

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 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. 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 Wamsutta Mills

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number Acushnet Ave., Logan, Wamsutta and North Front Streets not for publication

city or town New Bedford vicinity \_\_\_\_\_

state Massachusetts code MA county Bristol code 005 zip code 02740

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Brona Simon

July 7, 2008

Signature of certifying official/Title Brona Simon, Executive Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

State or 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 this 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): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Patrick Andrews

Date of Action

8/19/2008

Wamsutta Mills  
Name of Property

Bristol, MA  
County and State

### 5. Classification

#### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

(Check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)  
☒ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

#### Number of Resources within Property

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

Contributing

Noncontributing

10 building  
1 sites  
1 structures  
1 objects  
11 Total

#### Name of related multiple property listing

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

#### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

### 6. Function or Use

#### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY: manufacturing facility

#### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY: manufacturing facility

COMMERCE/TRADE

WORK IN PROGRESS: multiple dwelling

### 7. Description

#### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Utilitarian industrial

#### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls brick

stone

roof asphalt, rubber

other

#### Narrative Description

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

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Wamsutta Mills  
New Bedford (Bristol), MA

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### Narrative Description

The Wamsutta Mills complex is primarily located on an approximately nineteen-acre site bounded by Acushnet Avenue, Wamsutta, Logan, and North Front Streets. One building, located outside the city block on the south side of Wamsutta Street directly opposite the main yard, is the only other Wamsutta Mills building and is contiguous to the main city block. Beginning in 1847, the Wamsutta Mills developed the complex over the course of 75 years through a series of building campaigns as the business expanded its operations. Although a fire in 1924 destroyed three of the earliest structures (the four-story Mills Nos. 1, 2 and 3), the complex today includes a well-preserved grouping of two- to four-story mill buildings, several ancillary structures and a mill pond.

The Wamsutta Mills complex is situated in the Logan-Hicks area of New Bedford. Originally accessible from the west by foot across a railyard from the Wamsutta Mills Housing in the Acushnet Heights National Register District, the railyard was converted into a raised highway (Route 18) in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, severing that connection. Dominated by a massive "T" shape created by Mills No. 4, 5 and 6, the nearly 1,000-foot-long west façade presents a commanding streetscape on the east side of Acushnet Avenue, which runs north to south, parallel to the elevated MA Route 18. To the north and south of the main complex, several small industrial buildings and residential properties are located within city blocks primarily utilized for surface parking or are vacant. To the east, several mid-sized brick and granite industrial buildings associated with New Bedford Copper Works, constructed concurrently with Wamsutta's development, separate the Wamsutta complex from the Acushnet River.

Largely utilitarian in design, the buildings are constructed in brick and stone with hipped and flat rooflines. As typical of utilitarian industrial architecture, very little applied ornamentation is present; however, some detailing adds decorative interest to the buildings, including brick corbelling, cut granite sills and watertables, bracketed overhanging eaves, and decorative wrought-iron detailing. Also typical of industrial architecture of the era, very large, regularly spaced windows are a prominent feature, designed to maximize natural light and ventilation. The regularity of the size and placement of the windows to address these needs produced the uniformity of design and consistency of each elevation with its neighbor. Despite the electrification of the mills in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, daylight remained the primary source of illumination of the textile manufacturing business, as natural light was both cheaper and better suited to detailed textile work.

Mill Nos. 4 and 5 are the most visible of the factory buildings. Mill No. 4 (1868), and its associated No. 4 Picker House (ca. 1875), is attached to Mill No. 5 (1875) by the slightly set back No. 5 Picker House. The No. 6 Picker House (ca. 1924) is attached to the No. 5 Picker House and Mill No. 5. Mill No. 6 (1882) extends almost all the way across the east-west boundary of the site. The Old No. 6 Picker House is located at the west end of Mill No. 6. It was originally connected to the No. 4 Picker House and No. 6 Picker House by connecting bridges on the third floor. The freestanding Weave Shed (ca. 1905) on Logan Street is a single-story, square-plan building with a saw-tooth roof. The Cloth/Harness Room (1889) is a freestanding, two-story building within the southwest quadrant of the site, situated perpendicular to Mill No. 6. Rodman's Pond, located in the northeast quadrant of the city block, is a large mill pond that predates the Wamsutta Mills, but one that was substantially altered for use by the textile company beginning in 1847. Across from the main city block, the small two-story, red brick, unnumbered Waste House (ca. 1900) is the only extant manufacturing-related building outside the core Wamsutta city block.

