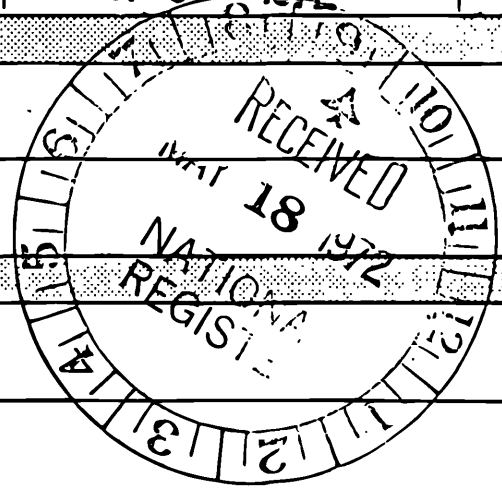


**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Rhode Island	
COUNTY: Kent	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
JUN 5 1972	



**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Pontiac Mills

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Knight Street, Pontiac

CITY OR TOWN:  
Warwick

STATE Rhode Island, 02886	CODE 44	COUNTY: Kent	CODE 003
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**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industrial <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 (Specify)
ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC (Yes/No)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No			

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Allied Textile Printers

STREET AND NUMBER:  
104 West 40th Street,

CITY OR TOWN:  
New York

STATE: New York	CODE: 36
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**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Warwick City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:  
3275 Post Road

CITY OR TOWN:  
Warwick

STATE: Rhode Island, 02886	CODE: 44
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**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1971     Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Independence Avenue and 1st Street, S. E.

CITY OR TOWN:  
Washington

STATE: District of Columbia	CODE: 11
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:	
COUNTY:	
ENTRY NUMBER	JUN 5 1972
DATE	

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

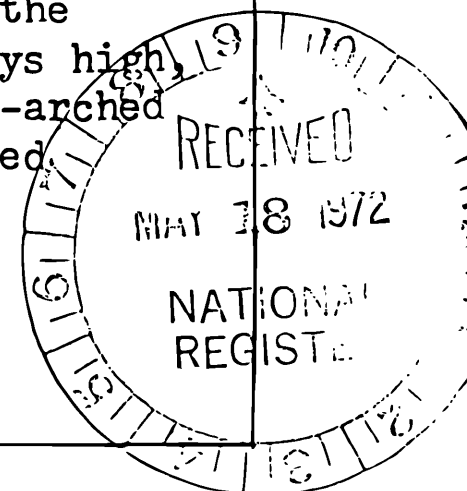
The Pontiac Mill and Bleachery (R. B. and R. Knight's Pontiac Mill) in Warwick, Rhode Island, occupies a narrow site between the Pawtuxet River and Knight Street. The river was dammed at this point to provide sufficient water power for the mills, and the dam, gates and portions of the original races still exist. Higher ground north of Knight Street was used for company-owned workers' housing which runs in several rows parallel to the mill complex itself, forming a typical Rhode Island mill village.

As it now stands, the mill site contains 38 buildings, comprising 404,000 square feet of floor space. The mills represent a series of building campaigns and renovation projects from 1863 onward. There do not appear to be any structures remaining from the previous industrial activity on the site, dating back to c. 1810. The center of the present mill complex is the 1863 building, which is four storeys tall, a long, rectangular, dark-red brick mass, interrupted at the center of the north elevation by an equally massive, strong-projecting stair tower with a belfry. The façades are treated with a minimum of detail at the door and window openings. A dentilled brick cornice between the third and fourth floors is the only evidence remaining of the original truncated-gable roof with dormers that capped the initial three-storey building. (The tower also has been altered by the removal of its original peaked roof, probably when the fourth floor was added.)

In the late 1860's, 1870's, through the remainder of the nineteenth century and on into the twentieth century, a number of other mill buildings, additions and alterations were undertaken on the site, extending the complex, in both directions, on its east-west axis along the Pawtuxet River. The majority of these structures were consistent with the 1863 mill in their fenestration and proportions and in the use of the projecting stair tower. Interestingly, stucco-faced rubble masonry, scored to simulate random ashlar, seems to have been preferred over the plain brick wall surface of the 1863 mill. Brick is used in these buildings, however, to accent door and window openings, giving them a curiously retardataire appearance (reminding one of the Italianate academicism of the 1850's, though here expressed in a most vernacular fashion). In addition, there is a one-storey connector in Lombard Romanesque style between the older block and its western wing. The one-storey, gable-roofed gate house on Knight Street is clapboarded and has rich wood detailing typical of the 1870's.

