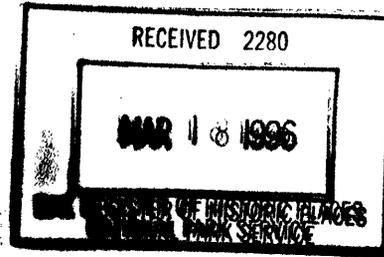


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name \_\_\_\_\_

other names/site number Main Street Historic District

2. Location

street & number See continuation sheet.  not for publication

city or town Manchester  vicinity

state Connecticut code CT county Hartford code 003 zip code 06040

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

John W. Shanahan 03/11/96  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

John W. Shanahan, Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action  
4-18-96

Entered in the  
National Register

Name of Property

County and State

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)
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
45	12	buildings
2	1	sites
		structures
3	1	objects
50	14	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store/business/  
 professional  
 GOVERNMENT/town hall/post office/courthouse  
 DOMESTIC/dwelling/hotel  
 RELIGION/church

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/speciality store/business/  
 restaurant/financial insitution  
 GOVERNMENT/town hall/ post office/courthouse  
 DOMESTIC/dwelling/business  
 RELIGION/church

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

19TH and 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/ Colonial  
 Revival/Gothic Revival  
 EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/  
 Commercial; LATE VICTORIAN/Romanesque

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone  
 walls brick  
 roof asphalt  
 other built-up/slate

Narrative Description

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

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Main Street Historic District, Manchester, Hartford County, Connecticut

Section number   2   Page   1  

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**2. Location**

Bissell Street: 18-20.

Center Street: 11, 41, 66.

East Center Street: 25, 52, 70-74.

Main Street: 479, 489, 494, 555, 575, 586, Center Park, 595, 599, 615-619, 623, 627-639,  
661, 669, 681, 687-691, 695-701, 705-713, 717-723, 745, 750, 757-763,  
765-773, 775-777, 785-793, 801-809, 806-814, 811, 819, 822, 832-848, 841-857  
867-877, 881, 887-893, 896, 901-907, 913-923, 935, 945-963, 969-985,  
989-991, 1007-1015, 1041, 1063-1067, 1069-1073, 1077-1081.

Oak Street: 22, 24-32, 34, 38.

Purnell Place: 13-17, 20, 24, 46-48.

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National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
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Main Street Historic District, Manchester, Hartford County, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 1

The Main Street Historic District comprises the commercial and institutional center of Manchester. A linear district running almost due north and south along Main Street for about seven-tenths of a mile, it includes a portion of Center and East Center Streets on its northern end and the beginning of several secondary streets that intersect with Main Street along its length (see attached district map). The district includes 64 resources (buildings and objects), of which 50 (78%) are contributing. Constructed mainly from about 1890 through the early twentieth century, the historic buildings reflect the principal styles of that period. The Colonial Revival style predominates, with a considerable degree of classical influence and some examples of Art Deco detailing. With few exceptions, buildings were constructed of brick in a range of hues and patterns, trimmed in limestone or concrete. Except for the 1948 Jarvis Building (Inventory #38), all the contributing buildings are more than 50 years old. Of the 13 non-contributing buildings, ten were constructed after 1948 and three are earlier historic resources that are no longer contributing because of extensive remodeling or alterations.

To the south and west of the proposed district is another historic district associated with development of the Cheney silk mills. Nominated in 1978 as a National Historic Landmark, it encompasses most of the Cheney's manufacturing village to the west and extends east to include several school buildings on Main Street, thereby abutting the southern border of the present district at Eldridge Street. To the east and west of the district are residential neighborhoods, primarily composed of one-family dwellings which are generally contemporaneous with the period of the district.

Main Street is a broad avenue almost 100 feet wide, allowing for angled parking along its length on both sides and four traffic lanes. Most of the historic commercial development in the district is found along the seven blocks on the east side of the district from Eldridge to East Center Streets, with most of the modern commercial buildings near the north end. Service alleys extend behind the three southernmost blocks, where there are also large parking lots. One of these alleys, named Purnell Place, swings back to the west to intersect with Main Street. On the west side of the street, the district begins farther north at St. James Street. Resources there include one historic commercial block, a church, two residences, and a major town park at the north end. Within the park grounds are several public buildings. Together with several other nearby buildings, they comprise the institutional and municipal center of Manchester.

