

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Fitchburg Yarn Mill

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### 2. Location

Street & number: 1428 Main Street

City or town: Fitchburg State: MA County: Worcester

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this  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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A  B  C  D

<u>Brona Simon</u>	<u>October 15, 2016</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title: <b>Brona Simon, SHPO</b>	Date
_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
_____ Title :	_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

*Jon Edson H. Beall*  
Signature of the Keeper

12.6.16  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>10</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY: Manufacturing Facility

COMMERCE: Business / Office Building

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

WORK IN PROGRESS

VACANT

DOMESTIC: Multiple Dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Utilitarian Industrial / Light Industrial

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Granite, Cast Stone, Concrete, Asphalt

### Narrative Description

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

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### Summary Paragraph

The Fitchburg Yarn Mill is located on an approximately 8.5-acre site on the north bank of the North Nashua River in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, immediately north of the Nockege Mills and the Heywood Chair Manufacturing Company complex. The grade is 20 feet below Main and West streets, which run parallel to the river and are located north of the mill. The site, predominantly paved with bituminous concrete, slopes southwardly at a steep grade to meet the river. The mill consists of six well-preserved, one-, two-, and three-story, flat-roofed, utilitarian brick buildings (Figure 1). The main mill building is comprised of three fully integrated buildings, identified as Nos. 1, 2, and 6 on Figure 1 and Sanborn insurance maps (Figures 4 and 5). The largest of the three is **Building No. 1** (Photos 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 20, 21), constructed in 1907 and encompassing approximately three quarters of the entire main mill building. **Building No. 2** (Photos 1, 6, 8) was constructed in 1907 at the east end of Building No. 1, and **Building No. 6** (Picker House; Photos 5, 6, 8, 16, 22) was added in 1919 to the east elevation of Building No. 2. The two-story **Engine Room** (Building No. 3; Photos 9, 10, 15, 18) and **Boiler House** (Building No. 4; Photos 6, 8, 9) were constructed at the north elevation of Building Nos. 1, 2, and 6 in 1907. The red brick **smokestack** (Photos 5, 8, 10, 17, 20, 21, 22) was erected immediately northeast of the Boiler House in 1907, and the two-story **Office Building** (Building No. 7; Photos 1, 3, 4) was added to the south elevation of Building No. 1 ca. 1940. Remains of a **railroad trestle foundation** (Photo 7) exist near the northeast corner of the site. The trestle carried a rail spur from the Boston & Maine Railroad that entered the west end of the site and extended to the Boiler House. Behind the trestle foundation, along the north perimeter of the site, is a concrete **retaining wall** (Photo 7), likely built in 1907. A small **steel-truss**

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

**bridge** (Photo 1), built between ca. 1915 and 1936, is connected to a stone and concrete abutment in front of the Office Building's south elevation. The bridge spans the North Nashua River.

The Fitchburg Yarn Mill retains a high degree of historic integrity, as demonstrated by its character-defining features, which have remained since the mill's construction in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These features include the cylindrical, red-brick smokestack and original large window openings. The smokestack, considered the largest of its kind in Fitchburg at the time of its construction in 1907, towered above the property and served as a symbol of Fitchburg's role as an industrial hub. The substantial size of the window openings at the primary (north and south) elevations of the main mill building (Buildings 1, 2, and 6) were an essential component of industrial buildings, allowing for the maximum amount of natural light and ventilation into the mill.

All six buildings (Buildings No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7) and four structures (smokestack, railroad trestle foundation, retaining wall, and truss bridge) are contributing resources within the Fitchburg Yarn Mill site.

The mill complex is nearing completion of a tax-advantaged rehabilitation that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties. As part of the project, all sash and infilled window openings in Buildings 1, 2, 6, as well as the Engine Room, Boiler House, and Office Building, have been replaced by historically appropriate, aluminum, double-pane, energy-efficient windows.

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### Narrative Description

The Fitchburg Yarn Mill complex is comprised of six red-brick industrial buildings and four structures, located on the north bank of the North Nashua River in the city of Fitchburg. The main mill building, comprised of Buildings No. 1, 2, and 6, is located at the center of the site between West Street, Main Street, and the North Nashua River. Built in 1907 and 1919, the three-story, red-brick main mill building measures 44 bays long and 10 bays wide. It features evenly spaced bays of large, segmental-arched window openings with rock-faced granite sills on all elevations. Vertical brick piers extend from the ground to the roof, and have inset brick spandrels (Photo 11).

The primary (south) elevation of the main mill building (Building Nos. 1, 2, and 6) rests on a stone foundation. Windows are evenly spaced along the façade with wider piers between bays 5 and 6 and between bays 11 and 12, where interior brick walls separate the three components of the mill structure. The windows are arranged in groups of two, with wide, wood mullions. Building No. 7 (Office Building) is connected at the first and second floors to the east end of Building No. 1's south elevation. The main entrance is located on the north elevation of Building No. 1, in the westernmost bay, and is not original to the building (Photo 12).

The north elevation also features a three-story, projecting toilet block, located at the northeast corner of Building No. 6 (Photo 6). This component is fully integrated into the east elevation, and features pairs of square, punched window openings separated by vertical brick mullions, with rock-faced granite sills and concrete lintels on the north elevation, and solid brick east and west elevations, of which the east has been painted white. A solid bay is situated on the third story of the mill between bays 10 and 11, where a belt shaft connected the Boiler House and Engine Room to the mill. A vertical bay of transom windows, set above solid brick walls, is located between bays 30 and 31. An egress doorway is also located on the west end of the north elevation.

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

The east elevation (Photo 5, Building No. 6), which has been painted white, features vertical piers with corbelled brickwork at each story, which are each topped with a granite capstone. A concrete-block loading dock with two openings has been added to the center of the elevation at the first story. Five additional loading bays, created by removing granite window sills and brick spandrels, are situated on the first story. Overhead hoistways have been created by removing the original granite sills and brick spandrels at one bay of the second and third levels.

The west elevation (Photo 13, Building No. 1) has also been painted white, and features evenly spaced window openings at each floor. Six of the window openings at the first floor were converted to loading bays by removing the granite sills and brick spandrels, and one bay was converted to a pedestrian entrance.

The interior of the mill building is divided into three sections. Building No. 1 is separated from Building No. 2 by an interior brick wall that features two segmental-arched pedestrian openings—one at the center bay and the second at the southeast corner—located along the first, second, and third floors. A third, off-center opening between the first two openings pierces the wall at the second and third floors. Adjacent to the brick dividing wall, a wood ramp along the first floor provides access from Building No. 1 to Building No. 7 (Office Building). Building No. 2 is separated from Building No. 6 (Picker House) by its original exterior wall along the east elevation. The interior wall retains many of its original window bays, some of which have been converted to wide openings by removing the original sills and brick spandrels. Each of the building's stories contains wide-open spaces, with three evenly spaced rows of wood columns supporting steel beams (Photo 14). The spaces feature painted brick walls and wood decking at the ceilings. A projecting toilet block is located at the northeast corner of Building No. 6 (Photo 6). The toilet block was constructed in 1919, concurrent with the addition of Building No. 6. It contains paneled wood and steel doors that provide access to the bathrooms at each floor. The walls within the restrooms feature glazed tile and painted brick (Photo 16). One dilapidated, unenclosed freight elevator is at the east end of the building. Two original staircases, situated at the southeast and northwest corners of Building No. 1, feature two straight runs of wood stairs with mid-level landings, which are enclosed in beadboard and interior brick walls.

The 1907 interconnected **Boiler House** (Building No. 4; Photos 8, 9) and **Engine Room** (Building No. 3; Photos 9, 10, 15, 18, 19) are attached to the north elevation of Buildings No. 1, 2, and 6. The two-story Boiler House is situated adjacent to the **smokestack** (Photos 5, 8 and 10). A single-story, brick addition to Boiler house that is shown in photo 9 has been removed (see below).

The two-story Engine Room has monumental arched window openings (Photo 10). Most of the window and door openings feature rock-faced granite sills. Along the west elevation, the first story holds two segmental-arched window openings and a modified door or window opening, and the second story contains three monumental, rounded-arch window openings with rock-faced granite sills. Along the east elevation, the exposed second story features two monumental, rounded-arch window openings with rock-faced granite sills. The north elevation features one square opening with a steel lintel, flanked by two segmental-arched window openings along the first story. The second story contains three round-arched window openings.

In the red-brick Boiler House most windows feature rock-faced granite sills (Photos 8 and 9). The first story of the east elevation of the two-story Boiler House contains two segmental-arched window openings with rock-faced granite sills and one rectangular door opening, and the second story features three

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

segmental-arched window openings with granite sills. A deteriorated metal beltshaft that connected the Boiler House to the adjacent brick smokestack (photo 8) has been removed (see below). The north elevation contains a former loading bay with a riveted steel lintel at the fifth bay; the remainder of the first story is not visible due to the single-story addition. The second story features segmental-arched window openings with rock-faced granite sills.

The interior of the Boiler House and Engine Room features painted-brick walls and exposed, painted-wood decking, with wood floors that are ramped slightly at the first and second stories. Large, heavy, timber-frame trusses with large concrete footings are located on the first story. A second story features painted-brick walls and exposed decking (Photo 15).

Remains of the **railroad trestle foundation** (Photo 7) are located near the northeast corner of the site. Built in 1907, the extant foundation consists of eight reinforced-concrete piers that each rise twelve feet in height. The base of each pier measures six feet in width, tapering to four feet. Aside from the trestle foundation, there are no railway structures or infrastructure remaining on site. In line with the trestle foundation is a reinforced concrete-block **retaining wall** (Photo 7) that extends west along the northern perimeter of the site. The wall measures fifteen feet in height and one foot in width.

The steel-riveted, single-intersection, **Pratt pony-truss bridge** (Photo 1) was built between ca. 1915 and 1936 across the North Nashua River. The bridge features a wood deck, and is connected to the site by a stone and concrete abutment adjacent to the south elevation of the Office Building. The bridge extends across the North Nashua River to the north embankment of Nockege Street, and is supported by a concrete pier. The ca. 1940 **Office Building** (Building No. 7; Photos 1, 3, 4) is located at the east end of the mill's south elevation. The red-brick building rises two stories from a concrete foundation to a slightly pitched roof, ornamented by wide overhanging wooden eaves supported by paired modillions.

The north elevation of the two-story, red-brick Office Building contains a series of entrances and window openings on the first floor, and a large overhead garage door opening at the center of the elevation. Two rectangular, punched window openings are located at the east end of the first-floor level. The second floor contains rectangular window openings separated by brick piers at the elevation's east end, and two punched window openings at the west end of the elevation. An overhead garage door set atop a concrete loading dock is located on the east elevation, and features a central rectangular window opening in the overhead, stucco-clad passageway. The east elevation of the Office Building's main block includes a projecting cast-stone beltcourse on one half of the elevation above the first floor, and a rectangular, punched window opening at the second-floor level (Photo 4).

The cast-stone beltcourse continues along the south elevation, which features window openings at the first-floor level and two small, rectangular window openings with steel lintels at the second floor. The remainder of the elevation features projecting brick piers with rectangular, punched window openings on both floors. Modern steel pedestrian entrance doors are located at bays 12-13 and 14-15, flanking a large, rectangular opening at bays 13-14 (Photo 3). The west elevation of the building is three bays wide, with a central bay with a pedestrian entrance at the first floor and rectangular, punched window openings on both levels of the flanking bays.

The interior contains a series of small and large office and bathroom spaces. Several of the offices have been altered through the introduction of overhead garage doors to provide access to the mill (a set of steps at the second story of the Office Building provides access to Building No. 1). Access to the second story is provided by two interior staircases. The first stair is located along the west wall of the building, and is

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

constructed of modern lumber. The second stair is accessed at the building's south elevation entrance, and consists of a simple wood staircase enclosed by wood partitions. The Office Building contains tiled flooring, modern interior partitions, wood paneling, painted-brick walls, and either plaster-finished or modern drop-tile ceilings.