At the east end of the complex, standing between the mills and the workers' wood-frame (originally clapboarded) housing dating from the 1830's to the 1920's, is the 1866 company store. It is two storeys high, faced in brack and topped by a tall mansard roof with segmentally-arched dormers; exterior detail is understated, except for a broad, paired modillion course.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

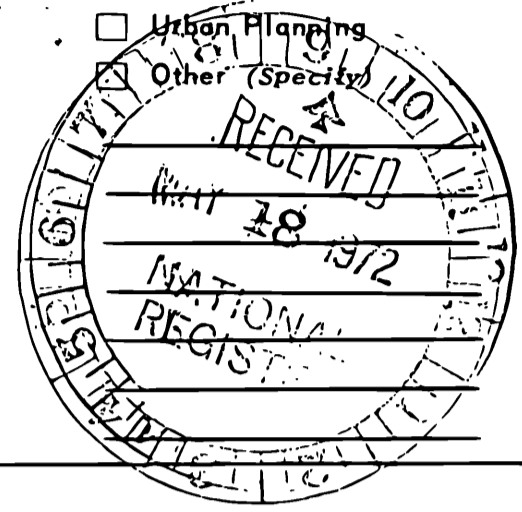
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1863 ff.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The land on which the present Pontiac Mills complex is located has been the site of textile manufacturing since about 1810, when Horatio Arnold carried on wool carding and cotton spinning there. Arnold sold this land and two-thirds of the water privilege in 1827 to Rice A. Brown, Jonathan Knowles and Samuel Fenner, and it later passed to John H. Clark, who in 1832 erected a stone factory that housed seventy-five looms and who in 1834 also built a bleachery.

Zachariah Parker and Robert Knight bought the entire site and its buildings from Clark in 1850, and two years later the premises were owned by B. B. and R. Knight, who subsequently became one of Rhode Island's leading textile manufacturers. This place (once called "Arnold's Bridge" and later "Clarksville") was now re-named "Pontiac" by the Knight family. They were responsible for giving the mills and the town their present character during the approximately seventy years they controlled them.

In 1863, the 1832 stone mill was torn down and a new brick three-storey building (200 by 66 feet with an ell 90 by 40 feet) was erected. The brick company store was built in 1866. On April 15, 1870, the old bleachery burned. It was replaced by a new building (160 by 140 feet) the same year. In 1874 a stone storehouse (157 by 58 feet), five storeys high, was constructed. Other structures were added from time to time until ownership by the Knight enterprises terminated in 1920. There has since been a succession of owners, and industrial activity in the complex has now ceased.

This property is a largely intact mill complex of the post-Civil-War textile boom in New England and remains a significant monument to the economic and social development of its surroundings for nearly a century. For this reason alone its preservation deserves serious consideration. An additional significance, however, is the architectural character of the buildings themselves, which are excellent specimens of the fully-developed American approach to industrial building as practiced in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

(See Continuation Sheet.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	Rhode Island
COUNTY	Kent
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
JUN 5	1972

(Number all entries)

