)</u> 2-story frame commercial building with an Italianate brick façade (1889)	C	14
190 [map 117 block 4 lot 2]	<u>Torrington Register Citizen</u> 2-story brick office bldg. (1905, with additions in 1914, 1919, 1921, and 1936); designed by Griggs & Hunt, built by the Torrington Building Co.	C	10, 14
190a [map 117 block 4 lot 2]	<u>Former Benjamin Garage</u> 2-story brick commercial bldg. with 1-story extensions front and rear (c. 1900)	C	1, 10
199 [map 110 block 19 lot 1]	<u>Hotchkiss Brothers Factory Office</u> <u>Office</u> 1-story brick office bldg. (1906); built by the Torrington Building Co.	C	16
199a [map 110 block 19 lot 1]	<u>Hotchkiss Brothers Factory Building #1</u> 2-story brick combination factory/commercial building (1885; remodeled after 1906); built by the Torrington Building Co.	C	1, 10

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Water Street cont'd

<i>199b</i> [map 110 block 19 lot 1]	<u>Hotchkiss Brothers Factory Building #2</u> 2-story brick factory bldg. with a monitor roof (1924); built by the Torrington Building Co.	C	1, 10
<i>199c</i> [map 110 block 19 lot 1]	<u>Hotchkiss Brothers Factory Building #3</u> 3-story brick factory bldg. (1924); built by the Torrington Building Co.	C	1, 10
<i>199d</i> [map 110 block 19 lot 1]	<u>Hotchkiss Brothers Factory Building #4</u> 2-story frame factory bldg. sheathed in corrugated metal (1895; metal siding c. 1955); built by Hotchkiss Bros.	C	1, 10
<i>199e</i> [map 110 block 19 lot 1]	<u>Hotchkiss Brothers Factory Building #5</u> 3-story frame factory bldg. sheathed in corrugated metal (1912; metal siding c. 1955); located behind Building #4	C	9,
235-37 [map 110 block 19 lot 1]	<u>Commercial Building</u> 2-story brick commercial bldg. (1907-09); built by the Torrington Building Co.	C	1, 10
236-46 [map 117 block 4 lot 4]	<u>Commercial Block</u> 2-story brick Colonial Revival commercial bldg. (1902; addition c. 1911)	C	1, 8

Naugatuck River

<u>Railroad Trestle</u>	C
3-span deck girder bridge which originally held 2 sets of tracks (1918); built by the American Bridge Co. utilizing the ironwork from the former 2-span deck girder bridge constructed by King Bridge Co. of Cleveland, Ohio in 1907	
<u>Bridge</u>	C
Deck girder bridge (c. 1920)	

Water Street Historic District, Torrington, Litchfield County, CT

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)

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)
ARCHITECTURE

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.

Period of Significance
1880-1947

Significant Dates
N/A

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.)

Significant Person
N/A

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a grave.

Architect/Builder
See inventory

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

Primary Location of Additional Data

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

State Historic Preservation Office

previously listed in the National Register

Other State agency

previously determined eligible by the National Register

Federal agency

designated a National Historic Landmark

Local government

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

University

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Other

Name of repository: Torrington Historical Society

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Water Street Historic District, Torrington, Litchfield County, CT **Section 8** **Page 1**

Summary

The Water Street Historic District provides a rare glimpse into the nineteenth-century industrial foundations of a community whose economy has been largely supported by industry from the early nineteenth century until the 1960s. At the heart of the district is the remarkable Hotchkiss Brothers factory. This factory is located on the site of the town's first mill, erected in the mid-eighteenth century, and the mill dam was maintained by the Hotchkiss firm into the twentieth century. A complex of five major buildings, with numerous sheds and wings, it mainly produced windows, doors, blinds, and shutters, continued to operate for that purpose from 1857 to 1990. In the early days, the mill provided materials for the many construction projects that accompanied the intensive industrial development of the Naugatuck Valley, and while one arm of the company prepared the lumber and millwork, another specialized in construction. Many residences in town and the surrounding area, as well as several of the buildings in this district, were the product of the Hotchkiss firm. The interior of the office was used as a demonstration of the company's products, and is well preserved. The construction arm of the company, which after 1901 was known as the Torrington Building Company, was responsible for many large institutional projects as well as smaller commercial structures like the ones in the district .