Throughout the mill's history, an additional seven buildings and additions have been constructed and subsequently demolished. The addition and demolition of mill buildings and structures was typical of early to mid 20<sup>th</sup>-century industrial complexes, as the mill space had to adapt to the ongoing changes in equipment, technology, and production. The interconnected Building No. 5 and Storehouse B, built concurrently between 1915 and 1930, were constructed immediately adjacent to the North Nashua River. Building No. 5 was a single-story shipping building added to the southern half of the west elevation of Building No. 1. Storehouse B was a low, three-story storehouse attached to the west elevation of Building No. 5. It was a two-part building that featured a freight platform, which projected from the center of its north elevation to the railroad spur. Storehouse A (1907), a long, narrow, two-story warehouse, ran parallel to the north elevation of Building No. 1, and was connected to both the mill and Engine Room by belt shafts. A single-story storage building (constructed between 1915 and 1930) with an attached automobile garage was located northeast of the toilet block. The mill's coal pile was located at the end of the rail spur (Figure 4), and the transformer yard occupied the area immediately east of the Office Building. A single-story, painted-brick addition, built between 1936 and 1950 and attached to the Boiler House (photo 9), was recently demolished due to substantial brick deterioration and settlement as a result of water infiltration.

The Fitchburg Yarn Mill will be converted to housing. The project, which will benefit from both the Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit and the federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit programs, will create 96 units of affordable and market-rate housing stock for the city of Fitchburg. The tax-assisted rehabilitation will include the cleaning, repair, and repointing of all exterior elevations (where necessary), and the installation of historically appropriate mechanical systems, doors, and aluminum-sash replacement windows. The deteriorated metal beltshaft connecting the smokestack to the Boiler House was removed and the smokestack repointed. The existing large, open floor plates will be subdivided into residential apartments with exposed brick walls, ceilings, hardwood and carpeted flooring, and high-quality appliances. The existing building systems will be replaced to meet modern building codes. The rehabilitation project will maintain the historic integrity of the complex, as all work is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties.

### **Archaeological Description**

While no ancient Native American sites have been identified on the mill property, it is possible that sites are present. One site has been identified in the general area (within one mile). Environmental characteristics of the mill property indicate locational criteria that are favorable for the presence of Native sites. The mill is located on a relatively flat, well-drained riverine terrace of the North Nashua River, a tributary of the Merrimack River. The mill site, however, has been the location of considerable industrial development, having a negative effect on the integrity of any ancient resources that might have been present. The overall lack of ancient sites in this area makes potential site locations difficult to ascertain. Given the above information, a low to moderate potential exists for the recovery of significant ancient Native American resources on the mill property. Deeply buried artifacts and truncated features may survive, possibly in stratified soils; however, the context for most potential cultural material has been destroyed by extensive industrial development that has destroyed most of those resources.



Fitchburg Yarn Mill

Name of Property

Worcester, MA

County and State

There is a high potential for the recovery of significant historic archaeological resources at the Fitchburg Yarn Mill. Additional documentary research, combined with archaeological survey and testing, may locate evidence of outbuildings no longer extant, as well as industrial trash areas, common around many textile mills. Industrial trash areas may include raw materials used in the production process, machine parts, and “wasters,” or discarded manufactured items. Additional structural remains and other transportation-related information may survive from a railroad trestle and route that carried a rail spur from the Boston & Maine railroad, entering the west end of the site and extending to the Boiler House. Archaeological research may also contribute important information on questions pertaining to a small, steel-truss bridge that spans the North Nashua River. Current research of cartographic sources indicates an inconsistency in the construction date for the bridge. Archaeological field testing of the area surrounding the bridge abutments and other supports may contribute information (artifacts) that indicates exactly when the bridge was built.

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

#### Criteria Considerations

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

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

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY  
COMMERCE  
ARCHITECTURE  
SOCIAL HISTORY

**Period of Significance**

1907 – 1966

**Significant Dates**

1907

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Frank P. Sheldon  
F. P. Sheldon & Son  
F. A. McCauliff  
Wiley & Foss  
A. S. Porter

Fitchburg Yarn Mill

Name of Property

Worcester, MA

County and State

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

The Fitchburg Yarn Mill was built in 1907 as one of a series of textile-related operations that were constructed along the banks of the North Nashua River beginning in 1881. Heralded as one of the city's essential companies, Fitchburg Yarn was central to the commercial and industrial development of the city from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, remaining in business for more than 60 years. Despite the loss of storage buildings and garages, the significant elements of the original Fitchburg Yarn Mill remain, including the main mill building (Buildings No. 1, 2 and, 6), the Boiler House and Engine Room (Buildings No. 3, and 4), the Office Building (Building No. 7), and the smokestack, considered the largest of its kind in the city at the time of its construction in 1907. The mill is significant under Criterion A for its association with Fitchburg's evolution as a dominant manufacturing community in New England in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The mill is also significant under Criterion C as a well-preserved example of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century industrial architecture, as well as an example of the work of Sheldon & Son, a notable nationwide architectural and engineering firm from Providence, RI. The Fitchburg Yarn Mill is the only complex designed by Sheldon & Son in Fitchburg.

The Fitchburg Yarn Mill retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and is significant at the local level. The period of significance begins with the construction of the mill in 1907 and extends to 1966, the standard 50-year cutoff period established by the National Register program.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

ARCHITECTURE: Designed by industrial architect and engineer Frank P. Sheldon in 1907, with additions made by his successor firm F. P. Sheldon & Son in 1919 and 1940, the brick and granite Fitchburg Yarn Mill is a well-preserved example of Sheldon's large-scale, red-brick utilitarian designs found throughout New England. The one-, two-, and three-story connected complex features wide hardwood floorplates with monumental window openings, designed to provide sufficient light to operate the mill's spinning machinery for the production of cotton and acrylic yarn. The heavy pier-and-spandrel construction was typical of Sheldon's mill designs across New England.

COMMERCE: The Fitchburg Yarn Company began its operations at the Fitchburg Yarn Mill in 1907 as a high-quality cotton yarn manufacturer. The combed yarns were all-purpose and offered in a wide range of colors. The yarn was both shipped to regional clothing manufacturers and sold at the mill's Main Street location for hand-knit items.<sup>1</sup> The Fitchburg Yarn Company's incorporation of acrylic yarn in the 1920s, in addition to the traditional combed yarns, sustained the mill and its employees through the years of the Great Depression, and facilitated its progression into the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

SOCIAL HISTORY: Fitchburg's development coincided with the onset of water-powered industry. The city's first gristmill was established in 1750, and was followed by a slow progression of grist, saw, cotton, and paper mills, assembled well into the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Fitchburg's growth was amplified by the construction of the first railroad from Boston in 1845, followed by the city's first rail connection to western Massachusetts by way of the Hoosac Tunnel in 1875, and the onset of streetcars in 1886. A

<sup>1</sup> *Fitchburg Sentinel* advertisement, "Fitchburg Yarn Co. Hand-Knitting Yarns."

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

period of massive industrialization quickly emerged in Fitchburg, facilitating the establishment of more than 50 manufacturing outfits by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, including the Fitchburg Yarn Mill in 1907. Continued advancements in transportation promoted a rapidly expanding immigrant population. The incoming groups of Irish, French Canadian, Greek, English, and Finnish immigrants, settled south of the North Nashua River in concentrated, culturally based urban neighborhoods within close proximity to the mills, while the middle- and upper-class residents settled in suburban neighborhoods north of the river. Construction of the Fitchburg Yarn Mill between the north bank of the North Nashua River and West and Main streets in 1907 positioned it immediately southwest of "Greektown," a Greek enclave along West, Main, and Caldwell streets and Ashburnham Hill Road. As a result, Fitchburg Yarn was situated within close proximity to an immigrant workforce that enabled its growth and success and defined the area surrounding the mill during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

INDUSTRY: The development of mill complexes along Fitchburg's North Nashua River reflects the city's evolution as an industrial center. Beginning in 1750 and continuing into the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the city's mills were producing paper, textiles, machine equipment, saws, chains, guns, bicycles, and shoes. The construction of regional rail lines increased the city's position as a manufacturing center. Construction of the Fitchburg Yarn Mill in 1907 along the North Nashua River and Boston & Maine Railroad during a paramount period of industrialization in Fitchburg ensured the company's early success, which lasted through the end of World War I. The company's continued prosperity during the Great Depression and World War II was facilitated by the production of Sase, an acrylic yarn trademarked by the Fitchburg Yarn Co. in 1931.

#### *Industrial Development of the North Nashua River Area*

Fitchburg is a regionally significant urban industrial center located along the North Nashua River corridor in central Massachusetts. Derived from the Native American word "Nashaway," meaning "river with the pebbled bottom," the North Nashua River remains the city's most vital resource, responsible for shaping its geologic and economic history. European settlement began in 1719, when Fitchburg was known as South Town. It incorporated as Lunenburg in 1728. In 1764, the western section of Lunenburg was set off as a separate town, deemed "Fitchburg," with a meetinghouse erected soon thereafter in 1766. The town remained sparsely populated until the end of the Revolutionary War, when the population jumped from 643 in 1775 to 1,200 by 1790.

The town's industrial activity began in 1750, with the establishment of the Kimball gristmill and dam along the upper portion of the North Nashua River near Punch Brook (less than one-half mile east of the Fitchburg Yarn Mill site). A second dam was erected in 1794 for a saw and textile mill. Additional dams were built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and manufacturing on the North Nashua River was firmly established with a paper mill in 1803 and the Fitchburg Cotton Manufacturing Corporation in 1807. The Red Mill or Rollstone Mill was built on the north bank of the North Nashua River at the intersection of Main and River streets (less than one-half mile southeast of the Fitchburg Yarn Mill) in 1813 for the manufacture of cotton, remaining in operation under a succession of owners throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By 1830, Fitchburg was home to two woolen manufacturers, four cotton manufacturers, one scythe manufactory, two paper mills, four gristmills, and ten sawmills.

Development in the early Industrial Period, or the decades between 1830 and 1870, continued steadily along the North Nashua River corridor. Construction of the railroad between Boston and Fitchburg in the early 1840s created a surplus in jobs for incoming immigrant groups. The Irish, who were arriving to escape the ongoing potato famine in Ireland, were among the first to gain employment with the railroads.

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

Completed in 1845, the Fitchburg Railroad extended from Boston before expanding in 1847 as the Vermont & Massachusetts Railroad. Upon completion of the rail, a rapid growth in manufacturing commenced, paralleled by the need for a larger workforce. As of 1830 Fitchburg was home to 2,169 residents; by 1870 the population had more than tripled to 11,260, with close to 25 percent being foreign-born. The subsequent immigrant groups included large numbers of French Canadians, Finns, Greeks, Swedes, Germans, Syrians, and Italians.

Fitchburg's greatest period of population growth coincided with transportation improvements made during the late Industrial period. Between 1880 and 1900, the population increased 154 percent, and the 3½-mile Fitchburg Street Railway (horse railway) was laid out between east and west Fitchburg. The first electric streetcar began operations in 1892, along the same route as the street railway. Industrial expansion continued along the North Nashua River with construction of the Star Worsted Woolen Company in 1882 (19 Sheldon Street, no longer extant), Orswell Spinning Mill in 1886 (245 River Street, acquired by the Fitchburg Yarn Company in 1935 and renamed the Watatic Spinning Mill [FIT.516]) and the Nocke Cloth Mill in 1893 (93 Nocke Street, FIT.518).

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the immigrant population constituted one third of Fitchburg's residents, and by 1915, the proportion of foreign-born residents reached 35 percent of the city's nearly 40,000 inhabitants. The largest immigrant group at this time was the French Canadians, who left the eastern provinces of Canada due to low employment rates or a lack of fertile farmland in conjunction with a short growing season. In addition, recruitment campaigns begun by local textile-mill agents, such as Andrew Cleghorn and John Parkhill, added to the large influx of French Canadians to Fitchburg, as the city was located just 230 miles south of the Canadian border.<sup>2</sup>

The years following World War I saw a decline in industry and subsequent reduction in population growth. The rise of the automobile and construction of regional highways such as the Mohawk Trail (MA Route 2) rendered the street railway defunct and slowed use of the railroad. The effects of the Great Depression in the 1930s led to large numbers of unemployed people, though the Fitchburg Yarn Company was able to maintain a steady workforce throughout the period due to the introduction of acrylic yarn at the mill in 1926, trademarked under the name "Sase" (discussed further in the following section).