The classical influence is most obvious in the predominately Colonial Revival-style institutional cluster at the head of the district. Built over a 40-year period, these masonry structures share common motifs and architectural features, especially projecting pavilions or porticos. Often full-height columns dominate their facades, a design exemplified by the Manchester's Municipal Building at the northwest corner of the district (Inventory #4; Photograph #1). Constructed in 1926 of brick and limestone, it employs the Corinthian order in its columned pedimented portico. A large oval cartouche with swags enriches the tympanum of the modillioned and denticulated pediment; the same modillion course continues around the building's cornice. A two-stage cupola, resting on a quoined base and capped by a gilded dome, extends from the center of the roof. On a large open lot to the east is the 1903 Center Congregational Church, the only wood-framed example in this group (Inventory #3; Photograph #2). While the porticoed facade has retained its clapboarding, the other elevations are sheathed in vinyl siding. Sheltered behind the columns of the Doric portico are three entrances capped with segmental-arched pediments supported by fluted brackets; each is surmounted by a swagged panel with corner blocks. Large wooden quoins that embellish the facade at the corners are also found on either side of the portico, which is also flanked by tall round-arched windows with key blocks. The four sides of the first stage of the steepled tower, which rises in front of a steep hipped roof, mimic the design of the portico with pilasters enframing round-arched louvered openings. A large two-story red-brick addition with a slate roof, which was built in 1958 to the back of the lot to the west, extends across and connects to the rear

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Main Street Historic District, Manchester, Hartford County, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 2

of the church. Its design utilizes a simplified pavilioned entrance with a triple-arched entry on its south facade. Northeast of the church, another more stylized slightly projecting pavilion enhances the main entrance of the former 1913 Lincoln School, also constructed of red brick (Inventory #11). Now called Lincoln Center, it houses town offices.

Across the street to the south is Center Park (also known as Cheney Park), which occupies a full block (Inventory #15). Laid out in 1905 in the informal manner of the period with winding pathways and natural landscaping, it is the site of several war memorials and a unique bronze sculpture, the Dancing Bears Fountain, designed by Albert Humphries (Inventory #s 17, 18, 18a, 16; Photograph #3). The park is also the site of two more classically inspired Colonial Revival public buildings. The earlier example, the former Hall of Records (now Probate Court) at the northwest corner, was built of amber brick in 1896 (Inventory #5; Photograph #4). Palladian windows in slightly recessed brick arches enhance its symmetrically balanced facade and side elevations. A modillioned pediment capping the slightly projecting pavilion breaks the eave line of the shallow hipped roof. Similar details are found in the 1937 Mary Cheney Library to the southeast on Main Street, also on park grounds (Inventory #14; Photograph #5). A long low red-brick building with a central pedimented portico and round-arched windows with tracery, its classical symmetry was maintained when the two nearly matching wings were added at either end in 1961.

The U. S. Post Office, built at the northeast corner of Main and East Center Streets in 1932, incorporates both Georgian and Colonial Revival influences in its design (Inventory #9; Photograph #6). Its porticoed entrance, set on an angled facade which cuts across the corner, utilizes limestone columns with Ionic capitals. It is flanked by tall round-arched windows with keystones, features found on the secondary facades facing each street. A brick and limestone frieze forms a parapet for the hipped slate roof, which is surmounted by a cupola. The immediate neighbor to the east is the 1926 Neo-Classical Masonic Temple, which has a recessed entrance *in antis* flanked by three-story columns (Inventory #6).

Across the street here are two additional major Colonial Revival buildings, Orange Hall and the Southern New England Telephone Exchange (Inventory #s 8, 7; Photograph #7). Built in 1902 as a meeting hall with commercial establishments at street level, Orange Hall has a facade elaborated by white-painted bricks around its central Palladian window and pilasters of alternating brick and limestone. The front gable is detailed with a modillioned cornice and cresting. Brick piers set off the original plate glass storefronts, and the central recessed round-arched, street-level entrance to the second floor has brick voussoirs and repeats the keystone found above the facade windows. The original portion of the Southern New England Telephone Exchange to the immediate west was built in 1929. Its stylized facade demonstrates the influence of Art Deco with concrete pilasters terminating in Greek fret capitals and the use of geometric patera blocks at the corners of concrete window lintels. A large c. 1950 brick rear addition is now connected to a new exchange building that extends almost to Main Street on the west. It replaced the Odd Fellows Hall located there. Part of that site is occupied by the Vietnam Memorial Park with its c. 1985 monument (Inventory #10).