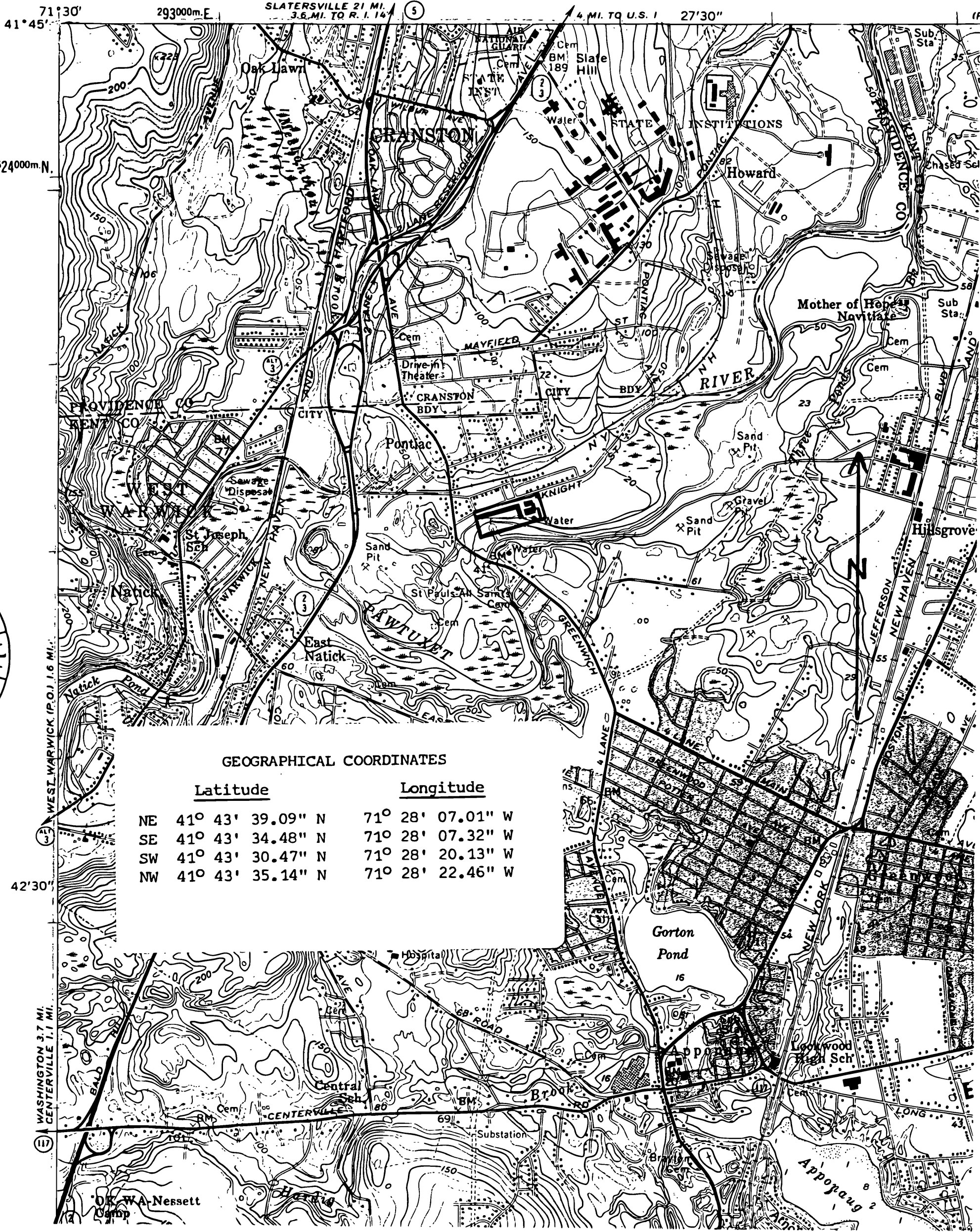
8. Significance.

The combination of materials and decorative motifs employed makes the Pontiac Mills rather unusual in relation to most of their contemporaries, which frequently display complete homogeneity; and this variety gives the Pontiac buildings part of their architectural interest. The central block with its projecting tower, all of dark red brick and with decorative elements derived from north-European Romanesque architecture, is typical of many local industrial plants built after the middle of the century, but the large flanking wings and extensive additions on the river frontage are relatively uncommon. In these sections where the stucco has been scored to resemble ashlar and where the openings display rusticated red brick surrounds, there is a naive but interesting and appealing attempt at formal architectural adornment, suggestive of rural buildings of the Italian renaissance or of the early seventeenth century in France. Occasional other examples of such treatment are to be found in neighboring towns, but by and large it remains an unusual departure in mill buildings. This variety, along with the loose, free linking of the individual units of the complex, suggests that the mills would lend themselves well to a wide range of re-use projects now that they have been vacated.

The mill locale is well defined by the adjoining neighborhood of former "company housing," by the river and steep hill beyond, and by the highway which clearly cuts it off from the nearby shopping plaza. The mill village, although not included in this nomination, is nevertheless worthy of mention and is still to be seen to the north and east of the mills--the dwellings still in their original planned ranks, although in some cases altered on the surface by present owners. As a still-intact "compound" and visual entity, closely related in all ways to the large mill complex here nominated, the mill housing may yet form a separate but related nomination to the National Register.



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES

	Latitude	Longitude
NE	41° 43' 39.09" N	71° 28' 07.01" W
SE	41° 43' 34.48" N	71° 28' 07.32" W
SW	41° 43' 30.47" N	71° 28' 20.13" W
NW	41° 43' 35.14" N	71° 28' 22.46" W



ORTN SITUATE

SLATERSVILLE 21 MI.  
3.6 MI. TO R. I. 14

4 MI. TO U.S. 1 27'30"

WEST WARWICK (P.O.) 1.6 MI.

WASHINGTON 3.7 MI.  
CENTERVILLE 1.1 MI.

OK W.A. Nessett  
Camp