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Ornamental detail on the peak-roofed, 4½-story, 495 foot x 75 foot **Mill No. 4** (1868) (**Photographs 1 and 5**) is limited to radiating voussoirs forming nearly flat segmental-arched windows with granite sills. Fenestration consists of large, multipaned double-hung sash. The windows consist of single-hung, 12/12 aluminum replacement sash with historically appropriate dimensions, muntin pattern, and brick mold. The peaked roofline, clad in asphalt shingle, is defined by unornamented overhanging eaves. Skylights run the length of the east roof.

The flat plane of the 48-bay façade of Mill No. 4 along Acushnet Avenue is broken by two evenly spaced, four-story metal fire escapes. The wrought iron scrolled brackets appearing below each level of the fire escapes are signature details of Wamsutta. The regularity of the Acushnet Street façade is only broken on the northernmost bay of the first floor with the inclusion of a single doorway accessed by a set of steep granite stairs.

The south exterior wall of Mill No. 4 is a simple eight-bay facade with a full at-grade basement, accentuated by a full-height cut-granite watertable. The two central bays are further defined by a three-level wrought iron fire escape matching those along Acushnet Avenue. A single entry door on the east end of the elevation, protected by an overhanging wooden hood, similar to those found on the Wamsutta mill housing nearby, provides access to the ground floor.

The main elevation of Mill No. 4 is along the east façade. Originally constructed in 1868 to face Mill No. 1 (not extant) and a reservoir (now the parking lot) between the two, the east façade of the mill is defined by two seven-story stairtowers evenly placed midway from the half-point of the mill. A large clock in a cupola is located atop the south tower. In photographs dating to 1898, a similar, if not the same, clocktower is seen atop the stairtower between Mill Nos. 2 and 3 (not extant). It is likely that the clock mechanicals, and possibly the clock faces, were removed from the tower following the 1924 fire and reinstalled atop the south stair tower of Mill No. 4. At the base of the south tower, a concrete stairway leads to an entry door directly over a vertical bay of four doors. The upper two levels of this bay display a 1/1 window above one small, unevenly spaced opening originally used for a block and tackle to raise goods to the upper floors. The second vertical bay in the south tower exhibits an even row of 1/1, single-hung, historically appropriate aluminum replacement windows. The north tower duplicates the design of the south tower, though no changes have been made to the base of this tower.

The fenestration pattern on the east elevation is similar to that of the west elevation. An elevator tower also interrupts the regular pattern of the façade and rises five levels to connect the ground floor with the attic by way of a flat-roofed passage. The No. 4 Picker House is directly connected at grade and levels one and two to the mid-point of Mill No. 4, and to the stair headhouse at the third level.

The interior of Mill No. 4 (**Photograph 3**) is primarily characterized by exposed wood beams, decking and columns, and wood floors. The first through fourth floors and the attic are currently being converted to large loft-style apartments with exposed ceilings. Long corridors throughout the building provide access to the monumental circular staircases (**Photograph 4**), with exposed brick walls and ceilings in the two towers. The brick walls have been painted.

Mill No. 5 is connected to Mill No. 4 via the three-story **No. 5 Picker House** (1875) (**Photograph 1**). The No. 5 Picker House is a simple brick building inset and slightly stepped back from the long and flat facades of Mill Nos. 4 and 5 along Acushnet Avenue. Due to the change in elevation from Mill No. 4 to No. 5, the No. 5 Picker House is slightly depressed from the floor heights of Mill No. 4 and slightly above the floor heights of Mill No. 5. A single fire stair with a wrought iron balcony is located on the second floor and has lost one decorative bracket as a result of the later construction of a

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loading or storage area and enclosed brick and concrete block one-story addition at the first level. Like Mill No. 5, the No. 5 Picker House exhibits a rubber membrane, flat roof, and overhanging bracketed eaves. The windows again consist of single-hung, 12/12 aluminum replacement sash with historically appropriate dimensions, muntin pattern, and brick mold. The interior of the No. 5 Picker House is characterized by primarily exposed wood beams, decking and columns, and wood floors. The three floors are currently being converted to large, loft-style apartments with exposed ceilings. The brick walls have been painted.

**Mill No. 5 (Photographs 1 and 5)**, constructed in 1875, is almost identical in plan and form to Mill No. 4. The distinctive differences between the two are the flat, rubber membrane roof and lower stairtowers of Mill No. 5. The red brick, four-story, 453- x 75-foot building extends along Acushnet Avenue from the No. 5 Picker House (1875) to the corner of Logan Street. Along Acushnet Avenue, Mill No. 5 is simply detailed with an overhanging, bracketed wood cornice, which is further defined by stepping forward the façade and window arches by a single brick width. The regimented multi-bay façade is broken at two locations by a pair of three-story wrought-iron fire escapes with scrolled brackets. Unlike Mill No. 4, with its heavy cut-granite watertable, the west elevation of Mill No. 5 has a brick façade set on a single course of granite. The windows along this elevation consist of 20/20 single hung, aluminum replacement windows with historically accurate dimensions, muntin pattern, and brickmolds. Low basement windows also contain single-hung, aluminum replacement sash. The top level of the south elevation of Mill No. 5 rises above the roof of the No. 5 Picker House.