Contained in the district are representative examples of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century commercial and industrial buildings which are typical of the period between 1880 and the mid-1920s in style, materials and construction. The commercial buildings in the district are notable because of the large number which have retained their original facades and storefronts. The buildings in the district form an important group of architecturally distinguished structures which illustrate the evolution of this industrial neighborhood during that period. The double-pronged expansion of the town's commercial enterprises and industries was first encouraged by the expansion of the nation's railroad network in the mid-nineteenth century, and then by various technological innovations. The district's history follows the history of American business from its beginnings in the small industrial firms of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the great industrial conglomerates that began to be consolidated in the Gilded Age.

Besides the Hotchkiss Brothers Factory the Coe/American Brass Company is another important example of a late nineteenth-century industrial complex. Although the Coe/American Brass buildings included in the district are only a part of what was once a much larger mill, they too represent a significant link to the town's industrial heritage. The three buildings from that complex in the district include the exceptionally fine Second-Empire office and two early reinforced concrete industrial structures built from the system developed and patented by Ernest Ransome, the engineer who was chiefly responsible for popularizing the use of reinforced concrete technology for industrial applications.

Historical Background

In the early eighteenth century the current center of town was a low-lying area with a stand of white pine that was first referred to as "Pine Timber," and later as "Mast Swamp." The narrow rocky Naugatuck River provided power for manufacturing purposes until the third quarter of the nineteenth century when most industries converted to steam power. In 1751 the town proprietors agreed to a long-term lease of the mill privilege to Amos Wilson, who established the first sawmill on the West Branch of the Naugatuck River. In the following year it was decided that a highway should be laid out running north and south through the swamp. This route became Main Street, located east of the district. Shortly after the first highway was established, a second road, later christened Water Street, was constructed, roughly paralleling the West Branch of the Naugatuck River, it ran from the sawmill to the new north-south highway.

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The largely agricultural character of the settlement was changed in 1813 when Frederick and Guy Wolcott of Litchfield purchased the water privileges on the river near the bridge that led to the south end of the Waterbury Turnpike. The Wolcott brothers erected a mill that manufactured high-quality finished woolen cloth, and the industrial center was named Wolcottville. By 1819 this hamlet comprised 18 houses as well as the mill, then owned by Oliver Wolcott, the governor of the state. The Wolcott Mill employed about forty workers. The sawmill operators, the Wilson family, built a gristmill near the site of the first mill. In 1834 Israel Coe, Anson Phelps, and John Hungerford, entrepreneurs of the Waterbury brass industry, purchased the Wilson mill privilege and began to construct a brass mill on the south bank of the river. The Wolcottville Brass Company was formed to manufacture brass kettles by the battery process. Prior to this period, all brass kettles had been cast.¹ By this period, the Naugatuck Valley had become not only the center of the American brass industry, but the only area of the country that was producing rolled brass. Many of the industrial workers lived in boarding houses along Water Street. Although the woolen mill was responsible for the founding of the town, the brass mill proved more important to the local economy in the long run. There was steady demand for its products and it furnished raw material that provided impetus for the establishment of several brass finishing businesses in town. The original woolen mill burned in 1844, but in 1845 the Union Manufacturing Company was formed and purchased a part of the complex which, located upstream from the main buildings, had survived the fire.² The former Union Manufacturing mill site is behind the current Fire House (#111 Water St.), just east of the district boundary.

In the early nineteenth century the products of local industry were shipped by road to Plainville, and then sent on barges that plied the Farmington Canal, which connected Northampton, Massachusetts, with New Haven, Connecticut. The Naugatuck Railroad, later part of the New York, New Haven and Hartford system, was chartered in 1845, and by 1849 it had reached Wolcottville, providing easy access to distant markets. The railroad line crossed the west branch of the Naugatuck River just east of the Coe Brass works, and the first depot was sited on the north side of Water Street.³ Industrial concerns clustered along the banks of the river, with residences situated in the area bounded by Water, Church, and Main streets. One such residence, a rare survival from this period, is the Greek Revival house (#206 Church Street) constructed for Linus Scoville in 1836, now converted to commercial purposes.