During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, industry saw a general trend of migration away from the northeast, due to cheaper nonunion labor and imports from overseas. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, Fitchburg Yarn was faced with intense competition from the importation of acrylic yarns from Taiwan and Hong Kong, as well as a sharp transition in the material used to make women's clothing from natural to manufactured fibers, including satin and Lurex. The Fitchburg Yarn Mill was not equipped to manufacture these new materials and was left with a surplus of inventory during a poor economy. It was forced to close in 1978. This loss of traditional industries has, in recent years, been mitigated by growth in non-manufacturing industries such as construction and professional services, as well as a rise in certain manufacturing industries such as plastics, medical goods and services, and chemicals.

#### *Establishment of the Fitchburg Yarn Company*

Constructed during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Fitchburg Yarn Company was established amid a period of expansive industrialization throughout New England. Designed by industrial architect and engineer Frank P. Sheldon, the three-story, red-brick and granite mill was ideally situated on a parcel between the Boston & Maine Railroad alignment and the North Nashua River. The mill was positioned adjacent to the

<sup>2</sup> LeBlanc 20-22.

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

river to take advantage of the moist river air. Moist air added to the elasticity and strength of the cotton fibers, and reduced breakage while the cotton was being spun into thread. The river was likely also used to dye yarns and wash and cool machinery. The river was not used to harness the available waterpower, as the mill was mechanized by electricity and fueled by coal.<sup>3</sup>

At the time of its construction in 1907, Fitchburg Yarn was one of four yarn manufacturing facilities in Fitchburg; the others were the Star Worsted Company (ca. 1882), Orswell Mills (1886), and the Grant Yarn Company (1892). In addition to the production of yarn, Fitchburg's industrial landscape at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century included the Parkhill Manufacturing Company (ca. 1885, FIT.514), a textile concern at the corner of Cleghorn and Daniels streets, the DeJonge Mill (ca. 1892, FIT.512), a paper coating mill at the corner of Cleghorn Street and Oak Hill Road, and Nockege Mills (1893) at 93 Nockege Street, the first mill in the city to produce cotton print cloth.

Construction of the mill complex began in February 1907 with the addition of a Boston & Maine railroad trestle and spur track that accessed the site from Sheldon Street. The trestle and track were initially required to convey building materials to the site, and were later utilized to transport coal and other materials required for the production of yarn. The excavation and laying of the brick foundation was completed by local mason Francis A. McCauliff, owner of the McCauliff Quarry located on the west side of nearby Rollstone Hill.<sup>4</sup> A native of Quebec, McCauliff immigrated to Vermont in 1867 before settling in Fitchburg in 1870. While in Fitchburg, he found employment as a contractor and quarryman at the Rollstone Hill Granite Quarry.<sup>5</sup> Wiley & Foss, a local construction and engineering firm, built the main body of the mill and ancillary buildings. Described by the *Fitchburg Sentinel* as a "superstructure," the construction of the Fitchburg Yarn Mill complex proceeded swiftly, and was completed by September 1907.

Materials used in the mill's construction included Pittsburgh steel, two million bricks from nearby Greenfield, MA, and one million feet of spruce and hard pine. The materials were conveyed to the site by the railroad spur track and trestle that were erected in 1907 before construction of the mill commenced. Five boilers were purchased from Fitchburg's D. M. Dillon Steam Boiler Works and a 1,500-horsepower engine was acquired from Hughes & Philips in Newark, NJ, as the mill's primary power supply. The 160-foot-tall brick smokestack, described in a 1907 article from the *Fitchburg Daily Sentinel* as the largest in the city, was built on a concrete foundation with a seventeen-foot diameter. It was estimated that 250,000 bricks were used in its construction.

By November 1907, 2,000 spindles were in operation, with more installed each day to reach the mill's capacity of 50,000 spindles. William E. Keach, superintendent of the Grant Yarn Company, a Fitchburg textile mill, and first general superintendent of Fitchburg Yarn, was credited with much of the efficient planning and preparation, which led to the construction and opening of the mill in under one year. Before the mill's opening in November 1907, Keach began attracting mill operatives and foremen to Fitchburg, anticipating the projected work force. As a result, the mill's labor force was able to begin as construction of the mill progressed.<sup>6</sup>

Jesse Thilyer Lyman served as president of the Fitchburg Yarn Company from 1906 until his death in 1931. Later known as one of the city's leading employers, Lyman began his career working in Chicago's

<sup>3</sup> *Sanborn Insurance Maps of Fitchburg, MA*, 1936 and 1950.

<sup>4</sup> United States Geological Survey 1911, 280.

<sup>5</sup> Emerson 43.

<sup>6</sup> "New Mill of the Fitchburg Yarn Company," *Fiber and Fabric*, 1907.

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

meatpacking industry before relocating to Boston and finding employment as a business clerk during the mid 1880s. By 1888 Lyman was listed as a commercial merchant at 15 North Market in Boston (Quincy Market), and was living in Malden. By 1890 he was managing the Boston firm Bartlett, Lyman & Company (his partner was Solon M. Bartlett) at 15 North Market and 54 Chatham streets. As of 1903 Lyman had relocated to Ashby, MA, where he remained until his death. Between 1903 and 1906, Lyman's business investments broadened considerably, with a focus in Fitchburg. Lyman and a group of local business associates began investing in yarn and textile mills in Fitchburg. The group included Lyman, four members of the Wallace family (proprietors of the Fitchburg Paper Company) led by brothers George and Herbert Wallace, and George P. Grant, Jr. (owner of the Grant Yarn Company). Frank W. and Edwin Lyman, Jesse's son and grandson, were later added to the investment group. Together the group maintained an informal syndicate, not only controlling a handful of Fitchburg's manufacturing industries, but also serving in influential positions as officers and directors of local banks, including the Fitchburg National Bank and Fitchburg Bank & Trust.

Shortly after Lyman's appointment as president of Fitchburg Yarn Company, he was named president of the recently incorporated American Glue Company in Peabody and remained in that position until 1928. In addition, he served as director of the Fourth National Bank in Boston in 1908, and as director of the Atlantic National Bank in Boston in the 1920s and early 1930s. Lyman's benefactions in Ashby, a town located roughly eight miles north of Fitchburg, included the Ashby Stock Farm, where he was able to employ local townspeople.

In 1925, Lyman appointed M. Fred Thomas vice president and general manager of Fitchburg Yarn Company (Figure 12). Thomas was responsible for initiating the production of acrylic fiber yarn at the mill in 1926. The shift in materials was due to a major shortage of cotton fiber in the years following World War I, caused by the infestation of the boll weevil (cotton-eating beetle) and the postwar depression. In addition, new legislation such as the 48-hour labor law (a work week could not exceed 48 hours) abbreviated industrial output and therefore condensed incoming revenue. In 1922, the diminishing industrial climate in Fitchburg was suffering to such an extent that both Fitchburg Yarn and Grant Yarn were forced to cease operations for seven days due to a lack of orders.<sup>7</sup> To counterbalance this loss in revenue, Fitchburg Yarn began to seek an alternative material to cotton that would not suffer in quality but would be economically feasible to produce.

Trademarked under the name "Sase," in November 1931, the Fitchburg Yarn Company claimed they discovered the material in 1925 with the help of the Susquehanna Silk Mills in New York and a "European expert who had achieved excellent results abroad in the development of similar yarns."<sup>8</sup> Described as the new acrylic fiber yarn, the material was not to be confused with rayon, and was actually of a higher quality that could most closely be compared with spun silk. However, according to a 1926 article from *The Textile World*, Sase was spun from an acrylic fiber of viscose base and was not "radically dissimilar to those that have been produced for some time in Europe which are variously termed 'staple fiber,' 'out rayon,' and 'spun rayon.'"<sup>9</sup> Though it remains unclear whether the Fitchburg Yarn Company discovered a new variety of acrylic yarn, the firm's ingenuity in seeking out different materials and markets in the 1920s carried both Fitchburg Yarn and the city of Fitchburg through the years of the Great Depression and into the second and third quarters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>7</sup> "Two Yarn Mills Closed For Week."

<sup>8</sup> "Sase, New Yarn Made Here, Booms Textile Industry."

<sup>9</sup> "Sase, New Yarn Made Here, Booms Textile Industry."



Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

Due to Fitchburg Yarn's shift from producing primarily cotton yarns to focusing on the production of acrylic yarns, it rose to operate at full capacity during the Great Depression of the 1930s. While the surrounding mills were able to maintain only a fraction of their former work force, Fitchburg Yarn employed more than 800 mill operatives, working three shifts on a 24-hour basis.<sup>10</sup> During this period, the overall footprint of the mill expanded. As of 1930, one four-bay automobile garage was located east of Building No. 6. The steel truss, single-intersection bridge was built between 1915 and 1936 across the North Nashua River.<sup>11</sup> The owner of the bridge and reason for construction are unknown. By 1950, a second garage was added just northeast of the first. Building No. 5 was expanded between 1930 and 1950 to extend across the remainder of the west elevation. A small, single-story waste storage building was constructed immediately northeast of the Engine Room between 1936 and 1950.

Following Jesse Thilyer Lyman's death in September 1931, his nephew Frank Warren Lyman was named president of Fitchburg Yarn. Frank had extensive experience in mill management, beginning his career in Chicago's meatpacking industry, before moving on to serve as vice president of American Glue in 1925, followed by Fitchburg Yarn six years later.

In 1935 the Watatic Spinning Company, producer of cotton yarns, was incorporated and housed in the former Orswell Mill, with M. Fred Thomas as president, Frank Lyman as treasurer, and Emil W. Hanson as secretary. The Wachusett Spinning Mill was incorporated soon thereafter, with M. Fred Thomas named president and Frank Lyman vice president. Thomas also founded a sales agency, the Fitchburg Spinners Sales Corporation, of which he also served as the first president. In 1938 Frank's son, Edwin, joined his father as a technician at Fitchburg Yarn, and eventually succeeded Thomas as president of the Fitchburg Spinners. At its peak, between 1945 and 1955, Fitchburg Yarn maintained a workforce of more than 1,000 workers that operated 95,000 spindles and produced 3.5 million miles of cotton and acrylic yarn per week.

Edwin Lyman went on to serve as vice president of sales at Fitchburg Yarn and Watatic Spinning before retiring in 1970. Like his predecessors, Edwin was also very active in the affairs of the community. He served as chairman of the Ashby School Committee, director of the Fitchburg YMCA and the Family Federal Savings and Loan, and was a former trustee of the Ashby Public Library. Following Edwin's retirement, Fitchburg Yarn Company was sold to the R. J. Kunik Company of Philadelphia. Around this time, Building No. 5, Storehouse A, Storehouse B, and both automobile garages were demolished. Not long thereafter, in 1979, Fitchburg Yarn Company was shut down.<sup>12</sup> Foreign competition was the primary factor in the demise of the acrylic yarn mill, with acrylic products constituting more than 80 percent of foreign imports to the United States during the mid to late 1970s. The property was eventually acquired by Sanitoy, Inc., a Delaware-based plastics manufacturer, which leased the mill to Nockege Mill Industries, Inc., which made clothing for medical patients, the elderly, and the handicapped under the trade name "Pristine." The property was sold to the JLV Corporation in 1989. Nockege Mill Industries, Inc. dissolved in 1991 and the mill was leased to the Home Line Furniture Company. Home Line remained at the location until the property was sold to Michael A. and Ernest Indresano in 2005. The mill remained vacant under the Indresanos' ownership until it was acquired by Winn Development in 2013.

<sup>10</sup> "The first mill in the world to produce spun rayon..."