The north elevation along Logan Street is a near duplicate of the south elevation of Mill No. 4, with the exception of the flat roof and overhanging bracketed cornice. The red-brick façade is nine bays wide and four stories tall, set on a single-course granite base. A three-story fire escape with decorative wrought-iron brackets is located at bays four and five. Windows in this elevation consist of 20/20 single-hung aluminum replacement windows with historically accurate dimensions and brickmolds. Similar to Mill No. 4, the east elevation of Mill No. 5 is dominated by two stairtowers evenly spaced midway from the half point of the building. The heavy overhanging bracketed cornice is carried around to this side of the building. Unlike the seven-story towers of Mill No. 4, the rooflines of Mill No. 5 towers are level with the roofline of the building. Additionally, a narrow elevator tower projects above the roofline and is located adjacent to the north tower. A narrow granite belt course above the brick basement level runs along the east elevation. The fenestration of Mill No. 5 is consistent with Mill No. 4, with evenly spaced, large windows. The east elevation windows also contain single-hung aluminum replacement windows with historically accurate dimensions and brickmolds.

The side elevations of the north and south towers also exhibit the same large window openings, and 8/8 double-hung casement sash and bracketed cornice. The east elevation of both towers also exhibits identical, two bay wide doors and window pattern. A brick passage, created from an original window opening, was added in the north tower of the elevator tower.

The interior of Mill No. 5 is primarily characterized by exposed wood beams, decking and columns, and wood floors. The first through fourth floors are currently being converted to large, loft-style apartments with exposed ceilings. Long corridors throughout the building provide access to the wood staircases with bead board wainscoting, exposed brick walls, and ceilings in the two towers. The brick walls have been painted.

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Built ca. 1875, the three-story, red brick **No. 4 Picker House (Photograph 9)** extends eastward via a connecting passage from the midpoint of Mill No. 4. The extremely utilitarian rectangular form of the building appears largely unchanged since its construction. The south elevation consists of a five-bay wide fenestration pattern interrupted only at the second bay by a solid brick wall. The second and third floors of the remaining three elevations exhibit the same size and pattern of windows as Mill Nos. 4 and 5. The first floor of each elevation is slightly different than those above of alternating windows with brick bays. At the southeast end of the east elevation, the last bay on the second floor has been bricked in where a former covered passage provided direct access over the former reservoir to the Cloth and Harness Room. Similarly, at the east end of the north elevation between the second and third floors, another bay has been bricked in at the location of a covered passage to Mill No. 6. Windows consist of single-hung aluminum replacement windows with historically accurate dimensions, muntin pattern, and brickmolds. The interior of the No. 4 Picker House is characterized by primarily exposed wood beams, decking and columns, and wood floors. The second and third floors are currently being converted to large, loft-style apartments with exposed ceilings, and the first floor will be utilized as a health club and support facilities for the apartments. The brick walls have been painted.

A boiler house (not extant) was replaced by the existing four-story **No. 6 Picker House (Photograph 5)** in ca. 1924, projecting from the No. 5 Picker House and southern end of Mill No. 5. The four-story No. 6 Picker House deviated from the traditional Wamsutta design while continuing to provide adequate natural light, but in an architectural expression commonly found in institutional architecture of the period. The facades are characterized by the regularly spaced multi-pane windows set in cast concrete sills and lintels and a brick parapet detailed with a cast-stone beltcourse. The entire east façade and projecting bay on the north elevation is further articulated by two ribbon courses of brick at the third floor. A two-story connector was also added to the south elevation to provide direct access to the building from Mill No. 4. A single-story, red brick, at-grade loading dock is located on the north elevation and includes two window openings and an arched entry door. A small, wood-frame, shingled penthouse is located on the roof of the building, which was added to provide a stair from the fourth floor of Mill No. 5. The interior of the No. 6 Picker House is characterized by primarily exposed wood beams, decking and columns, and wood floors. The four floors are currently being converted to large, loft-style apartments with exposed ceilings. The brick walls have been painted.

