

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received DEC 17 1987
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

JAN 14 1988

1. Name

historic MATTHEWS AND WILLARD FACTORY

and or common

2. Location

street & number 16 Cherry Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Waterbury N/A vicinity of

state Connecticut code 09 county New Haven code 009

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Torrington Supply Company, Inc.

street & number 125 Maple Street

city, town Waterbury N/A vicinity of state Connecticut

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Waterbury Town Clerk

street & number City Hall - 235 Grand Street

city, town Waterbury state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no ^{5/18/79}

date 1987 federal state county local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission
59 South Prospect Street

city, town Hartford state Connecticut

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Matthews and Willard Factory is a complex of connected brick mill buildings, built mostly between 1874 and 1887 (see sketch map), in the North Square neighborhood of Waterbury, Connecticut, an area of old industrial buildings, triple-decker houses, and new low-rise redevelopment housing. Located just to the southwest of the historic Waterbury Clock site, the complex is densely built-up and occupies most of the north half of the block bounded by Cherry Avenue and Elm, North, and Maple Streets. The buildings are 1 to 3 1/2 stories high and are sited close to the sidewalk. In general, the buildings have gable roofs, flat walls with round or star-shaped beam anchors visible at intervals, small-pane windows set in openings with granite sills and brick segmental-arched heads, and brick dentils along the cornices.

The first part of the complex (Photograph 1) to be built was the 2 1/2 story part with its gable end facing North Elm Street (Photograph 2). About 1880 two extensions were built: a 2-story plating and soldering shop to the north along North Elm Street, whose low gable roof with a short monitor-ventilator is concealed by a later parapet, and a large gable-roofed, 3 1/2-story factory with its ridgeline perpendicular to that of the older building and a 4-story hip-roofed tower at the southwest corner (Photograph 1). At this time the complex also included a boiler house and several 1-story wooden sheds.

Between 1884 and 1887 a number of enlargements were made. A pond to the east of the factory was filled in, and a large 3 1/2-story Mansard-roofed factory, with an office appended to its north or Cherry Avenue end, was built parallel to the existing complex on North Elm Street. The office (Photograph 4) has a central projecting bay or pavilion surmounted by a steep gabled dormer, and its cornice is more complex than the others, with multiple moldings, corbelling, and sawtooth courses. The plant's main entrance (Photograph 5) has original panel-and-glass double doors recessed within a shallow-arched opening outlined in granite with prominent impost and keystone blocks. There is a large gabled wall dormer on each side elevation of the office part, and smaller shed dormers on the factory part's roof (Photograph 6). The original building was extended to the east about the same time with a gable-roofed part, 3 1/2 and 4 1/2 stories high (the land slopes downward to the west). Also, the plating shop was extended to Cherry Avenue and continued around the corner almost up to the office (Photograph 3), a one-story wing was added between the earlier complex and the Mansard-roofed part, and a foundry building was built to the southeast, facing Maple Street (Photograph 7). The foundry, enlarged c.1895 and again c.1910, is presently flanked by c.1950 cinderblock additions which house an outlet store

Subsequent changes were few: the present 1-story brick boilerhouse and chimney were built between 1895 and 1901; the inner wing was raised to its present 2-story, flat-roofed configuration around 1900; and about 1910 a large tower was appended to the rear (Photograph 8) and the coping added to the plating shop.

(continued)

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National Park Service**

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Matthews and Willard Factory
Waterbury, CT

Owner of Property (continued):

The second piece of the complex (Block 86, Lot 103) is owned by

Sieglinde M. Dibner Children Trust
c/o Colonial Bank
New Haven Road
Southbury, Connecticut 06488

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Matthews and Willard Factory
Waterbury, CT

Representation in Existing Surveys (continued):

Connecticut: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites. By Matthew Roth. Washington: Society for Industrial Archeology and Historic American Engineering Record.

Federal/State - 1981

Records Deposited with Connecticut Historical Commission
59 South Prospect Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Historic and Architectural Survey of Downtown Waterbury

Local - 1979

Records Deposited with Mattatuck Museum
144 West Main Street
Waterbury, Connecticut 06702

and Connecticut Historical Commission
59 South Prospect Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

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Matthews and Willard Factory
Waterbury, CT

Description (continued):

Interiors are mostly open, with the wooden members of the post-and-beam interior framing visible. Floors are of layered-plank construction. Most of the complex is in use as a plumbing-supplies warehouse.

The buildings appear to be in good condition, both structurally and in terms of their exterior materials. Other than the many windows which have been blocked up with plywood and the concrete-block additions to the foundry part of the complex, there are few departures from the appearance the building had at the height of operations in the late 1880s.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Criteria A,C