<sup>11</sup> Construction of the bridge likely commenced after 1915, because the truss bridge is not portrayed in the 1915 *Aero View of Fitchburg* (Figure 3). The construction period culminates in 1936, when the bridge is identified on the 1936 *Sanborn Insurance Map of Fitchburg, MA* (Figure 4).

<sup>12</sup> Annual Planning Information Report 1980.

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

### *Operation of the Mill*

The manufacture of yarn at the Fitchburg Yarn Company mill complex required hundreds of skilled and unskilled workers over the course of its history. The complex process was undertaken in two distinct operations—preparation and spinning.

Upon delivery by rail to the site, bales of cotton were taken from one of the two storehouses to an opening house. The cotton bales were opened and placed into the opening machine, where a beating action loosened the fibers and separated out impurities. The cotton was processed through several picker machines. There were three kinds generally used: the breaker picker, the intermediate picker, and finisher pickers. The breaker picker, which was the first machine in the series, took cotton in a fluffy mass, partially cleaned it, and then produced the cotton in a wide sheet of matted fibers, which was rolled into a cylinderlike shape, or lap. The intermediate picker had the same function as the breaker, with the exception that four of the laps were fed into the machine and a leveling device made the product (also in lap form) into a sheet of even thickness. The finishing picker was the same as the intermediate, and completed the process by cleaning and fluffing the cotton a final time. The cotton was then propelled into the picker house (Building No. 6) by means of large fan blowers for continued processing.

The next step in the fiber preparation was performed by a carding machine that separated and paralleled the fibers, removed impurities, and delivered the fibers in the form of slivers (long, loosely twisted pieces of cotton fibers), which then went to the drawing frame. The drawing frame operation, immediately following carding, partially paralleled and drew down the fibers. This was accomplished by feeding a few of the slivers from the carding machine at a slow speed through fluted feed rollers, and delivering them at a greater speed through another set of rollers, called delivery rollers. The combing process brought the fibers parallel to each other, removed neps (naturally occurring knots in the fibers of the cotton) and other impurities, extracted a large portion of the short fibers, and was most commonly used to produce fine yarn. Next, the slubbing machine drew down (reduced the size of) and loosely twisted the slivers together into a roving, a slightly twisted sliver of cotton, which was sufficient in strength for subsequent operations. The roving was then passed through the fly frame, in which two strands of roving were combined in a wishbone-shaped machine, until it met the desired weight.

Spinning was the final process in drawing down and twisting cotton fibers into yarn. One or more strands of slightly twisted roving were used to create a single strand of spun yarn, which was wound onto bobbins by the speeder machines. Yarn was differentiated into warp (the yarn running lengthwise in the cloth) and the filling, the yarn that runs crosswise in the cloth. In preparation of the stock for spinning, the doubling machine was used: two or more laps, slivers, or rovings were doubled or combined and fed into the next operation, from which they would emerge as a single lap or sliver. The winding machine then wound a continuous length of yarn into a spool.

The yarn was then placed on the ring-spinning machine, utilizing a method of spinning yarn with a ring and traveler, which inserted the twist and guided the winding of the yarn onto a bobbin in a continuous and simultaneous spinning operation. The mule spinning machine, with intermittent action, first spun the yarn and then wound it on a spindle into a small package called a cop (a cylindrical unit of yarn wound on a paper tube). It spun yarns of any count, but was generally used to obtain very fine counts; since mule-spun yarn fibers did not lie straight in the yarn (as they do in ring-spun yarn), they formed a bulkier yarn and thus a fabric that was fuller.

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

Operations for Sase, the acrylic yarn trademarked by the Fitchburg Yarn Company, began at the Fitchburg Yarn Mill complex in 1926. Production of the new material moved to the Watatic Spinning Mills, Inc. (former Orswell Mill), acquired by the Fitchburg Yarn Company in 1935, and located a quarter-mile southwest along the south bank of the North Nashua River. The manufacture of Sase remained at Watatic until the Fitchburg Yarn Company shut its doors in 1978.

*Frank P. Sheldon, Engineer*

Frank P. Sheldon, considered one of the most prolific mill engineers in New England during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, designed the Fitchburg Yarn Company Buildings No. 1 and 2 in 1907. Of note, these were the only buildings designed by Sheldon in the city of Fitchburg. Following his death in 1915, Sheldon's son continued the business under the name F. P. Sheldon & Son, and was responsible for the 1919 addition of Building No. 6 and the subsequent ca. 1940 Office Building addition.<sup>13</sup>

Sheldon began his career working in both Rhode Island and Massachusetts textile mills during the mid to late 1860s. In 1870 he designed the first automatic screw-threading machine for the American Screw Company in Providence, before applying his practical experience as a mill worker to the establishment of a mill engineering firm. With an office on Westminster Street in downtown Providence, Sheldon went on to design prominent plants in New England and the southern states for the next 45 years. Of note, he served as director of textiles for the United States at the Paris Exposition Universelle Internationale in 1900.

Following Sheldon's death on August 17, 1915, his son Arthur Noyes Sheldon, a graduate of Harvard University in 1900 with a Bachelor of Science degree in engineering and architecture, maintained the business, and in 1921 published *A Half Century of Achievement*, a 50<sup>th</sup>-anniversary corporate retrospective authored by the F. P. Sheldon & Son Company. At the time of the book's release, the firm had expanded its portfolio to include a wide variety of industrial mill designs, as well as equipment and construction services. In 1921 the firm had 566 contracts with 289 clients in 20 of the United States and four Canadian provinces.

Over the course of Frank P. Sheldon's career, he was responsible for the design of many notable mill complexes throughout New England. These include: the Berkshire Mill #1 in Adams, MA (1889; NR 1982, converted to apartments ca. 2006); the Crompton and Knowles Loom Works in Worcester, MA (1890; demolished ca. 2012); the Lyman Cotton Mill in Holyoke, MA (1891; demolished 2011); auxiliary buildings at the Bourne Mill in Tiverton, RI (1900; NRDIS 2006; converted to apartments in 2009), which featured one of the state's first sawtooth weave sheds; the Greystone Mill Complex in North Providence, RI (1904-1911; NRDIS 2007; converted to apartments in 2008); and Building #4 at the Shaw Stocking Company in Lowell, MA (1907, LOW.2587, portions of the mill are still present).

*Employees of the Fitchburg Yarn Company*

When the Fitchburg Yarn Company mill complex opened in 1907, its workforce was constituted primarily of immigrants from England, Finland, Canada, Ireland, and Greece. By 1920, and until at least 1940, it appears the majority of workers were of Greek descent, many of whom lived immediately northeast of the mill in "Greektown."<sup>14</sup> Greektown surrounded the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church (built in 1921 at 1319 Main Street) along West, Main, and Caldwell streets, and Ashburnham Hill Road.

<sup>13</sup> FIT.520, 4.

<sup>14</sup> United States Census: 1910, 1920, 1930 and 1940.

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

Because there was no mill-owned housing available to employees of the Fitchburg Yarn Company, workers resided in three deckers on these nearby streets. This culturally based enclave or niche was among a handful of similar affiliated neighborhoods in Fitchburg wherein each group maintained the language, customs, and religious practices of their native land. The Irish settlement, later occupied by Italian immigrants, was deemed "The Patch" and located along the railroad and Water Street, between First and Fifth streets (1½ miles southeast of the Fitchburg Yarn Mill). The largest at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the French-Canadian neighborhood known as "Cleghorn," located immediately west of Rollstone Hill along Oak Hill Road and Cleghorn, Plymouth, and Daniels streets (one mile south and southwest of the Fitchburg Yarn Mill). The area was named for Andrew Cleghorn, proprietor of the Parkhill Manufacturing complex, because its inhabitants were so often referred to as "Cleghorn's Canadians."

The first wave of Greek immigrants came to America ca. 1890 to escape the restrictive rule of Ottoman Turks, due primarily to a new Turkish tax system created to destroy small businesses throughout the country. While early immigrants and their families worked hard to establish themselves and create Greek-American communities, the number of Greeks who immigrated to America dramatically decreased in the 1920s due to a shift in American immigration laws. The terms of the 1921 quota system specified the maximum number of persons admitted into the nation, quickly followed by the Immigration Act of 1924, which established fixed quotas of national origin. Following this legislation, the number of Greek immigrants entering the United States dropped to below 1,300 annually. The 1965 Immigration Act ended the national quota system, and initiated a new wave of roughly 11,000 Greek immigrants to the United States in the successive years. Most, however, settled primarily in New York City and the surrounding boroughs.

### **Archaeological Significance**

Since patterns of ancient Native American subsistence and settlement are poorly understood, any surviving sites could be significant. Ancient sites in this area may contribute important information related to the role and importance of upland/interior sites within local/regional Native American subsistence and settlement systems. Ancient sites located on the mill property may contribute information that indicates the importance of sites in the North Nashua River drainage to sites within the larger Nashua River/Merrimack River system. Native sites in this area could be part of a larger, possibly seasonal, settlement network of sites based upon the North Nashua River and the Merrimack River, or part of a specialized adaptation to local environments in the northern central Massachusetts uplands and Worcester Plateau locate. Many subsistence and settlement theories indicate prehistoric socio/political/economic boundaries are based within riverine basins. Ancient sites in the district may enable a test of various theories relating to riverine adaptations, and the importance of ranked streams within the same overall drainage.

Historic archaeological resources described above may contribute important information related to the late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century industrial development and manufacturing industry of Fitchburg. Detailed analysis of structural remains and the contents of industrial trash deposits may contribute information related to the architecture of mill buildings and the different stages of the textile manufacturing process. Archaeological resources may contribute information that supplements documentary sources describing the architecture of mill buildings and the raw materials, technology, and products used and produced through the manufacturing process. Important information may also survive relating to the working conditions of mill workers.

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

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Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

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Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
 Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
 County and State

**Fitchburg Yarn Mill Data Sheet**

Photo No.	Address	MHC No.	Resource Name	Date	Style	Type/Status
1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 20, 22	1428 Main Street	FIT.520	Building No. 1	1907; 1919	Industrial	B/C
1, 6, 8	1428 Main Street	FIT.520	Building No. 2	1907	Industrial	B/C
9, 10, 15, 18, 19	1428 Main Street	FIT.520	Building No. 3 (Engine Room)	1907	Industrial	B/C
6, 8, 9	1428 Main Street	FIT.520	Building No. 4 (Boiler House)	1907	Industrial	B/C
5, 6, 8, 16, 22	1428 Main Street	FIT.520	Building No. 6 (Picker House)	1919	Industrial	B/C
5, 8, 10	1428 Main Street	FIT.520	Smokestack	1907	n/a	S/C
1, 3, 4	1428 Main Street	FIT.520	Building No. 7 (Office Building)	ca. 1940	Industrial	B/C
7	1428 Main Street	FIT.520	Railroad Trestle Foundation	1907	n/a	S/C
1	1428 Main Street	FIT.520	Truss Bridge	ca. 1915-1936	n/a	S/C
7	1428 Main Street	FIT.520	Retaining Wall	1907	n/a	S/C

Totals: 6 contributing buildings, 4 contributing structures

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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



Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** FIT.520

---

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 8.5 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

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

1. Latitude: \_\_\_\_\_ Longitude: \_\_\_\_\_

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |              |                    |                      |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Zone: 19N | Easting: 269088.62 | Northing: 4718830.92 |
| 2. Zone:     | Easting:           | Northing:            |
| 3. Zone:     | Easting:           | Northing:            |
| 4. Zone:     | Easting :          | Northing:            |

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

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

The Fitchburg Yarn Company includes the 8.5-acre parcel of land located at 1428 Main Street in Fitchburg, MA, identified as parcel number 8-0 on map 27 by the City of Fitchburg's property assessment data. The parcel, which extends on to maps 16 and 17, is bound to the north by West and Main streets, to the east by a parcel of land located at 1324 Main Street, to the south by the North Nashua River, and to the west by Sheldon Street.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is limited to the parcel of land historically associated with the historic resources of Fitchburg Yarn Company as shown on the accompanying datasheet.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Alisa Augenstein and Maureen Cavanaugh, VHB,  
organization: with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission  
street & number: 220 Morrissey Boulevard  
city or town: Boston state: MA zip code: 02125  
e-mail: Betsy.Friedberg@sec.state.ma.us  
telephone: 617-727-8470  
date: October, 2016