Farther south on Main Street are the last of the free-standing institutional buildings in the district, the 1908 Salvation Army Citadel and 1876 St. James Church. The Citadel, a Military Gothic building built of red brick on the east side of the street, displays crenellated octagonal towers at the corners but its round-arched windows and central entrance are more Romanesque in feeling (Inventory #25; Photograph #8). The design of St. James Church, the earliest building in the district, is fully Gothic Revival in the ecclesiastical manner. Sheathed in aluminum siding, it utilizes a buttressed Basilican plan with a corner tower (steeple missing) on the left and displays lancet-arched windows (Inventory #48; Photograph #9). The arch of the main facade window has been filled in but

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Continuation Sheet**

Main Street Historic District, Manchester, Hartford County, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 3

its stained-glass rose window remains. The nearby 1892 rectory was remodeled in the Colonial Revival style in the 1920s (Inventory #47; Photograph #9).

Fully three-quarters of the historic buildings in the district were devoted to commerce. Then as now, the first level was used for retail businesses and the upper floors for apartments or offices.<sup>1</sup> There is a high concentration between Maple and Oak Streets on the east side of Main Street, an unbroken commercial stretch that illustrates the general appearance of Manchester's downtown business district as it developed in these three blocks from 1894 to 1920 (Streetscape Photographs #s 10, 11, 12). Here, the historic commercial buildings, which range in height from one to four stories, may share common or party walls, or be free-standing structures. The single commercial block on the west dates from 1928 to 1948 (Photograph #13).

Most of the buildings have retained their historic facades above street level and again, the Colonial Revival style is the most commonly employed. The majority have decorative parapets concealing flat roofs; only a few of the buildings display a heavy or projecting cornice. Only one, the c. 1897 Thomas Weldon Block, employs a more residential roof design, hipped with round-arched dormers, in keeping with its Colonial Revival style (Inventory #49; Photograph #11). Typically, decorative treatment, often utilizing contrasting brick, is limited to the facade, but a few corner buildings have detailed secondary facades along the side streets. Such is the case with the 1920 Watkins Brothers Furniture Store, built of red brick at the northeast corner of Oak Street, where limestone delineates the parapet and frames the storefront (Inventory #51; Photograph #14). There the first three bays of the side elevation repeat the design of the Colonial Revival facade above street level: three round-arched recesses with key blocks that extend from the second floor level almost to the frieze, which contain multiple-paned narrow windows in banks of five at each level, surmounted by a fanlight at the third story. Similar arched recesses complete the remaining eight bays of the side elevation. Many of these details are echoed in a smaller complementary building joined to the rear elevation (Inventory #61). Another example, which utilizes contrasting brick stringcourses to outline the parapet and define the storefront cornice of the facade and secondary elevation, is the 1926 20th-century commercial building at the corner of Eldridge Street at the south end of the district (Inventory #59; Photograph #15). It is joined to the three-story Forest Building to the north (Inventory #57) by a low one-story connecting structure, which has a simplified parapet with a pediment, a typical solution for infill construction, both historic and modern, in the district (Inventory #58).

Most of the historic commercial buildings, such as the 1910 Johnson Block or the c. 1920 Jaffee & Podgrove Building, have modern storefronts (Inventory #s 29, 39; Photograph #s 16, 17). Even though there has been no concerted effort to reproduce historic storefronts, quite often the original recessed entrance pattern flanked by display windows has been retained. The original street-level cornice, along with the entrance to the upper floors, remains on a few buildings, as in the Colonial Revival Dewey-Richman Building built in 1926 (Inventory #34; Photograph #18). Such is also the case for part of the 1911 Tinker Building to the south (Inventory #36; Photograph #19). The latter example, a much larger structure, has retained its panelled storefront cornice as well as its recessed Colonial Revival main entrance but on the right side of the building, this panel was removed for a modern storefront.

Several buildings stand out because of their historic function, unusual style, or scale. One is the 1894 Orford Hall Hotel, a Romanesque Revival building of imposing scale (Inventory #44; Photograph #20). One of the largest and probably the earliest extant commercial building in the district, it utilizes contrasting brick to frame the four-story towers and define the round-arched openings of the facade. Contrasting brick also was employed in the facade of the 1924 State Theater (Inventory #31; Photograph #21). Although the marquee was replaced when the building was converted for religious purposes,

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
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Main Street Historic District, Manchester, Hartford County, Connecticut

Section number   7   Page   4  

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the classical entrance surround, composed of full-height concrete pilasters and a large arched window, remains. A large theater auditorium is attached at the rear. The Patrick Gorman House, another unusual building, is the only other historic residence in the district (Inventory #32; Photograph #22). Built of banded yellow brick about 1900, it utilizes the earlier slated mansard roof in what is essentially a Colonial Revival design, one which displays a wealth of classical detail. It is now somewhat isolated on its large lot on the west side of Main Street by modern gas stations on either side, both excluded from the district. Just to the south is the block which contains the Jarvis Building (Inventory #38; Photograph #13). Although erected in 1948, it displays some of the same type of simplified Art Deco detailing utilized earlier in the district.