The establishment of a rail link intensified industrial development in the neighborhood; in 1857 Charles Hotchkiss purchased the former Wilson mill and set up a lucrative lumber and construction business in the rapidly expanding urban center. New machines made possible the elaborate millwork ornament which rapidly came into fashion. The Hotchkiss mill took advantage of this technology, and the products of the milling operation were much in demand. By the late 1860s both Hotchkiss sons, Edward and Henry, went into partnership with their father, forming Charles Hotchkiss & Sons.

The successor firm, Hotchkiss Brothers, makers of sash and blinds, was organized in 1880. Edward H. Hotchkiss, a grandson of the founder led the company until 1922. The oldest structure in the complex is Building #1, constructed in 1885. A rendering made c. 1906 shows that by that date the complex of nearly 20 structures, many of them joined, occupied almost an entire city block, on both sides of the river, bounded on the south by the brass mill, and stretching nearly to Church Street.⁴

The third quarter of the nineteenth century would see an expansion of the town's existing industries and a rise in population; between the close of the Civil War and the turn of the century the city grew from 600 to 12,000 people. The late 1870s was a time of municipal improvement; in 1878 the Torrington Water Company was organized and a little more than a decade saw the installation of a sewer system. In 1879 the

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fire district was established and ordinances were passed requiring new buildings to be of masonry construction in the most congested part of town. The Torrington Electric Light Company was formed in 1882, and by 1887 all street lights were electrified. Borough status was sought and granted in 1886 and the name was changed to Torrington. Frame commercial buildings were built on upper Water Street like the Holley and adjacent Odell blocks (#78-80 and #82-90 Water Street; both 1888), but they were joined by contemporary masonry structures like the Coe Brass Mill Office (#179 Water Street; 1888) and Building #1 of the Hotchkiss Brothers Factory (#199a Water Street; 1885). The destruction by fire of the Turner & Seymour factory on the lower end of Water Street near Main in the 1890s opened up land for needed commercial development. A new wave of construction began in the latter part of the decade once recovery from the depression of 1893 was underway; the Hotchkiss Brothers Factory Building #4 (#199d Water Street; 1895) and the handsome Batters Building (#187 Church Street; 1897), which initially housed a grocery business, and after 1906, a saloon.⁵

Following a national trend toward the consolidation of industries, the Coe Brass works amalgamated with American Brass at the turn of the century. The newly configured brass works became part of the conglomerate that dominated the industry until mid-century.⁶ A new train station was built on Railroad Square (#30c; 1898), modeled after the depot in upscale Stamford. A long platform ran all the way from Water to Church Street, with the passenger station on the interior of the block. The reconfigured railway complex was soon complimented by another local landmark, the E.J. Kelley Co. Garage (#30 Railroad Square; c. 1912). Kelley was an Irish emigrant who had arrived in town with the completion of the rail line more than 50 years earlier. He worked for the railroad in various capacities until the early 1870s when he began his trucking and express company. The Kelley Company became the leading trucker in the area, and with the increased popularity of the automobile, the decision was made to replace the old horse barn on Mason Street with the present monumental garage.

Construction projects during the early years of the new century brought several other major new structures to the district; the commodious and handsome fire house (#117 Water Street; 1901), two hotels, the New Century (#122 Water Street; 1901) and the Hotel Raymond (#178 Water Street; 1900), a new structure for the local newspaper (#190 Water Street, 1905, which replaced a building at #182 Water Street, built only a few years earlier, in 1889), a large garage (#190a Water Street; c. 1900), and splendid new brick commercial blocks at #236-46 Water Street (1902) and 229-35 Church Street (c. 1912). Manufacturing concerns also expanded in this period; a separate office was built for the Hotchkiss Brothers Factory (#199 Water Street; 1906), and new building technologies were explored in the construction of reinforced concrete industrial buildings for American Brass (#153 Water Street, 1907). At the turn of the century Hotchkiss Brothers was the busiest factory in town due to the great demand for building materials. In 1901 Hotchkiss Brothers was incorporated and the construction subsidiary became a separate firm, christened the Torrington Building Co. In 1921 the Torrington Building Company's offices were established in the former Batters Building (#187 Church Street), which they continued to occupy until 1960.⁷

After World War I local fraternal organizations gained a foothold in the neighborhood, purchasing and renovating older commercial structures for their use. The Knights of Pythias erected a new brick façade on the former Odell Block in 1928 (#82-90 Water Street), and in 1935 a saloon at #131 Water Street was renovated and renamed The Polish National Home. This was not a residence, but meeting rooms similar to Pythian Hall.