---

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

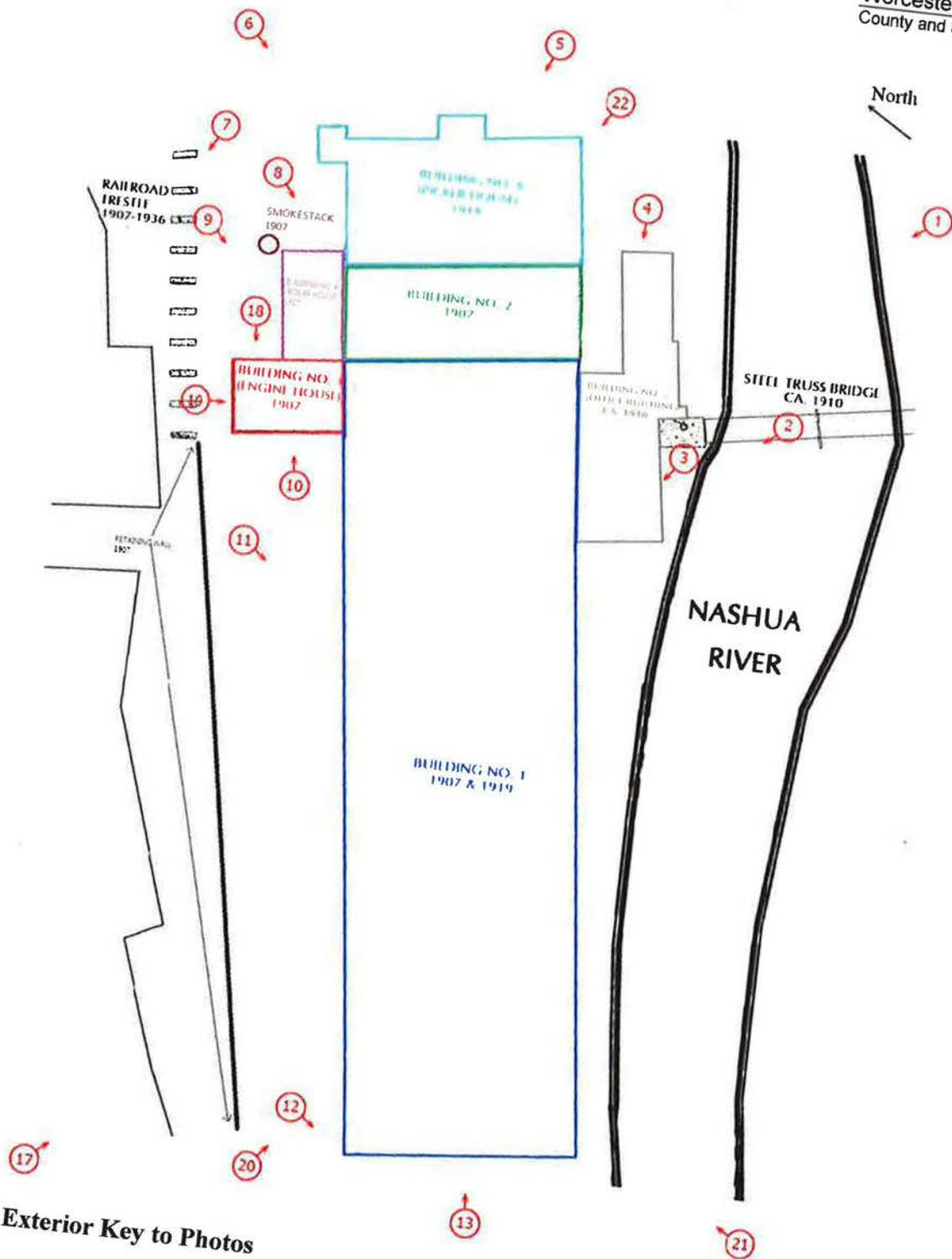


Figure 1: Exterior Key to Photos

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

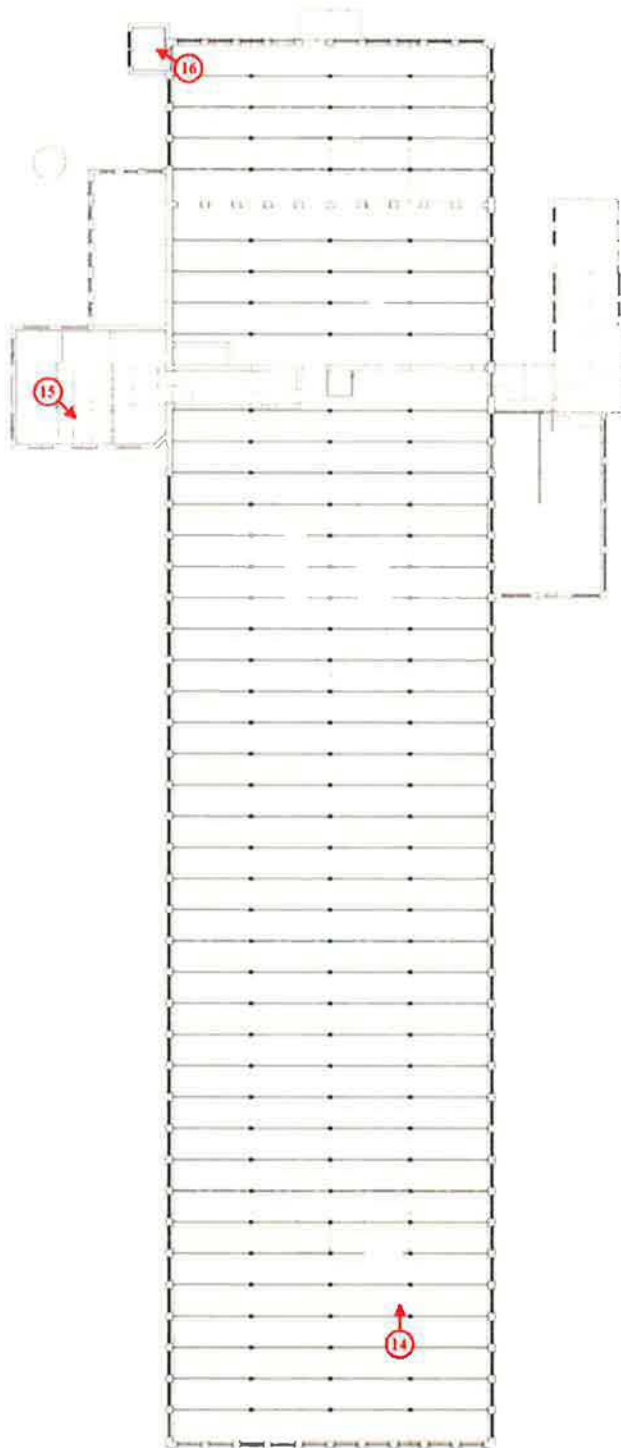
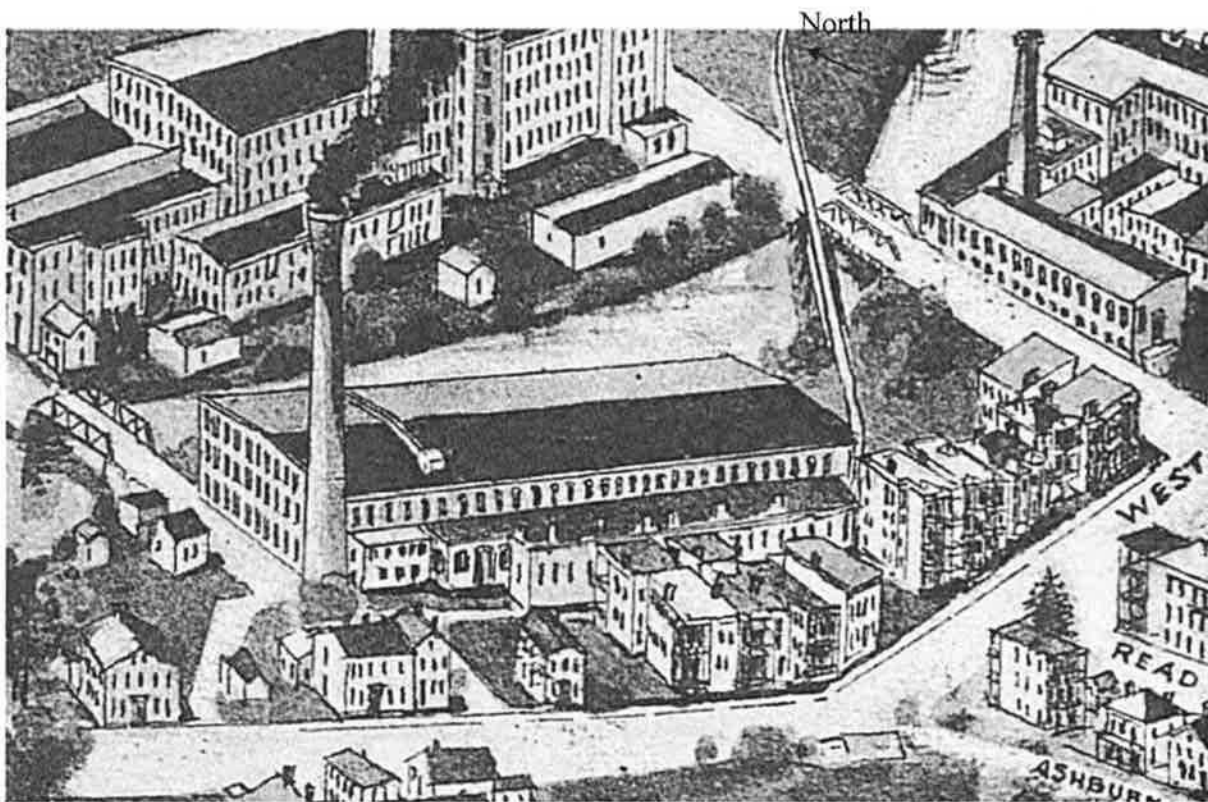


Figure 2: Interior Key to Photos, Second Floor

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State



**Figure 3: Fitchburg Yarn Mill at center. Aero View of Fitchburg, MA, 1915.**  
(Source: Aero View of Fitchburg, MA, 1915. New York, NY: Hughes & Bailey, 1916)