A full listing of all the contributing and non-contributing resources in the district follows:

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Main Street Historic District, Manchester, Hartford County, Connecticut

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Inv. #	Address	Name/Style/Date	C/NC	Ph. #
1.	18-20 Bissell Street	Colonial Revival, c. 1900	C	
2.	18-20	garage, deteriorated, c. 1900	NC	
3.	11 Center Street	CENTER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, Colonial Revival, 1903; addition 1958	C	2
4.	41	MANCHESTER MUNICIPAL BUILDING, Colonial Revival, 1926	C	1
5.	66	HALL OF RECORDS, Colonial Revival, 1896	C	4
6.	25 East Center Street	MASONIC TEMPLE, Neo-classical, 1926	C	6
7.	52	SNET EXCHANGE BUILDING, Colonial Revival/ Art Deco, 1929	C	7
8.	70-74	ORANGE HALL, Colonial Revival, 1902	C	7
9.	479 Main Street	U. S. POST OFFICE, Classical and Georgian Revival, 1932	C	6
10.	489	Vietnam Memorial Park, c. 1985	NC	
11.	494	LINCOLN CENTER, Neo-Classical, 1913	C	
12.	555	modern commercial, 1969	NC	
13.	575	commercial, 1900, extensively remodeled	NC	
14.	586	MARY CHENEY LIBRARY, Colonial Revival, 1937	C	5
15.	---	CENTER PARK/CHENEY PARK, 1905	C	3
16.	---	DANCING BEARS FOUNTAIN, c. 1905	C	3
17.	---	WARD CHENEY CAMP #13 U.S.V.W. MEMORIAL, (Spanish American War), n. d.	C	
18.	---	CIVIL WAR MONUMENT, 1877	C	
18a.	---	REVOLUTIONARY WAR MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN, c. 1920 *	NC	

\* For convenience "18a" was used since this resource was added to inventory after mapping of district was completed. The object is classified non-contributing only because it was moved to this location within the last decade.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
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Main Street Historic District, Manchester, Hartford County, Connecticut

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19.	595	modern commercial, 1973	NC	
20.	599	modern commercial, 1978	NC	
21.	615-619	modern commercial, 1953	NC	
22.	623 Main Street	SELWITZ BLOCK, Colonial Revival, 1910	C	
23.	627-639	modern commercial, 1950	NC	
24.	647-649	PEARL BLOCK, Colonial Revival, 1923	C	
25.	661	SALVATION ARMY CITADEL, Military Gothic, 1908	C	8
	669	vacant lot		
26.	681	Early 20th-c. commercial, 1900	C	
27.	687-691	JOHNSON BLOCK (SECOND), Colonial Revival, 1912	C	
28.	695-701	commercial (connector), c. 1970	NC	
29.	705-713	JOHNSON BLOCK, Colonial Revival, 1910	C	16
30.	717-723	Early 20th-c. commercial, 1903, all new facade	NC	
31.	745	STATE THEATER, Colonial Revival, 1924/1995	C	21
32.	750	PATRICK GORMAN HOUSE, Mansard Colonial Revival c. 1900	C	22
33.	757-763	FRADIN-KEMP BLOCK, 20th-c. commercial, 1926	C	
34.	765-773	DEWEY-RICHMAN BUILDING, Colonial Revival, 1926	C	18
35.	775-777	WOOLWORTH'S, 20th c. commercial, c. 1930	C	18
36.	785-793	TINKER BUILDING, Colonial Revival, 1911	C	19
37.	801-809	WARANOKE INN, Colonial Revival, c. 1905	C	
38.	806-814	JARVIS BUILDING, Art Deco, c. 1948	C	13
39.	811	JAFFE & PODGROVE BUILDING, 20th-c. commercial, c. 1920	C	17
40.	819	PURNELL BUILDING, Colonial Revival, 1900	C	12, 17
41.	822	MONTGOMERY-WARD BUILDING, 20th c. commercial, 1928	C	13
42.	832-848	commercial, Colonial Revival, 1928	C	13

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Main Street Historic District, Manchester, Hartford County, Connecticut