The **Cloth/Harness Room (Photograph 10)** is a freestanding, two-story, red brick building sited perpendicular to Mill No. 6. This building replaced an earlier structure in 1889. The 26- x 5-bay building appears to have been constructed in a single building campaign and was originally connected to Mill No. 1 (not extant). The nearly flat, very low-pitched roof is simply detailed with an overhanging cornice set on rafters extending from the face of the wall to the edge of the eave. Unlike any of the other structures on the Wamsutta site, the Cloth/Harness Room (so named for its uses as a cloth room on the first floor and a harness and office on the second) is illuminated by large arched windows set on cast stone sills on the second floor. The first floor consists of large arched openings extending from grade to the second level. Today, the second floor windows have been replaced with sets of two 1/1 double-hung windows. The majority of the first-floor arched entry doors have been completely blocked in with concrete blocks and vertical metal sheeting. Along the west elevation, one bay on the first floor has been converted to a pedestrian entry with an overhang. Additionally, a second-floor arched entry, originally utilized as an aboveground passage over the former reservoir (now a parking lot) to the No. 4 Picker House, has been enclosed with concrete block. The interior of the Cloth/Harness Room is characterized by primarily exposed wood beams, decking and columns, and wood floors. The interior has been subdivided with modern, gypsum board walls as needed for individual tenants. The brick walls have been painted.

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Wamsutta Mills  
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Several small remnant structures or stone walls of Mill No. 1 (not extant) appear to have been repaired and incorporated into the east side of the Cloth/Harness Room which survived the 1924 fire. The footprint of the northern ell, constructed partially of rubblestone, concrete, and brick, corresponds to a small two-story structure identified as the "harness store room" associated with Mill No. 1 on the 1906 Sanborn Map. The southern ell appears to be the remains of a four-story connector between the Cloth/Harness House and Mill No. 1. This remnant is constructed of cut granite blocks, similar to the ground floor treatment of Mill No. 4 and consistent with the exterior of Mill No. 1, as seen in historic photographs, with concrete in-fill and altered or bricked in window openings.

Contemporary in design with Mill No. 5, **Mill No. 6** (1882) (**Photograph 7**) and the Old No. 6 Picker House (1888) have the same slightly pitched roof with overhanging bracketed eaves. The three-story, red brick, 569- x 95-foot, Mill No. 6 is connected to the 69- x 95-foot Old No. 6 Picker House by a party wall. The 67-bay facade of Mill No. 6 consists of continuous arched windows, now in-filled with plywood and small sliding sash. The south elevation is broken only by two wrought iron fire escapes with scrolled brackets on both ends of the building, halfway between the midpoint of the structure. A narrow, granite belt course defines the basement level (partially above grade) from the upper floors.

At roughly at the half-point of the building, a multi-bay, enclosed concrete loading dock has been added to the building, altering several bays of windows on the second floor. A large earthen ramp system, obscuring 12 bays of the basement and first-floor windows, has been constructed. The basement and first-floor windows covered by the ramp system have been blocked in. The loading dock extends off the south elevation of Mill No. 6 to the north wall of a remnant outbuilding originally attached to Mill No. 1. This small, two-story, brick structure appears to be one of four small rectangular buildings identified in 1893 as "Eng Rm" and in 1906 as "Belt Room." This small structure may be the one of the oldest structures on the site; however, similar to the connector off the Cloth/Harness Room, it too is a remnant of a larger set of buildings. The building is in poor condition, with four deteriorated and broken windows on its west elevation, two altered window openings on its south elevation, and total and partial obscuring of the north and east elevations, respectively, by the earthen ramp. Additionally, the concrete retaining wall on the west end of the earthen ramp supporting the loading docks, extends along a portion of the west façade of this building.

A second concrete-block loading dock has been constructed at the base of the earthen ramp. This single-story, enclosed loading dock obscures four bays of the first floor and basement. Located further east, this end of the building is accessed via a set of granite steps leading to a doorway on first floor. Additionally, a doorway with an overhead awning at the basement level of a vertical bay of double leaf cargo doors provides a second means of access to the building. Both the east and west ends of the building are eight bays wide with a single point of entry at the basement level. Unlike Mill Nos. 4 and 5, however, balconies are not present. The north façade of Mill No. 6 is also a simple red brick elevation of continuous bays of arched windows set on granite sills. Facing Rodman's Pond, this elevation witnessed limited changes until the 1920s when a large elevator tower was installed at the midpoint of the building. This simple red-brick tower is three stories in height and embellished with wide blind arches. Other alterations to Mill No. 6 include a number of overhead passages constructed between 1888 and 1950.

The interior of Mill No. 6 is primarily characterized by exposed wood beams, decking and columns, and wood floors. Where needed, the interior of the building has been subdivided with modern, gypsum-board walls for individual tenants. The brick walls have been painted.