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

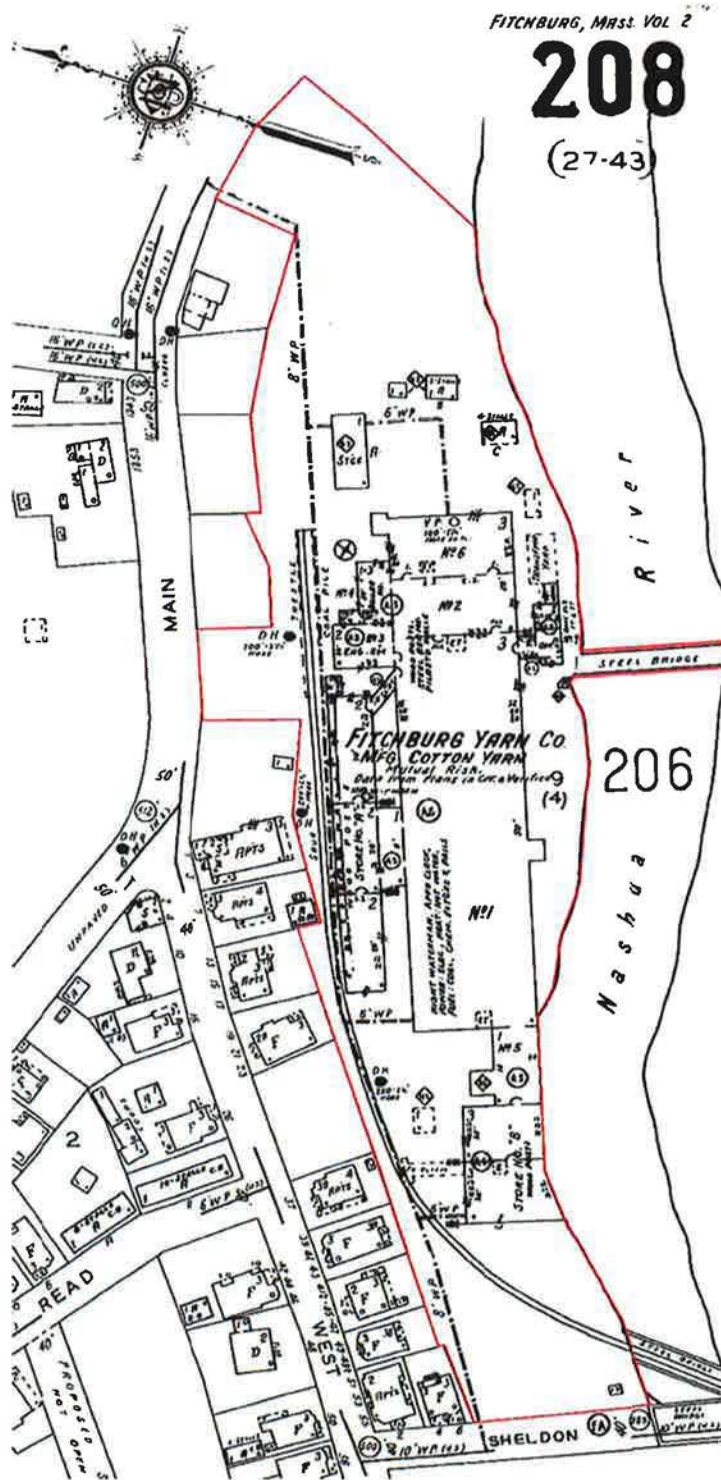


Figure 4: Sanborn Insurance Map of Fitchburg, MA, 1936.  
(Source: Sanborn Map Company, New York)

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

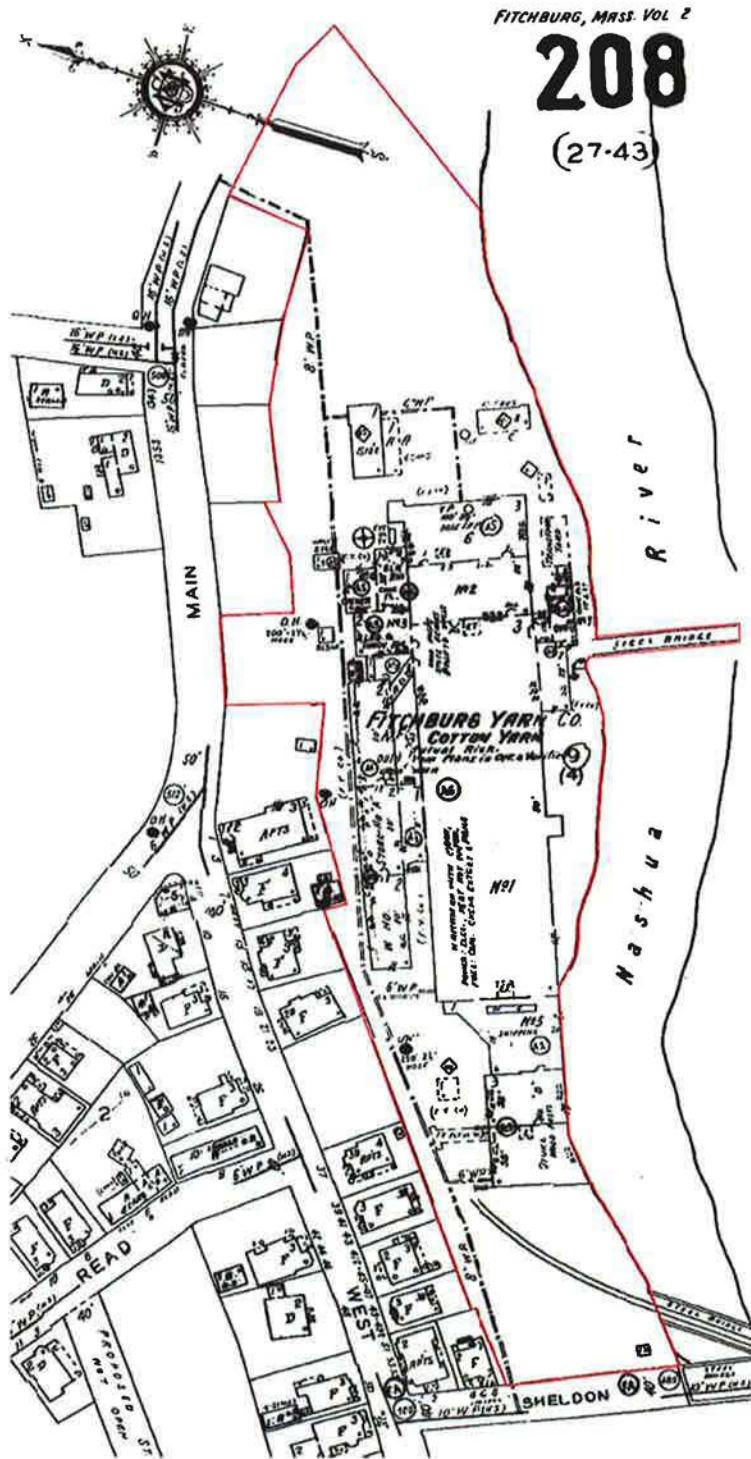
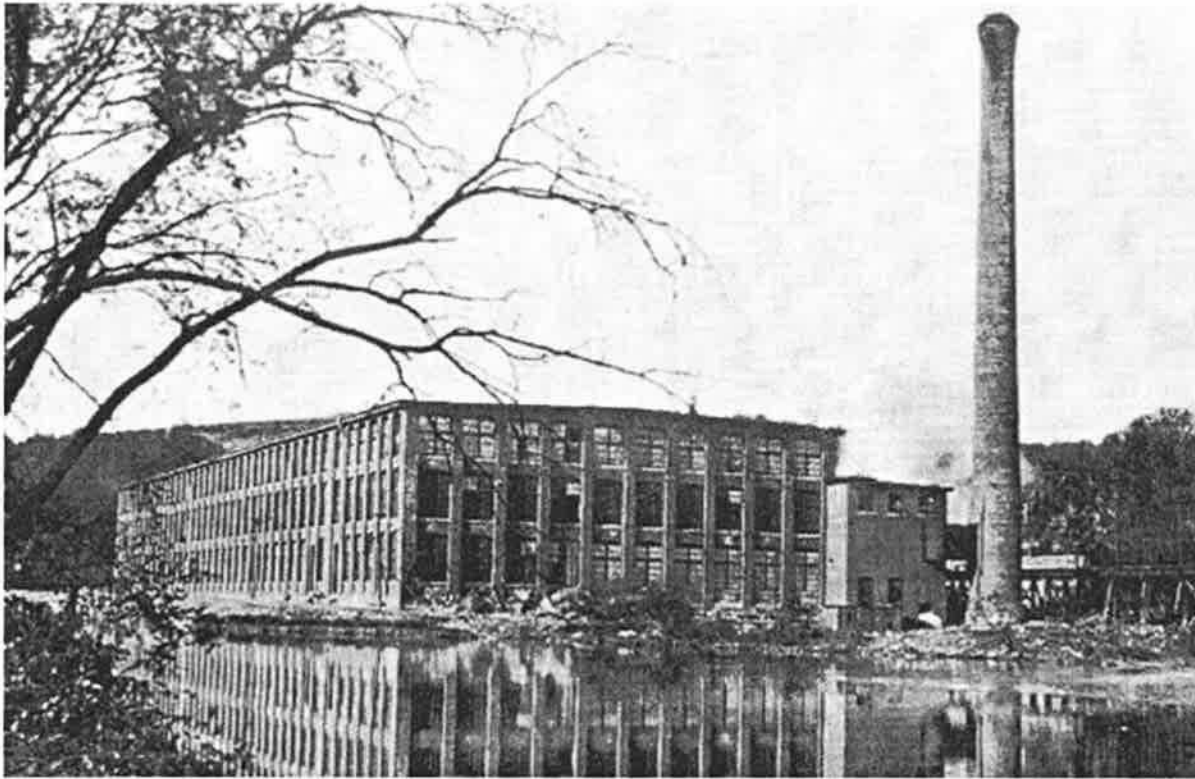


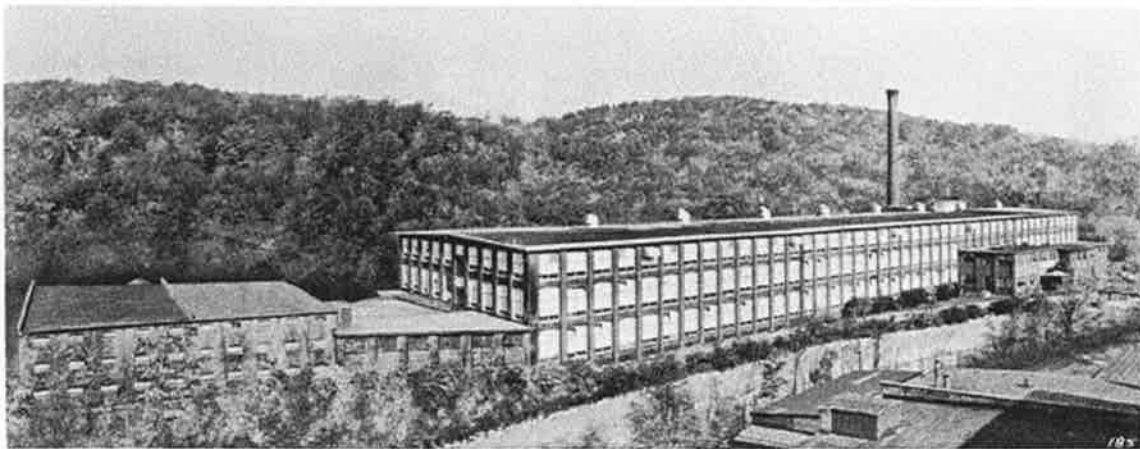
Figure 5: Sanborn Insurance Map of Fitchburg, MA, 1950.  
(Source: Sanborn Map Company, New York)

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State



**Figure 6: View northwest of the Fitchburg Yarn Mill, 1907.**  
(Source: *Fibre & Fabric*, Boston, MA: November 2, 1907, 1)

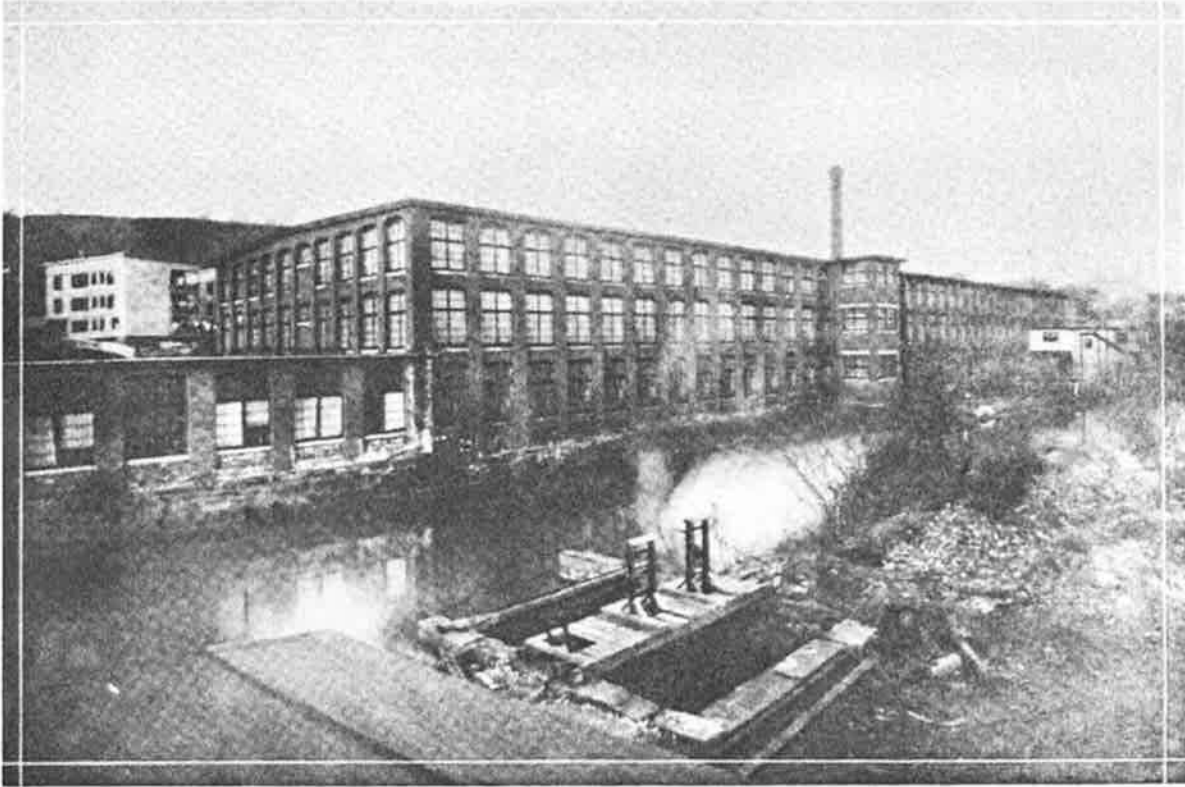


**Figure 7: View northeast of the Fitchburg Yarn Mill, date unknown.**  
(Source: American Textile History Museum, Lowell, MA)



Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State



**FITCHBURG YARN CO., FITCHBURG, MASS.  
Cotton Spinning Mill.**

**Figure 8: View northeast of Fitchburg Yarn Mill, 1921.**

(Source: A Half Century of Achievement, Providence, RI: F. P. Sheldon & Son, 1921)

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State



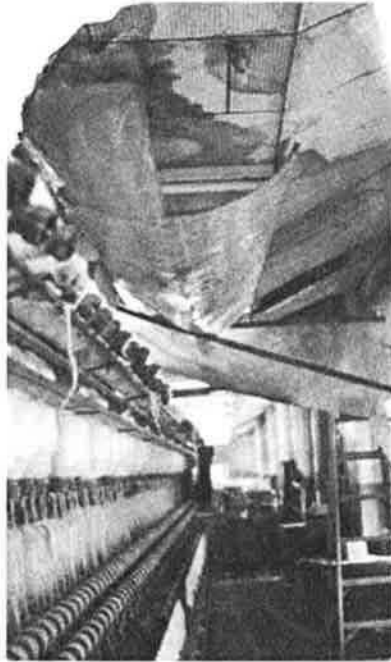
**Figure 9: Fitchburg Yarn Mill's 1935 yarn advertisement.**  
(Source: The Fitchburg Sentinel, April 17, 1935)



**Figure 10: View of the manufacturing floor at the Fitchburg Yarn Mill, 1968.**  
(Source: Fitchburg Historical Society)

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State



**Figure 11: Manufacturing floor at the Fitchburg Yarn Mill, 1968.**

(Source: Fitchburg Historical Society)



**Figure 12: M. Fred Thomas, vice president and general manager of the Fitchburg Yarn Mill, date unknown.**

(Source: Fitchburg Historical Society)

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

### Photos

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Fitchburg Yarn Mill

City or Vicinity: Fitchburg

County: Worcester State: MA

Photographer: Brian Graves, Epsilon Associates, Inc.

Date Photographed: January 4, 2011, March 26, 2014, March 31 2015,  
October 7, 2015, April 6, 2016, September, 2016

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

1 of 22

MA\_Fitchburg(Worcester County)\_Fitchburg Yarn Mill\_0001.jpg

View northwest of the North Nashua River and Buildings No. 1, 2, 6 (Picker House), 7 (Office Building) and steel truss bridge. Photographed April 6, 2016.

2 of 22

MA\_Fitchburg(Worcester County)\_Fitchburg Yarn Mill\_0002.jpg

View northwest of the North Nashua River and Building No. 1. Photographed January 4, 2011.

3 of 22

MA\_Fitchburg(Worcester County)\_Fitchburg Yarn Mill\_0003.jpg

View northwest of Building No. 7 (Office Building). Photographed January 4, 2011.

4 of 22

MA\_Fitchburg(Worcester County)\_Fitchburg Yarn Mill\_0004.jpg

View west of Building No. 7 (Office Building). Photographed January 4, 2011.

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

5 of 22

MA\_Fitchburg(Worcester County)\_Fitchburg Yarn Mill\_0005.jpg  
View west of Building No. 6 (Picker House) and the smokestack.  
Photographed Sept. 2016.

6 of 22

MA\_Fitchburg(Worcester County)\_Fitchburg Yarn Mill\_0006.jpg  
View southwest of Building No. 6 (Picker House), detail of corner toilet block, and Buildings  
No. 2 and 4 (Boiler House). Photographed Sept. 2016

7 of 22

MA\_Fitchburg(Worcester County)\_Fitchburg Yarn Mill\_0007.jpg  
View west of the railroad trestle foundation and retaining wall. Photographed January 4,  
2011.

8 of 22

MA\_Fitchburg(Worcester County)\_Fitchburg Yarn Mill\_0008.jpg  
View southwest of Buildings No. 6 (Picker House), 2, 4 (Boiler House) and the smokestack  
(left to right). Photographed March 31, 2015.

9 of 22

MA\_Fitchburg(Worcester County)\_Fitchburg Yarn Mill\_0009.jpg  
View southwest of Building No. 4 (Boiler House), the single-story addition ( demolished),  
and Building No. 3 (Engine Room). Photographed March 31, 2015.

10 of 22

MA\_Fitchburg(Worcester County)\_Fitchburg Yarn Mill\_0010.jpg  
View east of Building No. 3 (Engine Room), detail of monumental arched windows, and  
smokestack. Photographed Sept. 2016

11 of 22

MA\_Fitchburg(Worcester County)\_Fitchburg Yarn Mill\_0011.jpg  
View southwest of Building No. 1. Photographed Sept. 2016.

12 of 22

MA\_Fitchburg(Worcester County)\_Fitchburg Yarn Mill\_0012.jpg  
View southwest of the main entrance at the west end of Building No. 1.  
Photographed March 31, 2015.

13 of 22

MA\_Fitchburg(Worcester County)\_Fitchburg Yarn Mill\_0013.jpg  
View east of Building No. 1. Photographed Sept. 2016

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

14 of 22

MA\_Fitchburg(Worcester County)\_Fitchburg Yarn Mill\_0014.jpg

View east, second floor of Building No. 1. Photographed January 4, 2011.

15 of 22

MA\_Fitchburg(Worcester County)\_Fitchburg Yarn Mill\_0015.jpg

View northeast, second floor of Building No. 3 (Engine Room).

Photographed March 31, 2015.

16 of 22

MA\_Fitchburg(Worcester County)\_Fitchburg Yarn Mill\_0016.jpg

View northeast, second floor of Building No. 6 (Picker House), toilet block.

Photographed March 31, 2015.

17 of 22 Looking southeast at building 1 (west and south elevations). Photographed Sept. 2016

18 of 22 Looking southwest at building 3 (north elevation). Photographed Sept. 2016

19 of 22 Looking south at building 3 (north elevation). Photographed Sept. 2016

20 of 22 Looking east at building 1 (west and north elevations) Photographed Sept. 2016

21 of 22 Looking northeast at building 1 (south and west elevations) Photographed Sept. 2016

22 of 22 Looking northwest at Building 6, picker house (south and east elevation. Photographed Sept. 2016

## **Figures**

Figure 1: Exterior Key to Photos.

Figure 2: Interior Key to Photos, Second Floor.

Figure 3: Fitchburg Yarn Mill at center. Aero View of Fitchburg, MA, 1915.  
(Source: *Aero View of Fitchburg, MA, 1915*, New York, NY: Hughes & Bailey, 1916)

Figure 4: Sanborn Insurance Map of Fitchburg, MA, 1936.  
(Source: Sanborn Map Company, New York)

Figure 5: Sanborn Insurance Map of Fitchburg, MA, 1950.  
(Source: Sanborn Map Company, New York)

Fitchburg Yarn Mill  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

Figure 6: View northwest of the Fitchburg Yarn Mill, 1907.  
(Source: *Fiber & Fabric*, Boston, MA: November 2, 1907, 1)

Figure 7: View northeast of the Fitchburg Yarn Mill, date unknown.  
(Source: American Textile History Museum, Lowell, MA)

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(Source: Fitchburg Historical Society)

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(Fitchburg Historical Society)

Figure 12: M. Fred Thomas, vice president and general manager of the Fitchburg Yarn Mill,  
date unknown. (Source: Fitchburg Historical Society)

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

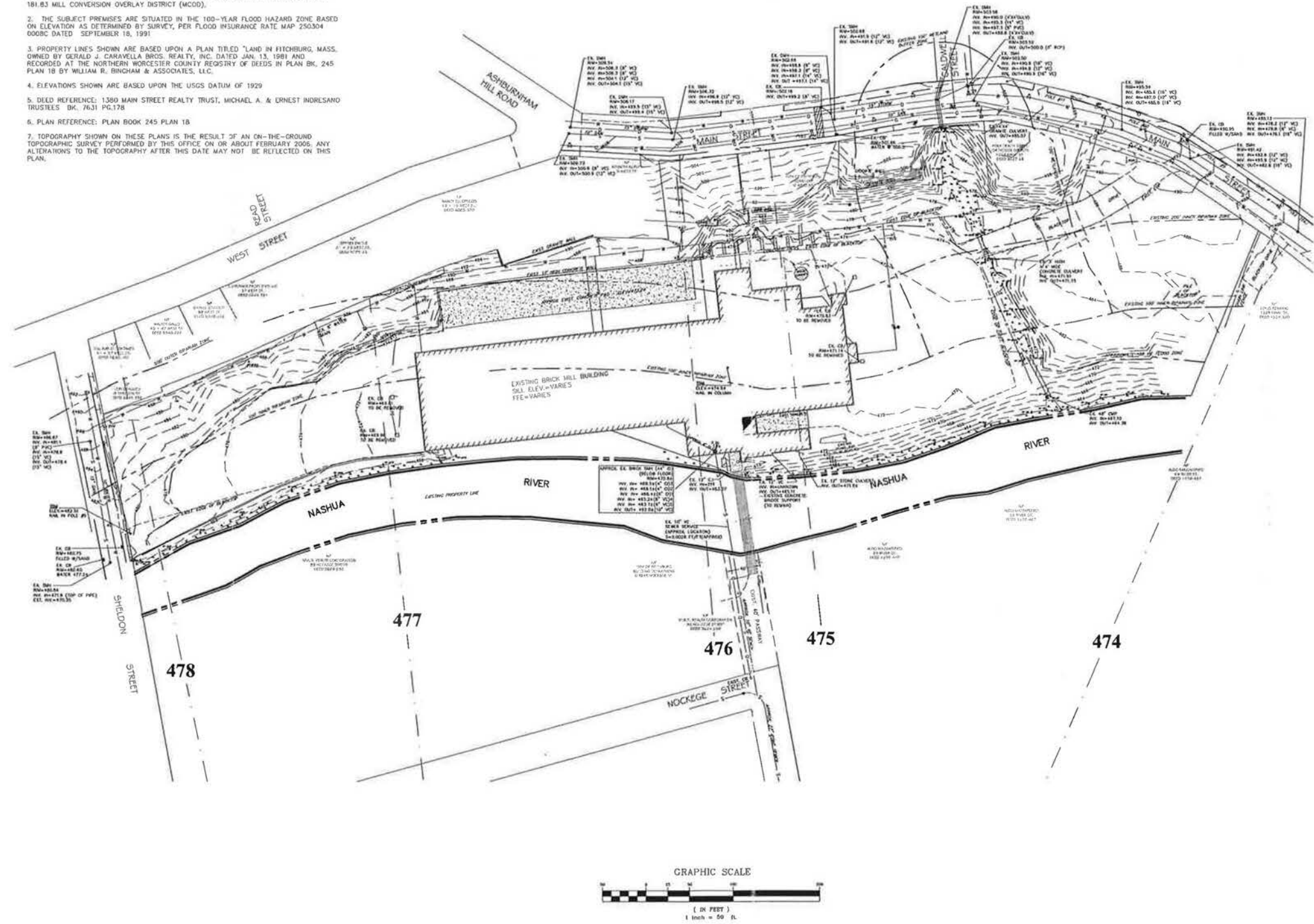
FITCHBURG  
YARN MILL

FITCHBURG  
(WORCESTER) MA

**tat**  
the architectural team

The Architectural Team, Inc.  
50 Commandant's Way at Admira's Hill  
Chelsea MA 02150  
T 617.889.4402  
F 617.884.4329  
www.architecturalteam.com  
©2008 The Architectural Team, Inc.