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43.	841-857 Main Street	RUBINOW BUILDING/PARK BUILDING, 20th-c. commercial, 1890-1940	C	11, 12
44.	867-877	ORFORD HALL HOTEL, Romanesque Revival, 1894	C	11, 20
45.	881	20th-c. commercial, 1920	C	11
46.	887-893	modern commercial, 1950	NC	11
47.	896	ST. JAMES RECTORY, Colonial Revival, 1892	C	9
48.	896	ST. JAMES CHURCH, Gothic Revival, 1876	C	9
49.	901-907	THOMAS H. WELDON BLOCK, Colonial Revival, c. 1897	C	11
50.	913-923	20th-c. commercial, 1910, remodeled c. 1985	NC	11
51.	935	WATKIN BROTHERS FURNITURE STORE Colonial Revival, 1920	C	10, 14
52.	945-963	HOUSE AND HALE BUILDING, Colonial Revival, 1909	C	10
53.	969-985	CHENEY BLOCK, Colonial Revival, 1899	C	10
54.	989-991	Early 20th-c. commercial, c. 1900	C	10
55.	1007-1015	commercial, Colonial Revival, 1905	C	10
56.	1041	modern commercial, 1947	NC	
57.	1063-1067	FOREST BUILDING, 20th-c. commercial, c. 1923	C	15
58.	1069-1073	20th c. commercial, c. 1925	C	15
59.	1077-1081	20th-c. commercial, c. 1926	C	15
	22 Oak Street	vacant lot		
60.	24-32, 34, 38	Colonial Revival, c. 1920	C	
61.	13-17 Purnell Place	Colonial Revival. c. 1925 (attached at rear of 935 Main Street)	C	
62.	20	20th-c. commercial, c. 1920 (attached at rear of 877 Main Street)	C	
63.	24	commercial garage, c. 1930	C	
	46-48	vacant lot		

**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.)

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.  
Inventory #38

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

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

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1876 - 1948

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

various; see item #8.

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Main Street Historic District  
Name of Property

Hartford, CT  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of Property 50

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

3	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

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

**Boundary Justification**

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

**11. Form Prepared By** Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

name/title Jan Cunningham, National Register Consultant

organization Cunningham Associates Ltd. date 9/15/95

street & number 37 Orange Road telephone (860) 347 4072

city or town Middletown state CT zip code 06457

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

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

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Main Street Historic District, Manchester, Hartford County, Connecticut

Section number 8 Page 1**Statement of Significance**

Encompassing most of Manchester's historic downtown, the Main Street Historic District is a fine representative example of early twentieth-century commercial and institutional urban development. It derives further significance as an exceptional demonstration of the evolution of the Colonial Revival style from about 1890 to 1940. As the Colonial Revival progressed from turn-of-the-century classicism to the modern period, forms and detailing were simplified and even stylized and well-preserved examples of every stage can be found in the district. Although the district's cohesiveness and historic character are well established by this prevailing stylistic influence, a remarkable degree of architectural variety is still achieved, especially in the commercial architecture, through differences in scale, form, and materials, as well as the introduction of several other contemporary revival styles. Included in these contributing buildings is the 1948 Jarvis Building (criteria consideration G). Although less than 50 years old, it is an integral part of an older commercial block and stylistically compatible with other district buildings because of its simplified Art Deco detailing. Of particular architectural significance is the superior institutional grouping at the head of the district built between 1896 and 1937, which illustrates the almost universal preference for symmetry and classical design in Colonial Revival public buildings of that period.

**Historical Background**

Without question, the development of Manchester's downtown was a direct response to the growth of the Cheney Manufacturing Company, producers of silk textiles, the city's premier historic industry. Once the largest industry of its kind in the United States, it flourished from the late nineteenth century until the 1930s.<sup>2</sup> Although the Cheney brothers provided most of the workers' housing and many of the public facilities in South Manchester, as this part of town was then known, the continued expansion of the company engendered a general economic prosperity that is reflected in the central business district. Main Street evolved in a relatively short period, with residential stock rapidly replaced by large commercial blocks devoted to providing a full range of goods and services, a growth pattern that was tied closely to the rise and fall of the Cheney fortunes. Not only did the Cheney family directly participate in this development, but members of the family donated land and/or funding for public buildings and the municipal park.