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The eight westernmost bays extending westward off Mill No. 6 are known as the **Old No. 6 Picker House** (1888) and differs substantially from the rest of the regularly spaced façade of Mill No. 6. A large, two-story arched opening (currently infilled with concrete and an off-center, square garage door) is shown in the 1888 Sanborn Map with a spur track running through the building. Several doors and windows of various dimensions define this end of the building as a receiving department. In 1888, this end of the building is identified as "Opener, Dust Room, Picker, S[ ], Spooling." To the west of the large arch, a large overhead garage door opening has been introduced. To the east of the large arch, a set of granite stairs provides access to the first floor through a large door. By 1893, the spur track crossing through the Old No. 6 Picker House no longer appears on maps as delivery of materials appears to have been consolidated into the new Cloth/Harness Room. The interior of the Old No. 6 Picker House is primarily characterized by exposed wood beams, decking and columns, and wood floors. Where needed, the interior of the building has been subdivided with modern, gypsum-board walls for individual tenants. The brick walls have been painted.

Typical of its time, but a departure for the traditional Wamsutta designs, the ordinary sawtooth roof **Weave Shed** (**Photograph 6**), also known as Mill No. 8, was constructed ca. 1905 as a single-story, square, red brick building designed specifically for weaving cloth. Constructing the Weave Shed along Logan Street to take advantage of the northern light necessitated filling a small corner of Rodman's Pond. Despite its utilitarian form, the building is defined by continuous 1½-story rectangular bays with a corbelled cornice. Inset in each bay on the west elevation are low, gently arched windows which have since been in-filled with brick. Several small square openings, which have also been bricked in at the ends of each saw tooth on the east and west elevations, are present. The sawtooth roof has also been altered by the removal of the original windows and replacement with solid in-fill materials. In addition, the sixth bay of windows along the roof, fronting Logan Street, has been shingled over. A small brick "bump-out," with two small in-filled windows above a low vent, is located off the center of the east elevation in Rodman's Pond. This bump-out does not appear on any of the historic maps, but does appear contemporaneous with the remainder of the building. The interior of the Weave Shed is primarily characterized by exposed wood and steel beams, decking and columns, and wood floors. Where needed, the interior of the building has been subdivided with modern, gypsum-board walls for individual rooms, and the brick walls have been painted.

The **Waste House** (**Photograph 8**) was originally utilized as an Opener and Dust Room on the first floor and a Picker Room on the second floor in ca. 1900 and converted to a Waste House following the construction of the existing No. 6 Picker House in ca. 1924. The two-story, red-brick building contains punched opening and is located opposite the main mill complex on Wamsutta Street. Originally abutting the Acushnet River, the land south of the existing building was filled by the New Bedford & Taunton Railroad for use as a rail yard. The building contains a three-story projecting tower with a wide overhanging roof. The utilitarian building contains rusticated granite window sills and large punched openings. A large garage door has been cut into the west elevation of the building at the ground floor. The interior of the Waste House is primarily characterized by exposed wood beams, decking and columns and wood floors. Where needed, the interior of the building has been subdivided with modern, gypsum-board walls for individual rooms. The brick walls have been painted.

**Rodman's Pond** (**Photograph 4**) was located within the site when it was purchased for the Wamsutta Mills in 1847. A fresh water millpond, the body of water covers approximately 3.7 acres of the city block. Altered from its original appearance as the structures were constructed on the site, the pond is roughly square in shape abutting the north elevation of Mill No. 6 and the east elevation of the Weave Shed. Surrounded by chain-link fence, the pond, though overgrown, continues to provide secondary, gravity-fed fire protection to the main mill complex.

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A large **metal storage building**, constructed ca. 1990, is located in the southeast section of the site. This building features a shallow pitched roof and vertical metal siding. The building is considered noncontributing to the historic district as it falls outside the period of significance and is not associated with the Wamsutta Mills.

### Archaeological Description

While no ancient Native American sites are known within the district, sites may be present. Four Native sites have been identified in the general area (within one mile). Environmental characteristics of the property prior to industrial and urban development represented locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, proximity to wetlands) that were favorable for the presence of ancient sites. The district occupies a level to moderately sloping riverine terrace located along the western shoreline of the tidal Acushnet River. The river is located less than 1,000 feet east of the district. A freshwater pond is located within the district. Given the above information, the district area would have provided an excellent settlement location for Native Americans with access to a wide variety of flora and fauna from upland and marine-related ecosystems available for their subsistence. In general, however, the potential for locating significant ancient Native American resources in the district is low. Construction of eight mill buildings with basements, several industrial outbuildings, and related utilities would have destroyed any ancient resources that were located in the area.