Unlike the downtown center, few buildings have been constructed in the district since 1930. Some of the sheds and smaller buildings in the Hotchkiss Brothers complex have been lost, but most of the complex

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remains as it was in the early twentieth century. Several commercial buildings along Water Street have been replaced by parking lots, and the railroad station, no longer in use has deteriorated. A devastating flood in 1955 damaged a great deal of the brass mill complex on the south bank of the river, but owners of Water Street properties were luckier. The railroad trestle was the only bridge to survive the flood, and was the only link between the two sides of the river until temporary bridges could be built.

Architectural Significance

The Hotchkiss Brothers Company's contracting arm was responsible for acting as the general contractor on many buildings in the local area, including several in the district in addition to its own factory buildings. An example of the firm's early work in the neighborhood is the Palmer House (the former New Century Hotel; #122 Water Street; 1901), and a later example is the Kelley Garage (#30 Railroad Square, c. 1912), which was pictured in the firm's promotional material. The custom millwork produced by the factory was so well regarded that it was installed in large private residences as well as in the formal public spaces of major institutional projects like the Yale Divinity School.⁸

The architect-designed buildings within the district are the product of local men, most notably Carston D. Janssen (1849-1917), a German-born designer who was commissioned to design St. Paul's German Lutheran Church, the Meara Brothers Building, and the Eagle Bicycle Company's factory as well as numerous residences, some of which were near the district. The earliest of Janssen's designs in the district is Pythian Hall (first called the Odell Block; 82-90 Water Street; 1888), a large Second Empire-style structure with stores on street level and apartments above (Photograph #2). Janssen's other contribution is also a commercial building, the Batters Building (#187 Church Street; 1897). Built of brick and designed in the Neoclassical style, the building is an example of exceptional craftsmanship (Photograph #6). Two buildings in the district were designed by Charles S. Palmer, an employee of Hotchkiss Brothers. The former Fire House (117 Water Street; 1901), an eclectic brick structure which incorporated the latest technology was built about the same time as the Palmer House (formerly the New Century Hotel, but renamed in honor of its designer; #122 Water Street; Photograph #4). This lively interpretation of the Renaissance Revival style anchors the corner of Water and John streets and presents richly ornamented facades on both elevations.

Another stylish building within the district is the Coe/American Brass Mill Office, built in 1881 and designed by Robert W. Hill, a Waterbury architect. The only building constructed entirely of granite in the district, the architect skillfully adapted his Second Empire-style design to an office for one of the community's most important industries. The exterior is richly detailed and interesting (Photographs #11 and #12). The interior finishes, including arched doors, mahogany paneling and doorway architraves, have likewise been preserved.

Although most of the commercial structures in the district are not the products of known designers, they exhibit an exuberance and attention to detail that makes them indistinguishable from the architect-designed structures. The decorative metal cornice and handsome segmental-arch windows of The Place (former Hotel Raymond; #178 Water Street; 1900; Photograph #14) were probably meant to attract passengers from the train station in Railroad Square. This train station is much deteriorated today, but the quoined corners and arched windows make reference to the Colonial Revival style, and the delicate turnings of the ticket window frame and its massive rusticated granite coping reveal the level of detail lavished on the structure

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(Railroad Square; Photograph #7). The Colonial Revival Khoury (Minetto) Block, on the southeast corner of Water and Church streets, exhibits a curved façade which is exceptionally well detailed, with a number of original storefronts (229-235 Church Street; c. 1912; Photographs #1 and #10), and the commercial block on the northeast corner of the same intersection is similar (236-246 Water Street; 1902; Photographs #1 and #10). Simpler in style is the commercial building at 235-37 Water Street (Photographs #1 and #8) which was built by the owners of the Hotchkiss Brothers as a speculative venture (1907-09), but the brick corbelling and the granite foundation and steps show its quality.