Business was booming at the Cheney mills in the early decades of the century. By World War I more than half (58%) of the 33 extant historic commercial buildings had been constructed in the district, including two hotels. As was common in that period, social and commercial interests converged in Orange Hall, which was meeting place for seven different fraternal organizations, some of ethnic origin (Inventory #8; Photograph #7). Following a brief lull during the war, construction continued apace until the Great Depression. Though technically still a town, the community took on many of the aspects of a bustling city. Having outgrown the old town hall, in 1926 Manchester erected its new Municipal Building on that site (Inventory #4; Photograph #1). The State Theater was constructed in this period, along with several imposing business blocks (Inventory #31; Photograph #21). Some, like the Watkins Brothers Furniture Store (Inventory #51; Photograph #14), were devoted exclusively to one business; the majority housed several retail establishments and professional offices. National chain stores, such as Woolworths and Montgomery-Ward, made their appearance on opposite sides of Main Street by 1930 (Inventory #s 35, 41), soon followed by W. T. Grant's, which moved into the Jaffe and Podgrove Building in the 1930s (Inventory #39; Photograph #17). By 1929 so many telephones were in service that Southern New England Telephone built its new exchange (Inventory #7; Photograph #7). The Cheney family was forced to retrench during the Depression: negotiating government loans, selling off most of their housing stock, and transferring ownership of their schools to the town and their gas and electric plants to local utility companies. Except for the two public buildings funded by the federal government, construction in the district essentially ended, not to resume until after World War II.

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At least three buildings in the district were the result of several generations of Cheney philanthropy. They included the Mary Cheney Library, which, like the Post Office, was a Depression-era project; Cheney trust funds set aside for its construction in 1913 were matched by the Public Works Administration (Inventory #14; Photograph #5). Land for the Hall of Records was donated by Frank Cheney (1817-1904) and the park by his wife, Susan (Inventory #s 5, 15; Photograph #s 4, 3). The Dancing Bears Fountain was also a gift to the town from Mary Cheney (Inventory #16; Photograph #3). Land and possibly construction funds were provided by the family for St. James Church, the first parish church for Roman Catholics in South Manchester (Inventory #49; Photograph #9). Most of its members worked at the Cheney mills.

Not surprisingly, the Cheney family were among the first to locate a commercial building on Main Street. Their first general store, located several blocks south of the district, was destroyed by fire in 1898, a common occurrence for wood-framed commercial buildings, which accounts for the almost universal use of brick masonry in the district. A few wood-framed, free-standing commercial buildings survived on the side streets and two remain in the district: a c. 1900 example on Bissell Street and a group of connected buildings on Oak Street (Inventory #s 1, 60). The present Cheney Block, which housed a number of businesses as well as the South Manchester Post Office, was built in 1899 (Inventory #53). Along with Thomas Weldon, who had rebuilt his c. 1890 commercial block after a fire in 1897 (Inventory #49), the Cheney family are credited with initiating the commercial development of this northern section of Main Street, previously a residential area. A number of other early buildings in the district were replaced by fireproof masonry structures, including the 1897 Oak Hall Building which burned down in 1908 and was replaced by the 1909 House and Hale Building (Inventory #52.) It housed Hales' drygoods store, which evolved into a department store with a self-service grocery by 1920, as well as another Cheney enterprise, the Manchester Building and Loan Association, organized in 1891 to provide residential mortgages for their workers.

**Architectural Significance**

The quality, variety, and craftsmanship of the commercial buildings in the district are exceptional. Although generally limited to the historic facades above street level, the level of preservation is quite good. Several restored or original storefronts still enhance these resources; especially notable are the ones at Orange Hall and the Thomas Weldon Block, both of which are distinguished by overall facade integrity (Inventory #s 8, 49; Photograph #s 4, 7, 11). Although the scale or design of some newer storefronts is incompatible with the rest of their historic facades, others have retained enough of their storefront plan and detail to provide a model for their restoration.

Similar detailing and materials, as well as repetition of form, help integrate the commercial blocks, which are anchored by a number of stylish buildings of exceptional merit. Through their larger scale, the streetscape's undulating rhythm is established (Photographs #s 10, 11, 12). Such items as key blocks over windows and flat or stepped parapets are common design motifs. For example, the design of the flat parapet and frieze of the Watkins Furniture Store is repeated in several other buildings of similar scale or style, including the 1905 building to the south which now is occupied a bank (Inventory #s 51, 55). On a smaller scale, the parapets of the Rubinow and Tinker Buildings echo the exaggerated decorative pediment of the Cheney Block (Inventory #s 43, 36, 53). Although lacking a definitive stylistic influence, the half dozen buildings designated as 20th-century commercial still utilize a variety of contrasting brick to define levels and cornices (Inventory #59; Photograph #15).