No historic archaeological resources that predate initial mill construction in 1847 have been identified within the district. Those potential resources, if they exist, were also destroyed by textile mill construction in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Structural evidence may survive from Mill Nos. 1, 2, and 3, all destroyed by fire in 1924. Mill No. 7 was demolished in 2005. Architectural study of the extant mills may identify portions of the burned mills that have been incorporated into the extant industrial buildings in the district. For example, remnant structures or stone walls from Mill No. 1 appear to have been repaired and incorporated into the east side of the Cloth/Harness Room, which survived the 1924 fire. Structural evidence may also survive from several industrial outbuildings destroyed in the 1924 fire or demolished by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Industrial outbuildings include the gatehouse (demolished between 1958 and 1968), located along Wamsutta Street; a carriage shed (demolished between 1958 and 1968), located near the Cloth/Harness Room; a storehouse (demolished between 1924 and 1950), located near Mill No. 6; the No. 3 Storehouse (demolished by 1950), formerly the gasometer providing gas to the mills, converted a second time to a restaurant by 1924; the No. 4 Storehouse (demolished by 1924), located near Mill No. 7; a storehouse on North Front Street; and several storehouses and sheds on the west side of the former railroad tracks, now Route 18 (demolition dates unknown), as well as several other small structures located within the complex and utilized in a support role for the mills.

Archaeological evidence of occupational-related features (trash pits, privies, wells) may also survive within the district. Industrial trash areas may typify this resource category. Basement levels of mills destroyed in the 1924 fire may have been filled with fire-related debris and industrial waste from extant mills.

(end)

Wamsutta Mills

Name of Property

**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 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.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

(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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Bristol, MA

County and State

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Community Planning and Development

Industry

Invention

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1847-1958

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Thomas Bennett, Jr.

Edward Kilburn

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Wamsutta Mills  
New Bedford (Bristol), MA

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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Wamsutta Mills in New Bedford, Massachusetts, a late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century mill complex, is representative of the large, self-contained, utilitarian, brick pier and masonry spandrel manufacturing facility typically constructed in New Bedford as the city converted from New England's major whaling port to a large industrial city largely focused on the production of cotton textiles. Named for Wamsutta, son of the Sachem Massasoit from the local Narragansett tribe who sold tracts of land to the original settlers of the New Bedford area in the Acts of Incorporation, the complex is also significant for its associations with United States Congressman Joseph Grinnell and leading textile manufacturer and commission agent Thomas Bennett. The period of significance for the complex extends from 1847, when the oldest extant resource within the complex was developed (Rodman's Pond), to 1958. Despite a large fire in 1924 and demolition of several buildings within the complex, the Wamsutta Cotton Mills complex retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling, association, and workmanship and retains its architectural integrity. In recognition of its historical significance as the first cotton textile-mill complex in the city of New Bedford, and its architectural significance as a well-preserved example of industrial architecture, the Wamsutta Mills complex is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C and is significant at the local level.

New Bedford was originally part of the town of Dartmouth, established in 1664. During the early years of settlement in Dartmouth, most of the residents were Quakers from Plymouth and Taunton, Massachusetts, and Portsmouth, Rhode Island. This area remained largely agricultural until the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the harbor was first exploited for whaling and local and foreign trade. By the 1760s, the residential and commercial development of the town was focused along the waterfront. Support industries began to emerge such as shipbuilding, rendering plants, and ropewalks. Whaling became the number one industry in New Bedford and generated a great deal of wealth for its investors. During the Revolutionary War, however, New Bedford became a haven for privateers and suffered greatly following a British attack on the town in 1778 which burned many of the homes, vessels, and businesses of the rebel Americans. As a result of considerable redevelopment in the area, New Bedford was incorporated as a separate township in 1787.

Following the Revolutionary War, New Bedford rebounded economically and by 1804 had returned to pre-war prosperity, but this proved to be short-lived, ending less than a decade later with marine embargos associated with the War of 1812. Despite these obstacles, by 1820, New Bedford had surpassed Nantucket in the whaling industry. New Bedford was chartered as a city in 1847 following rapid development as an urban center and the extension of the New Bedford & Taunton Railroad into the north end of New Bedford. By 1857, local whaling ships landed nearly half of all whale oil used in the United States. Due to the high rate of return on whaling ventures, many of New Bedford's wealthiest investors failed to invest in other activities, such as the emerging textile industry.