Ernest L. Ransome, the inventor of an early reinforced concrete system of construction achieved an international reputation for his work, and his first structure using the pioneering new technology was built in California in 1890. Between 1900 and 1902 he developed a major new way of constructing reinforced concrete factory buildings by extending the floorplate over the external columns. This innovation made large windows possible and allowed the curtain walls to become carrying members. Ransome also pioneered a system he termed "Unit Construction," which made construction of reinforced concrete buildings far more economical. Among the first attempts by Ransome to employ this new technique was at the Foster Armstrong Plant in East Rochester, N.Y., in 1904-05. Shortly after the turn of the century buildings constructed according to his patent began to be built on the east coast, and the former American Brass Company Blacksmith and Machine Shop buildings were built on his system in 1907 (#153 Water Street).⁹

Endnotes

¹ William Devlin, "Torrington Historic Resource Survey" (1983), pp. 2-6; William G. Lathrop, The Development of the Brass Industry in Connecticut (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936), pp. 15-16.

² Devlin, "Historic Resource Survey," p. 6.

³ Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁴ Historic Resource Inventory forms for Hotchkiss Brothers Factory, completed by William Devlin, 1983.

⁵ Devlin, "Historic Resource Survey," pp. 9-12.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 14-16; Lathrop, The Development of the Brass Industry in Connecticut, p. 18.

⁷ Devlin, "Historic Resource Survey," p. 13; Historic Resource Inventory forms for buildings enumerated here, all completed by William Devlin.

⁸ The firm's promotional brochure, many architectural plans and photographs are in the collection of the Torrington Historical Society.

⁹ Ernest L. Ransome and Alexis Saurbrey, Reinforced Concrete Buildings (New York and London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1912), pp. 12-16; 161-2.

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Bibliography

Devlin, William. "Torrington Historic Resource Survey." 1983.

Lathrop, William G. *The Development of the Brass Industry in Connecticut*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936.

Ransome, Ernest L. and Saubrey, Alexis. *Reinforced Concrete Buildings*. New York and London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1912.

Sanborn Insurance Maps for Torrington

Water Street Historic District, Torrington, Litchfield County, CT

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 13 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

X See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kate M. Ohno

organization Torrington Historic Preservation Trust date May, 2002

street & number 81 Pond Hill Rd. telephone (203) 234-2848

city or town North Haven state CT zip code 06473

Additional Documentation

Property Owner: multiple

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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UTMs

Approximately 20 acres in the Torrington and West Torrington quads

	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
A	18	655820	4629220
B	18	655860	4629260
C	18	655800	4629340
D	18	655760	4629320
E	18	655740	4629460
F	18	655400	4629400
G	18	655760	4629160

Boundary Description

Beginning at the southeast corner of 78-80 Water Street going north to the rear property line, then turning west and going along the rear property lines of 82-90 and 88 Water Street to the eastern boundary of parking lot [map 117 block 8 lot 14], turning north to the rear boundary of the same parking lot, turning west and following the rear boundary of the parking lots [map 117 block 8 lots 13 and 14] and the northern boundary of 18 John Street, crossing John Street to the eastern boundary of 30 Railroad Square and traveling along the John, Mason, and Church street boundaries of 30 Railroad Square to the railroad right-of-way, crossing the railroad right-of-way and continuing west along Church Street to a point opposite the eastern boundary of 206 Church Street, crossing Church Street and following the eastern boundary of 206 Church Street to the rear boundary, turning west and following the northern boundaries of 206 Church Street and 8 Migeon Avenue to Migeon Avenue, turning south and following Migeon Avenue/Water Street to the southeast corner of the intersection with Church Street, crossing Water Street, and following the south side of Church Street to a point on the south bank of the west branch of the Naugatuck River which forms the rear property line of 199 Water Street, turning and running southeast with the rear property line of 199 Water Street and thereafter following the south bank of the river to a point opposite the eastern boundary of the vacant lot [map 117 block 9 lot 11], crossing the river and continuing along the eastern boundaries of [map 117 block 9 lot 11] and parking lot [map 117 block 9 lot 9] to the rear boundary of 117 Water Street, turning east to the eastern boundary of 117 Water Street, crossing Water Street to the north side of the street, turning east and continuing to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The district is bounded on the south and west by new construction on the south bank of the Naugatuck River. The section of the river between Church Street and the Fire House which parallels Water Street is included in the district because historically both the Hotchkiss Brothers Factory and the Coe/American Brass Company property spanned both banks of the river. In the case of the Brass Company Machine Shop, the building actually extends over the river. A residential neighborhood on Migeon Avenue forms a natural boundary to the district on the north, and the new fire station and the Downtown Historic District on the east.

