

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCERS use only

received MAY 28 1980

date entered

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

## 1. Name

historic Davol Rubber Company

and/or common Davol, Inc.

## 2. Location

street & number Point and Eddy Streets, \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Providence \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of Hon. Edward P. Beard  
congressional district 2

state Rhode Island code 44 county Providence code 007

## 3. Classification

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

## 4. Owner of Property

name DLD Associates

street & number 711 Branch Avenue

city, town Providence \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Rhode Island

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. City Hall

street & number 25 Dorrance Street

city, town Providence \_\_\_\_\_ state Rhode Island

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic American Engineering Record has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1978. page 185  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Library of Congress

city, town Washington \_\_\_\_\_ state D.C.

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## 7. Description

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

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

#### Location

Davol, Inc., as it is known today, is located south of Providence's central business district, bounded by South Street, Eddy Street, Richmond Street, Point Street and the Providence River. It is part of an industrial area of mid-to late-nineteenth-and early-twentieth-century jewelry, base metals and power generating plants (Photo 1).

#### Description

Davol is a four-acre complex, of interconnected, brick mill structures built mainly between 1880 and 1913, for rubber manufacturing.

In 1880 the Simmons Building, the first substantial building of the complex, was completed. This building, located at 419 Eddy Street and named after its builder Eban Simmons, is a long, rectangular, four-story, flat-roofed, brick building with granite belt courses above rectangular windows and, at ground level, cast-iron storefronts that face on Point Street and Eddy Street (Photo 2,3).

The Simmons Building housed all of Davol's operations until 1884 when the first structure of the main complex, north of Point Street, was constructed to provide room for expansion. The Simmons Building stands alone but is connected to the main complex by an overhead metal-clad conveyor (Photo 4) which traverses the intersection of Point and Eddy Streets on the diagonal.

The main complex of buildings was built in several stages (see site plan). From the exterior the complex appears as several large rectangular structures surrounding interior alleyways and courtyards. The flat-roofed, brick structures generally are three and four stories in height.

The original three-story, brick structure, at 15 Point Street, built in 1884, has heavy-timber framing, segmental-arch windows, and a five-bay storefront with large round-arch windows and a central, arched doorway. In the late 1890's a one-story (later a second story was added) office was added to the west side and a large three-story addition was added to the east of the original structure (Photo 5). The Point Street elevation appears as one continuous building because of similar detailing in the earlier and later facades.

Between 1895 and 1908, more brick, heavy-timber frame buildings were added on the South Street side of the property. The complex continued to grow in the early 20th century with the 1913 addition of a long, rectangular, flat-roofed, steel-frame, brick structure (a glass and steel fourth story was added in 1960), and a three-story addition of similar detailing was built in 1918.

Between 1918 and 1926 the complex as we see it today was finished. The original boat slip was filled, a one-story structure with windows and framing identical to the 1913 addition was added and the small isolated office building at the southeast corner of the property was built (Photo 6). In addition to the 1960 fourth story glass and steel addition, there are several metal-wall sheds attached to the eastern end of the complex.

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Exterior features

The Simmons Building features a cast-iron storefront with windows that admit light to the basement, hand-finished face brick set with narrow mortar joints, granite belt courses and original twelve-over-twelve double-hung windows. The major alteration to this building is a stair/elevator tower attached to the Eddy Street side.

The windows of the steel-frame buildings built in 1913, 1918 and 1926 are, in some cases, double-paned. The major decorative element of the building complex is the gable at the main entrance (Photo 5) and the water tank atop a brick tower attached to an interior building. There were once rooftop glass structures, now demolished, that were used to dry rubber sheet goods.

Interior features

Much of the original, simple interior detailing of the building remains in the upper floors and in areas isolated from where additions intersected. However, the actual spatial relationships have been heavily altered by additions between buildings and in interior courtyards. This is the result of the complex being continually modified to satisfy manufacturers' needs. The original office interiors still exist on the second floor of the 1884 building.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

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transition, due to market and economic pressures, to an industrial neighborhood. Today, new market pressures are creating a different demand. As industries are moving out of these large building complexes, new uses are being found to occupy the buildings. Vacant since 1977 and unattractive to industrial users, the Davol complex is about to be transformed into a mixed-use, residential-commercial-retail development.

# 8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1880, 1884, 1903, 1913  
1878, 1880, 1903, 1910 Builder/Architect Eban Simmons, Joseph Davol

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

In 1874 Joseph Davol and Emery Perkins founded the Perkins Manufacturing Company. This small experimental rubber company was located on the site of the Eban Simmons Planing and Saw Mill, not far from the present facility, owned by Davol's grandfather-in-law, Eban Simmons. In 1878 Davol was sole proprietor and two years later the Davol Manufacturing Company moved into the Simmons Building (Photo 1). In 1884 the first building of the main complex was completed. The late 1890's and the early 1900's were periods of rapid expansion for Davol. The name of the company changed again to the Davol Rubber Company and became a "pioneer in a field hitherto exclusively controlled by foreign manufacturers".<sup>1</sup>

Among the innovations of the company, Joseph Davol engineered the vanishing seam on rubber tubes used to carry plasma. They produced over 23,000 different products for druggists, surgeons, dentists and stationers. The company continued to grow and in 1913 a three-story brick and steel frame structure was erected on the corner of Point and Eddy Streets. The complex was essentially complete.