Wamsutta Mills, incorporated in 1847, manufactured fine cotton goods and provided a good return to its small board. Despite its initial success, it failed to attract substantial investments during this early stage. It would be twenty years before the next textile manufacturing company was constructed in New Bedford, largely as a result of overstock of whale oil in 1857 and further complications to the industry as a result of the discovery of petroleum in Pennsylvania in 1859. New Bedford's whaling industry declined further as the fleet was decimated by southern rebel ships during the Civil War. At the same time, whaling in the Arctic, which provided the major stock base of Bowhead baleen and whalebone, was on the rise as an alternative business to whale oil. Following the collapse of the whaling industry, the city's wealthiest men finally turned to the emerging textile industry as a way to stay afloat.

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Wamsutta Mills  
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### Incorporation of Wamsutta Mills

The Wamsutta Mills was the first textile manufacturing company instituted in the City of New Bedford. Incorporated by an act of the Massachusetts Legislature on April 1, 1846, at the request of Captain Abe Howland, a sea captain out of New Bedford, the mills did not begin operation for another year. According to the Act of Incorporation, Wamsutta was incorporated "for the purpose of manufacturing cotton, wool and iron in the Town of New Bedford." Unfortunately for Captain Howland, he was unable to gather together the necessary investors for this risky undertaking such that had never been seen in New Bedford, a community focused on its whaling industry.

The establishment of the Wamsutta Mills was largely due to the partnership of two men, one a young man looking for a future, the other a powerful and wealthy citizen of New Bedford. Thomas Bennett, Jr., the son of a Fairhaven sea captain and educated at the Friends Academy in New Bedford, moved to New Orleans for the warm climate and took up work as a warehouse clerk at a cotton mill owned by another Fairhaven native. After a few years of work there, Bennett realized that a cotton mill could be a potential windfall. On a trip north, Bennett stopped in Washington, D.C., to propose a business opportunity for a cotton mill in the South to the New Bedford Congressman Joseph Grinnell, who was also a Quaker and very wealthy. Grinnell, a shrewd businessman and apt politician, proposed a mill development in New Bedford rather than the South and sent Bennett back up north to scout a location for such a undertaking in his home town.

In 1847, Bennett and Grinnell met in New Bedford to discuss what types of products would be manufactured by the future mill. Both agreed that "fine goods" would be the most profitable product, to avoid competition with textile mills in nearby Fall River producing less refined and printed cloths. Following this meeting, Bennett began to make arrangements to take over the charter for the Wamsutta Mills from Captain Howland. The procurement of the charter was likely to have been done with a delicate hand, as Howland, the newly elected Mayor of New Bedford, had run against Grinnell in the Congressional elections, which Grinnell won. Given Howland's new responsibilities of his office, Howland relinquished the charter to Bennett, and the development of the Wamsutta Mills began in earnest after a one-year hiatus.

Bennett and Grinnell determined that \$300,000 in capital was needed to establish the mill, and they set out to tap the resources of New Bedford's wealthy investors. The original stockholders included several members of the Howland family, sea captains, and wealthy investors in the whaling industry. Investors were hard to come by with only an anticipated 6% per year return while investing in the whaling industry brought in a 100-300% return on a two-to-four-year voyage. Bennett and Grinnell were only able to amass \$160,000 in cash, but decided to begin the project with this conservative budget.

### The Early Years of the Mills

With cash in hand, Bennett set out to locate a site for the mill. He found the ideal location for the Wamsutta Mills on a five-acre piece of property owned by Benjamin Rodman. The parcel of land was located along the Acushnet River, where the New Bedford-Taunton Railroad had recently constructed a wharf, also had a freshwater millpond (now known as Rodman's Pond), and where a spur track off the recently laid railroad could be built. The only disadvantage to this location was its lack of housing, as this area of New Bedford was sparsely populated and would require the company to construct residences for the mill workers. Despite the lack of housing, however, the Wamsutta Company, at their first board meeting (headed by the newly appointed Chairman Grinnell) appropriated \$7,500 for the purchase of the five-acre plot.

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Bennett immediately drew up specifications for what would become Mill No. 1, which was located perpendicular to the river (parallel to and behind the existing Mill No. 4). The company hired the respected New Bedford architect Seth H. Ingalls to draft plans for the mill building that would be 217 feet long, 69 feet wide, and three stories tall. The cost of this, the first large-scale steam-powered mill in New Bedford, would total \$36,000, a monstrous sum for that time. Newspaper advertisements for carpenters and masons were listed in the *New Bedford Standard Times* requesting proposals for constructing a rubblestone mill with a shingle roof and copper gutters. The carpentry company of Pierce and Wright and Dudley Davenport won the bid for \$19,560, which required importing all their materials. Meanwhile the firm of Haile Luther undertook the masonry work, including quarrying stone from nearby Marsh Island, for \$16,395.