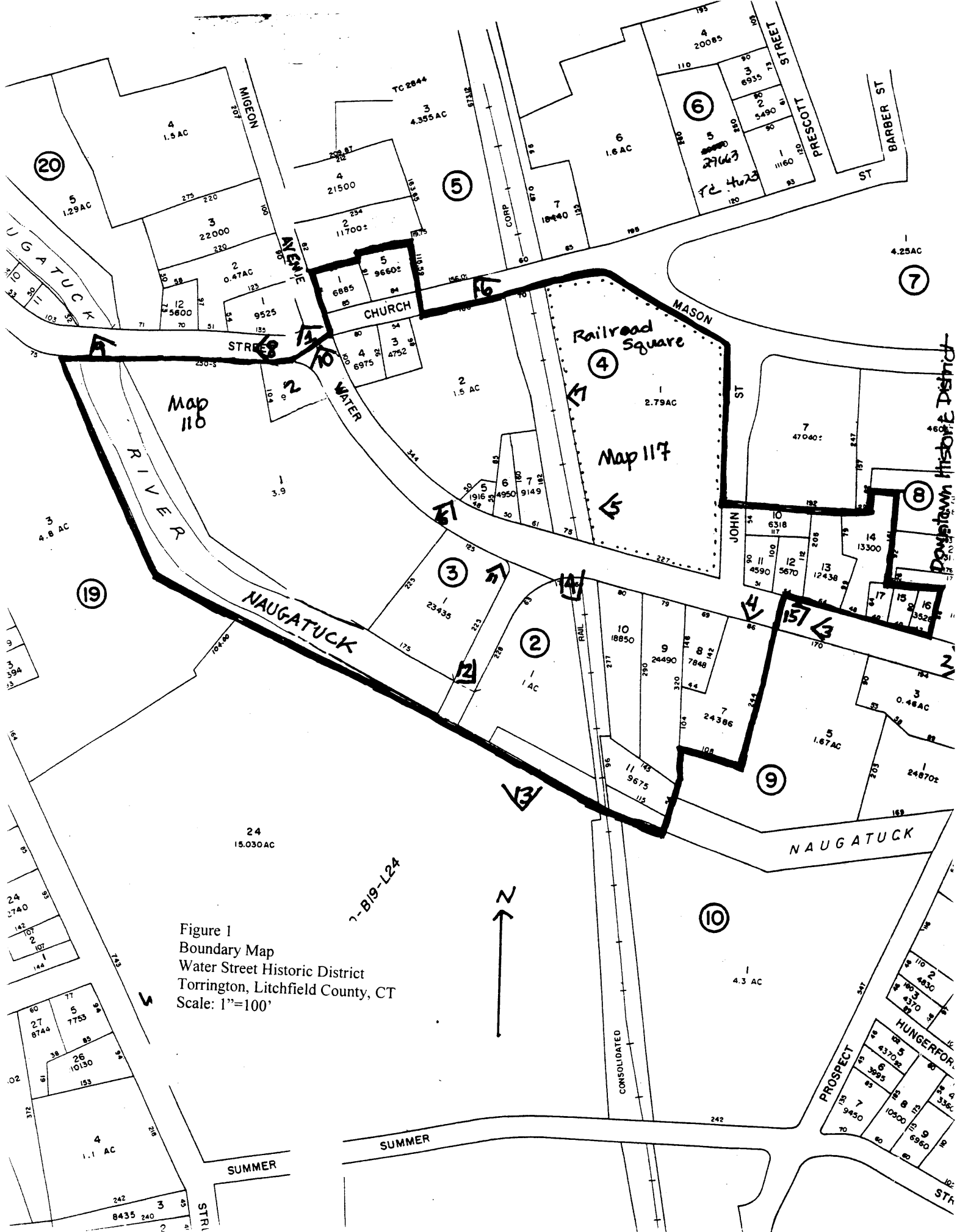


Figure 1
 Boundary Map
 Water Street Historic District
 Torrington, Litchfield County, CT
 Scale: 1"=100'