The institutional component of the district is distinguished by its level of style and superior integrity. While each is significant in its own right, together they comprise an exceptionally well-designed and integrated group. Although only three architects are

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known, undoubtedly all were designed by professionals, who, while working within a relatively restricted formality of the classically inspired Colonial Revival, achieved a remarkable diversity by employing the full range of classical orders and motifs. Because of its central location and impressive level of style, Center Congregational Church is a commanding presence here (Inventory #3; Photograph #2). The use of red brick and simplified detailing in its stylistically compatible addition provides a suitable background, one which enhances the pristine appearance of the fully detailed church. With its tripartite symmetrical massing and monumentally scaled portico, the Municipal Building is a handsome structure, one that is quite typical of civic architecture in this period (Inventory #4; Photograph #1). Its contrasting limestone detailing and portico played off against a red-brick ground is a common convention, one also employed in the Cheney Library and the U. S. Post Office (Inventory #s 14, 9; Photograph #s 5, 6). Even though both are the more standard academic interpretations of the Colonial Revival associated with Depression-era municipal architecture, their carefully executed designs and superior craftsmanship demonstrate the commitment of the federal government to quality public architecture at that time. The Post Office, listed on the National Register in 1986, was designed in 1931 under the supervision of James Wetmore, acting head architect for the U. S. Treasury at that time. A Cheney family member, Frank Farley, designed the library. He was the grandson of the Susan Cheney who donated the land for the park. Although not as monumental as the other civic buildings, the earliest example, the Hall of Records, with its relatively complex use of Palladian motifs, is perfectly scaled and proportioned, and also notable for its use of amber brick (Inventory #5; Photograph #4). It was designed by the Hartford firm of Hapgood and Hapgood, which was noted for its public buildings.

Three commercial examples demonstrate the variation found in the changing face of the Colonial Revival style in the district. With its bold classical elevations highlighted by tall arched window recesses, the integrated Colonial Revival design of the well-preserved 1920 Watkins Brothers Furniture Store exhibits a level of style on a par with the district's municipal buildings (Inventory # 51; Photograph 14). A number of smaller companion buildings of this style are typical of the understated simplicity of the later Colonial Revival. Among them is the well-preserved Dewey-Richman Building, which has retained its fine classical entrance surround as well as its storefront cornice (Inventory #34; Photograph #18). Although recognizably Colonial Revival in style, the Southern New England Telephone Building achieves the ultimate simplification in its stylized facade, where an Art Deco influence is quite obvious (Inventory #7; Photograph #7).

Important contributions are made by other individually significant buildings, such as the imposing Romanesque Revival Orford Hall Hotel (Inventory #44; Photograph #11). Contrasting brick is effectively used to integrate and emphasize the repeating arched rhythms of its facade, one which also displays a superior level of masonry craftsmanship. Another standout is the miniature castle built for the Salvation Army, appropriately called the Citadel (Inventory #25; Photograph #8). It is a well-preserved and rather unique example of Military Gothic, a style fully compatible with the goals of this organization.

## End Notes:

1. Today the upper floors in several buildings are condominium offices or apartments. See Inventory #s 51, 52.

2. The history of the silk industry in Manchester has been extensively covered in several publications. Among them are William E. Buckley, *A New England Pattern*, 1973; Ellsworth S. Grant, "The Silken Cheney's," *Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin*, 44:3, July 1979; and "Cheney Brothers Historic District, NHL, National Park Service, 1978.

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**9. Major Bibliographic References**

Aero View of Manchester, 1914. New York: Hughes and Bailey, 1924.

Buckley, William E. *A New England Pattern: A History of Manchester, Connecticut.* Chester, Connecticut: Pequot Press, 1973.

Grant, Ellsworth Strong. "The Silken Cheney's," *Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin*, (44:3). July, 1979.

Historical and Architectural Resource Survey of Manchester Connecticut: Main Street and East Side Neighborhood, Connecticut Historical Commission, 1993.

Manchester, Connecticut: West Side Neighborhood Cultural Resource Survey, Connecticut Historical Commission, 1995.

Spieß, Mathias and Percy W. Bidwell. *History of Manchester.* Centennial Committee of the Town of Manchester, 1924.

**10. Geographical Data**

**UTM References**

1. 18 705780 4627690
2. 18 706050 4627800
3. 18 706160 4626690
4. 18 706050 4626690
5. 18 706020 4627050
6. 18 705880 4627020

**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The boundaries of the district are shown on the attached district map drawn to scale from "Downtown Manchester: "Revitalization and Planning Program, Town of Manchester," n.d.

**Boundary Justification:**

The boundaries were drawn to encompass the surviving historic resources that comprise the Town of Manchester's Main Street central business district and civic center. Wherever possible, non-contributing resources on the perimeter were excluded. The architectural character of the district changes beyond these boundaries, becoming primarily residential. To the north of the district is a town park on the west and a residential area on the east. To the west and east of Main Street are residential neighborhoods and to the south is the "Cheney Brothers Historic District," NHL, nominated in 1978.