In the 1930's as the textile industry was declining in Providence, Davol employed 700 men and women. The company name changed again to Davol, Inc., as it expanded beyond the rubber industry. In the 1960's, working in association with Tufts and Harvard universities, Davol researched and provided capital for the first heart pump machine. In 1969 a new facility was built in the suburbs and in 1977 the last operations in Providence moved to North Carolina.

In 1977, when Davol, Inc., stopped manufacturing at its Providence facility, it marked the end of one of the city's oldest industrial complexes maintained for its original function. It contains the earliest remaining structures built by Providence's once important rubber industry which included, aside from Davol, the Providence Rubber Company, the Joseph Bannigan Rubber Company and the United States Rubber Company (Uniroyal).

Though the complex is not architecturally unique and parts of it have been altered to meet the needs of the Davol Company, this large, 250,000-square-foot complex does represent the development of a company of national and international reknown.

As this complex and neighboring industrial buildings were built, it was in what was originally a residential neighborhood. The result was a

<sup>1</sup>Bicknell, The History of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. Page 392-93.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Bayles, Richard. History of Providence County, Rhode Island.  
Volume I (New York, 1891), pp. 613-14.

(See continuation sheet 3)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property 4 acres

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle name Providence

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

UTM NOT VERIFIED

A 

1	9	3	0	0	0	8	0	4	6	3	2	0	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Property described on city plat map 21, lot 310, bounded by Point, Eddy & South Street, comprising 150,775 square feet and lot 313, bounded by Point, Eddy & Richmond Streets & comprising 18,100 square feet.

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

state code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jeffrey Blydenburgh, Architect

organization Beckman Blydenburgh & Associates date March 1980

street & number 116 Chestnut Street telephone 401-274-3690

city or town Providence state Rhode Island

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Frank P. Williams

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date May 14, 1980

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

Anna J. Dezel

date 6/27/80

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Patrick Andrews

date 6/25/80

Chief of Registration

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Bicknell, The History of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Biographical. Volume 4 (New York, 1920), pp. 392-93.

Consolidated Illustrating Company, Rhode Island 1636-1896 (New York, 1896), pp. 169-70.

Davis, William, editor, The New England States, Volume IV (Boston, 1896-7?). p. 2560.

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Greene, Welcome Arnold, The Providence Plantations for Two Hundred and Fifty Years (Providence, 1886), p. 282.

Hall, Joseph D., editor, Biographical History of the Manufacturers and Business Men of Rhode Island at the Opening of the Twentieth Century (Providence, 1901), p. 48.

Hopkins, G.M., City Atlas of Providence, Rhode Island, 5th, 6th, 8th & 9th Wards (Philadelphia, 1875).

Kulik, Gary and Bonham, Julia, Rhode Island, An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites, Historic American Engineering Record (Washington, D.C., 1978), p. 185.

McKinney, Jas., Industrial Advantages of Providence, Rhode Island (Providence, 1889), pp. 79-80.

Munro, W.H., Memorial Encyclopedia of the State of Rhode Island (New York, 1916), pp. 90-92.

Phenix National Bank of Providence, Romance of Rhode Island Industries, radio presentations (Providence, July 16, 1945).

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"Davol Rubber Company", Providence Board of Trade Journal, Volume 15, no. 2 (Providence, February, 1903), p.61.

"Joseph Davol", Providence Board of Trade Journal, volume 21, no. 7 (Providence, July, 1909), p. 365.

"Davol Rubber Company", Providence Board of Trade Journal, volume 23, no. 6 (Providence, June, 1911), pp. 305-06.

"Davol Rubber Company, Providence, Rhode Island, U.S.A.," Providence Board of Trade Journal, volume 25, no. 12 (Providence, December, 1913), p. 535.

"Davol Rubber Company, Providence, Rhode Island, U.S.A.," Providence Board of Trade Journal, volume 26, no. 12 (Providence, December, 1914), p. 835.

article, Providence Journal Bulletin (Providence, July 14, 1932).

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article, Providence Journal Bulletin (Providence, August 13, 1969).

Providence Telegram, Providence of To-day, its Commerce, Trade and Industries, Providence Telegram Publishing Company (Providence, 1893), p. 42.

Obituary Joseph Davol, Rhode Island Historical Society Proceedings 1909-10 (Providence, 1909), pp. 46-47.

Rhode Island State Bureau of Information, The Book of Rhode Island (Rhode Island, 1930), p. 67.





# NAVY COMPLEX, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND.