- NOTES:
1. THE SUBJECT PREMISES ARE GRAPHICALLY SITUATED IN THE INDUSTRIAL ZONING DISTRICT, WITH THE FOLLOWING MINIMUM DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS:  
MINIMUM LOT FRONTAGE: 20'  
MINIMUM LOT AREA: NONE  
MINIMUM FRONT SETBACK: 20'  
MINIMUM SIDE SETBACK: 25'  
MINIMUM REAR SETBACK: 20'
  2. THE SUBJECT PREMISES ARE SITUATED IN THE 100-YEAR FLOOD HAZARD ZONE BASED ON ELEVATION AS DETERMINED BY SURVEY, PER FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAP 250304 000BC DATED SEPTEMBER 18, 1991
  3. PROPERTY LINES SHOWN ARE BASED UPON A PLAN TITLED "LAND IN FITCHBURG, MASS. OWNED BY GERALD J. CARAVELLA BROS. REALTY, INC. DATED JAN. 13, 1981 AND RECORDED AT THE NORTHERN WORCESTER COUNTY REGISTRY OF DEEDS IN PLAN BK. 245 PLAN 18 BY WILLIAM R. BINHAM & ASSOCIATES, LLC.
  4. ELEVATIONS SHOWN ARE BASED UPON THE USGS DATUM OF 1929
  5. DEED REFERENCE: 1380 MAIN STREET REALTY TRUST, MICHAEL A. & ERNEST INDRESANO TRUSTEES BK. 7631 PG.178
  6. PLAN REFERENCE: PLAN BOOK 245 PLAN 18
  7. TOPOGRAPHY SHOWN ON THESE PLANS IS THE RESULT OF AN ON-THE-GROUND TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY PERFORMED BY THIS OFFICE ON OR ABOUT FEBRUARY 2005. ANY ALTERATIONS TO THE TOPOGRAPHY AFTER THIS DATE MAY NOT BE REFLECTED ON THIS PLAN.



Consultant:  
**WHITMAN BINGHAM**  
ASSOCIATES  
REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYORS  
1000 STATE STREET  
FITCHBURG, MASSACHUSETTS 01525

Revision:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Architect of Record:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Drawn: AMC  
Checked: BFM  
Scale: AS NOTED  
Key Plan:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Project Name:  
**Fitchburg Yarn Lofts**

**Nockege Mill  
Fitchburg, MA**

Sheet Name:  
**EXISTING  
CONDITIONS  
PLAN**

Project Number:  
**13125**

Issue Date:  
**MARCH 20, 2015**

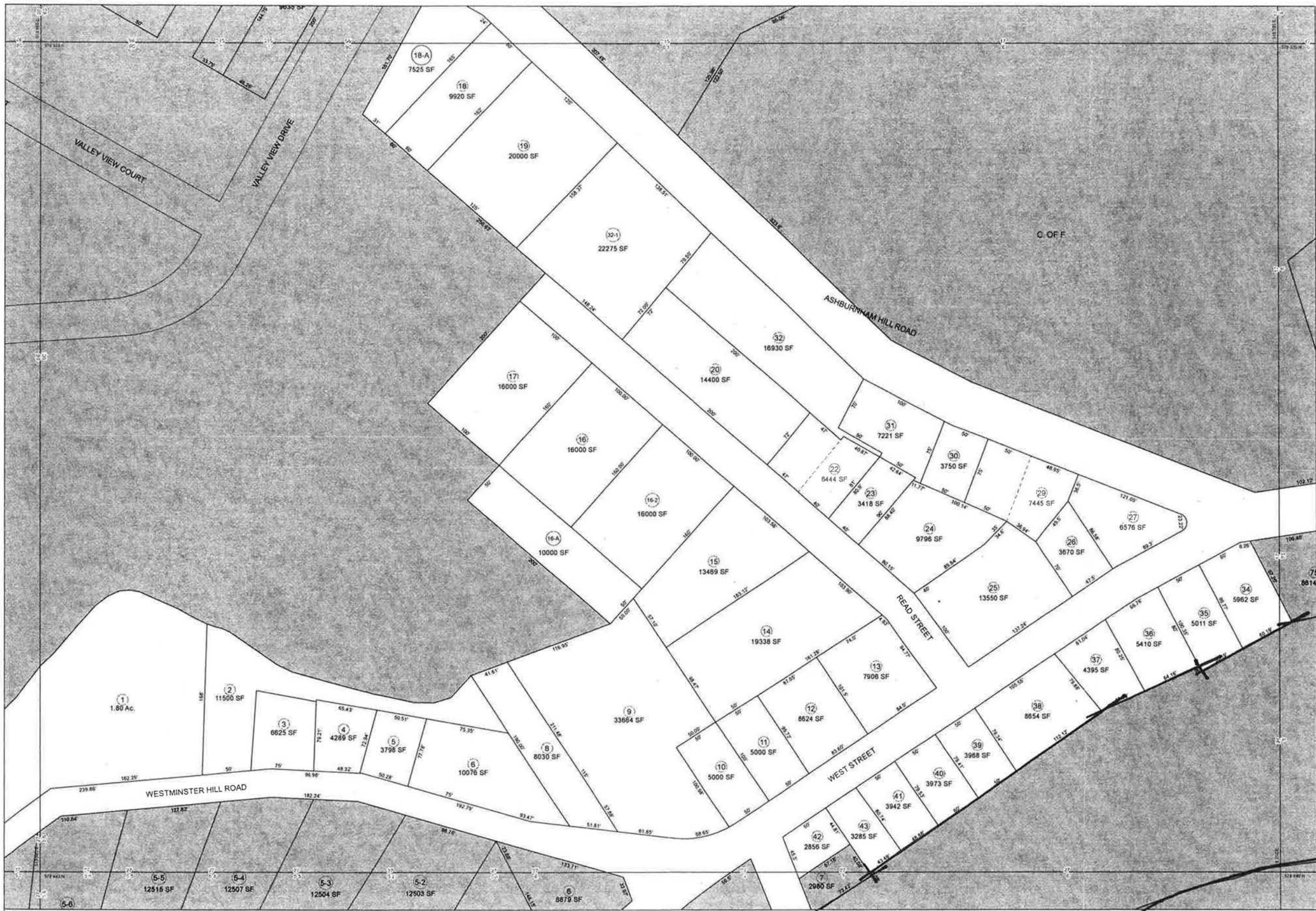
Sheet Number:  
**EX 1.00**

Friday, March 20, 2015 10:00:00 AM  
H:\Dwg\Fitchburg\miller-ashburnham.dwg



FITCHBURG  
YARN MILL

FITCHBURG  
(WORCESTER) MA



### CITY OF FITCHBURG MASSACHUSETTS

Parcel boundaries shown on this map are for  
assessment and planning purposes only.

Scale: 1 inch = 40 feet  
0 36 666666 623333333110 220 Feet

**Legend**

- Easement
- Historic Lot Line
- Open water
- Wetland
- Parcel on adjacent map

Sheet Number:  
**16**

56R	60R	61R	62R
65R	69R	70R	71R
77R	78R	79R	80R
86R	87R	88R	89R
94R	95R	96R	97R
102R	103R	104R	105R
110R	111R	112R	113R
118R	119R	120R	121R

214 09504	215 09505	8 09601
	16 09510	17 09606
26 09514	27 09515	28 09611



Map Produced By:  
**AppGeo**  
January 2013

**MAP 1 of 3**







7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE SHOWING

- Contours and elevations in meters
- Highways, roads and other manmade structures
- Water features
- Woodland areas
- Geographic names



USGS AND HISTORICAL MAP 1988 GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

1988

Produced by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with Massachusetts Department of Public Works Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts agencies. Map edited 1988. Supersedes Fitchburg 1969 and Gardner 1970 1:25,000-scale maps. Projection and 1000-meter grid, zone 19 Universal Transverse Mercator. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate system, mainland zone. 1927 North American Datum. To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 6 meters south and 39 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks. There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State Reservations shown on this map. Gray tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown. Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is uncheckered.

CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS  
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
 CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER  
 OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER  
 THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

CONVERSION TABLE		DECLINATION DIAGRAM		ADJOINING MAPS			
Meters	Feet	GN	MN	1	2	3	
1	3.2808			4	5		
3	9.8425			6	7	8	
5	16.4042			1	Winchendon		
6	18.0450			2	Ashburnham		
7	22.9660			3	Townsend		
8	24.5470			4	Andover		
9	28.3470			5	Amherst		
10	32.8084			6	Barre		
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808				UTM grid convergence (GN and 1983 magnetic declination MN) at center of map diagram is approximate		7	Ware
To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048						8	Hudson

FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

Topographic Map Symbols

- Primary highway, hard surface
- Secondary highway, hard surface
- Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
- Unimproved road, track
- Route marker: Interstate, U. S. State
- Railroad: standard gage; narrow gage
- Bridge: drawbridge
- Facilities: swamps; underpass
- Build-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown
- House; barn; church; school; large structure
- Boundary: National, with monument; State; County, parish; Civil township, precinct, district; Incorporated city, village, town; National or State reservation; small park; Land grant with monument; found section corner; U. S. public lands survey; range, township, section; Range, township; section line: location approximate; Fence or field line; Power transmission line, located tower; Dam; dam with lock; Cemetery; grave; Campground; picnic area; U. S. National monument; Windmill; water well; spring; Mine shaft; prospect; adit or cave; Control: horizontal station; vertical station; spot elevation; Contour: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression; Distorted surface: strip mine, lava, sand; Bathymetric contours: index; intermediate; Perennial lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream; Rapids, large and small; falls, large and small; Swamp; marsh; Submerged marsh; land subject to controlled inundation; Woodland; scattered trees; Sand; mangrove; Orchard; vineyard

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request



























Welcome to  
**NOCKEGE  
RIVER MILLS**  
*Executive Offices*



Any person who enters  
the premises of this facility  
hereby acknowledges and  
consents without limitation to  
be monitored for through  
the use of video and  
**CAMERA AND TELEPHONE**  
recording equipment by  
our Security Alarm Data Division





FIRE DEPARTMENT  
CONTRACTOR  
MUSIC

ARCHIVE FIRE PROTECTION CO.  
910-213-2247

ALL OTHERS MUST  
CALL 910-213-2247  
FOR A PERMIT







TOMMY  
LIKES  
ELEPHANT  
COCK





United Rentals

S-6





FIRE DEPARTMENT  
CONECTOR  
INSIDE







CTION CO.  
83





**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

October 15, 2016

Mr. J. Paul Loether  
National Register of Historic Places  
Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street, NW, 8<sup>th</sup> floor  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed please find the following nomination forms:

Fitchburg Yarn Mill, 1428 Main Street, Fitchburg (Worcester), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property in the Certified Local Government community of Plymouth were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 60 to 90 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

We request that the review of this nomination be expedited by shortening the Federal Register review period.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg  
National Register Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Alisa Augenstein, VHB, consultant  
Sam Blair, Fitchburg Historical Commission  
LeAnn Hanfield, Winn Development  
Stephen DiNatale, Mayor, City of Fitchburg  
Paula Caron, Fitchburg Planning Board