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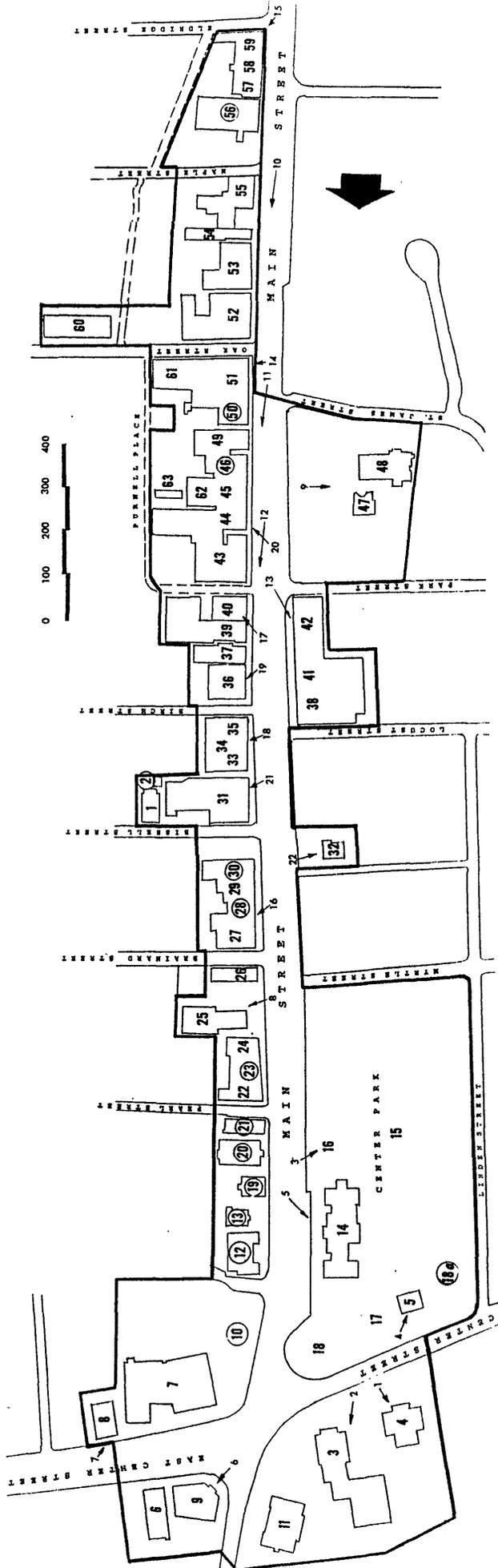
List of Photographs

Photographer: Cunningham Associates Ltd.

Date: 9/95

Negatives on file: Connecticut Historical Commission

1. MUNICIPAL BUILDING, facing NW
2. CENTER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, facing NE
3. HALL OF RECORDS, facing SW
4. CENTER PARK with DANCING BEARS FOUNTAIN, facing W
5. MARY CHENEY LIBRARY, facing NW
6. U. S. POST OFFICE, facing NE
7. ORANGE HALL AND SNET BUILDING, facing S
8. SALVATION ARMY CITADEL, facing NE
9. ST. JAMES CHURCH AND RECTORY, facing W
10. STREETScape (L-R) 925 to 1007-1015 Main Street, facing NE
11. STREETScape (L-R) 841-857 to 913-923 Main Street, facing NE
12. STREETScape (L-R) 819 TO 841-857 Main Street, facing NE
13. STREETScape (L-R) 832-848 to 805-814 Main Street, facing NW
14. WATKIN BROTHERS FURNITURE STORE, facing E
15. (L-R) FOREST BUILDING and 1069-1073, 1077-1081 Main Street, facing NE
16. JOHNSON BLOCK, facing NE
17. JAFFE & PODGROVE BUILDING and PURNELL BUILDING, facing SE
18. DEWEY-RICHMAN BUILDING and WOOLWORTH'S, facing NE
19. TINKER BUILDING, facing NE
20. ORFORD HALL HOTEL, facing SE
21. STATE THEATER, facing NE
22. PATRICK GORMAN HOUSE, facing W



**MAIN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT**  
Manchester, Hartford County, CT

- # Contributing resource
- Ⓢ Non-contributing resource
- # with arrow: photograph view

**Bold Line: National Register District Boundary**  
**Base Map: DOWNTOWN MANCHESTER: REVITALIZATION PLANNING PROGRAM, TOWN OF MANCHESTER**  
 Cunningham Associates Ltd. 9/95