Specific dates 1874 - started **Builder/Architect** Not known

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Summary

The Matthews and Willard Factory is significant for its association with the development of the brass industry, the economic base of Waterbury from the early 19th to the middle 20th century (Criterion A), and as a representative, relatively intact example of late 19th-century factory construction (Criterion C). In addition to the huge mills which produced two-thirds of the nation's basic brass in the form of sheet, wire, and tube, Waterbury in the late 19th century had scores of factories making a wide variety of consumer-oriented products out of brass, such as buttons, eyelets, pins, and clocks. Some of the factories were subsidiaries of the large brass companies; others, like Matthews and Willard, were small independent firms which exploited a limited range of the brass-products market. Henry Matthews started the company in 1848, making saddlery items out of brass and other metals. In 1870 he took William Stanley as a partner, and they built the first buildings on the present site in 1874. In 1882 Samuel Willard replaced Stanley as Matthews's partner, and the plant was greatly expanded. Saddlery trimmings remained in their catalog, but they also made lamp parts, urn-shaped stove finials, and statuettes. Much of their output came from the power presses which were the mainstay of stamped-brass production, but brass-spinning, casting, machining, and plating processes also occurred within the complex. In the 1880s production steadily increased, and eventually the workforce at Matthews and Willard numbered nearly 500. In 1888 price-fixing by the city's primary producers raised the price of brass dramatically, and small "cutting-up shops" like Matthews and Willard were forced under. One of the city's large producers, Scovill Manufacturing Company, had partially financed Matthews and Willard's plant, and when the company went bankrupt in 1890, some of Scovill's officers bought the buildings. Scovill bought the complex outright in 1903, operating it as the Matthews and Willard division, and sold it in 1945.

Unlike most of the brass factories which still survive in Waterbury (many have been demolished), the Matthews and Willard complex has not been substantially altered by 20th-century additions. During the two world wars, when tremendous expansion occurred in most of the city's industrial plants, Matthews and Willard was a sideline operation for another company.

The complex stands today much as it was established in 1874 and enlarged in the 1880s. As markets improved and capital became available (Samuel Willard, Matthews's partner from 1882, was treasurer of Holmes, Booth and Hayden, a major producer), the plant replaced smaller, wood-frame buildings with large brick structures. Some parts of the complex, such as the foundry (Photograph 7) or the portion used for plating (Photograph 3), were consistently used for certain process, but much of the plant was general industrial space. Spinning, stamping, polishing, packing, and other processes

(continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Commemorative Biographical Record of New Haven County. Chicago: J.H. Beers, 1902.

Insurance maps of Waterbury. New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1884-1927.

(continued)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 2

Quadrangle name Waterbury

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	8	6	6	3	7	8	0	4	6	0	2	2	2	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property includes the historical bounds of the factory complex, and is shown in Waterbury Assessor records as Block 86, Lots 103 and 1042.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

N/A

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Matthew Roth and Bruce Clouette, consultants, edited by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

organization Historic Resource Consultants date June 5, 1987

street & number 55 Van Dyke Avenue telephone (203) 547-0268

city or town Hartford state Connecticut

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

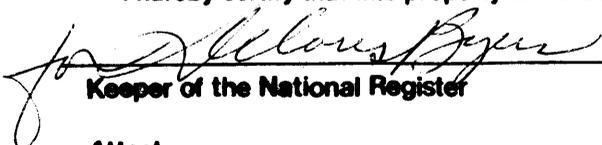


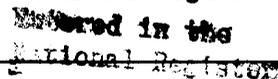
title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

date December 9, 1987

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register


Keeper of the National Register



date 1-14-88

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
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Matthews and Willard Factory
Waterbury, CT

Significance (continued):

were moved around as changes in the market (such as the decline in demand for harness hardware) dictated changes in production. The bankruptcy of 1890 effectively froze the plant in time. Some additional enlargement to the foundry and the middle wing is all that occurred until the recent construction (shaded on sketch map).

Architectural Significance

The Matthews and Willard Factory embodies the distinctive characteristics of late 19th-century mill architecture. Derived from the experience of textile mills, the demands of fire insurance companies, and requirements for light and the efficient transmission of power for belt-driven machinery, a standard type of construction emerged which was adaptable to a wide variety of industrial processes. Key characteristics include brick construction, heavy post-and-beam interior framing, long and narrow proportions for individual buildings, multi-story height (except for special processes such as casting), and "slow-burn" plank floors. The complex also has the standard small-pane windows, stone sills, and segmental-arched brick window heads which had become standard mill features. Like most plants which evolved over time, rather than being planned at once for specific processes, the complex exhibits the dense filling-in of all available land for factory space, allowing only small open areas in between for light and ventilation. Unlike the factories of a generation later, when flat roofs became practical, most of the Matthews and Willard Factory has a gable roof of normal pitch or, as was briefly fashionable before insurance companies objected to the amount of roof framing needed, a Mansard roof; the exception is the near-flat roof on the c.1900 second story of the middle wing. Also indicative of the complex's origin in the 1870s and 1880s is the use of beam anchors which pass through the walls, rather than the later practice of simply laying the beam ends on pintels in the brickwork mortises.

In terms of decorative embellishment, the Matthews and Willard Factory is also in the mainstream of late 19th-century industrial architecture. The factory buildings themselves are utilitarian, with only the cornice dentils relieving the plainness of the exterior, but the office part, which also contained a sample room for customers, is considerably more impressive, with its more detailed cornice, steep dormers, and finely cut stone arch over the entry. Similar architecturally stylish office components are found at other sites in Waterbury, such as the detached office of the Waterbury Clock Company (National Register-listed) or the Romanesque Revival office appended to the street-facing end of the 1890s Steele and Johnson button factory on South Main Street.

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Matthews and Willard Factory
Waterbury, CT

Bibliography (continued):

Pape, William J. History of Waterbury and the Naugatuck Valley. Chicago:
S.J. Clarke, 1918.

View of Waterbury, Connecticut. Milwaukee: O.H. Bailey, 1876.

Waterbury and Her Industries. Gardner, Mass.: Linotype Printing and Publishing
Co., [1887].