Mill No. 1 was completed in 1848, and the first shipment of cotton arrived by ship in the fall of that year. The mill was designed to accommodate 15,000 spindles and 300 looms. Due to the board's concern about quantity of output, and balance and efficiency of production, the mill was outfitted with only 10,000 spindles and 200 looms with some arriving from England in the fall of 1848.

Work could not begin in the mill until it had skilled laborers to do the job. New Bedford's population in 1848 was largely devoted to the whaling industry. Due to the lack of qualified workers, Wamsutta initially hired overseers and operatives from mills in Rhode Island, Connecticut, and central Massachusetts. Concurrently, the company began constructing dwellings and boardinghouses for the workers on nearby land. Early on, the company also realized the machinists in New Bedford lacked not only the skills required to keep the company operating, but also the tools to do it, as these machinists were also devoted to tending to whaling ships. To address this need, a machine shop was quickly constructed in the basement of Mill No. 1.

By early 1849, the boiler room was in operation to fuel the looms and spindles, and in February of that year, the first yards of cloth were produced by Wamsutta. It became immediately clear that the fine-quality sheeting produced by the company was their most successful product; however, the shirting also became an immediate favorite. By May 1849, 107,000 yards of cloth had been woven, and with these successes, Bennett made his first bid to the board to purchase more machinery to expand production.

At the 1849 stockholders meeting, Bennett stated, "Although our bills payable may at this time seem large, we have something which will in the course of a few months enable us to reduce them considerably. It appears from the actual results of the work at the Mill during the past month that the estimates of production and cost of cloth presented to stockholders at their meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> were not far from being correct and are under rather than over-stated, the production being 19.73 yards per day to a loom, and the cost per yard for cotton, labor, and daily expenses not exceeding 8 and 4 one hundredths cents per yard instead of 8 and 10 hundredths yards as estimated." He went on to note that preparation and spinning machinery produced 2,885 pounds of yarn to be woven into cloth, "which would reduce the cost per yard eleven hundredths of a cent, leaving the cost of cloth at 7 and 93 hundredths." These positive statements encouraged shareholders to raise an additional \$140,000.

With the new infusion of cash, Bennett purchased a new boiler and equipment that increased capacity of Mill No. 1 to 5,824 ring spindles for warp and 6,840 mule spindles for filling, for a total of 12,664. In January 1850, the company declared a 5% dividend. By February 1, production of sheeting totaled 1,066,272 yards, prompting the shareholders to close the subscriptions of stock. After a year of production, Wamsutta was considered a success and quickly changed the occupations in New Bedford from seaman, sailmaker, and rigger to overseer, fireman, and weaver.

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The fine quality of the Wamsutta products was continually improved by Bennett. In addition to using high-quality Mississippi cotton, the density of the completed product, at an average of 34 inches wide with 80 picks per inch in the warp and 96 picks per inch for the 40-inch-wide filling, was extraordinary. Not satisfied with the quality of the cloth, Bennett upgraded the product again in 1850 after learning of the superior quality of sheeting shown at the American Institute in New York and at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia. Not to be outdone, Bennett set out to produce a new cloth measuring 36 x 41 inches with the purchase of new machinery operated out of the basement of the mill. By the end of the year, dividends for shareholders was up to 6%.

By 1853, shareholders were more than comfortable with their return on their investment and allocated \$270,000 for the construction of Mill No. 2, designed by Seth Ingalls. Construction began on the mill immediately and was completed in 1855. The new mill was constructed perpendicular to the original mill and was connected at the end. The three-story mill was slightly longer than the original, six bays wide at the end, and parallel to the Acushnet River forming an "L" shape around a coalyard.

In what would become typical of the Wamsutta Company in later years, the company embraced modernization as early as 1859. Captain Abe Howland, the original keeper of the Wamsutta Charter, had started a new venture in New Bedford: a gas company. Up until this point, the Wamsutta Mills were illuminated by whale oil, which was quickly becoming scarce with the decline in the whale population. The company quickly decided that illuminating the mills by gas was the more efficient method and entered into a contract with its originator.

### The Expansion of the Mills

In 1860, the Wamsutta Mills, buoyed by their early success, began construction on a third mill designed entirely by Bennett. Mill No. 3, located east of Mill No. 2 on Wamsutta Street, was completed in the summer of 1861, and was a near mirror image of Mill No. 2. With the outbreak of the Civil War, the mills went on short time (an eight-hour day) due to the sudden shortage and high price of cotton. The company attempted to stop purchase on the machinery it had ordered for Mill No. 3, but contracts had already been signed and the spindles and looms arrived in the Summer of 1863.

During the war, the price of cotton jumped from 9½ cents to 60 cents, and there was pressure on mills in New England to produce the most product with the least amount of cotton. Wamsutta refused to reduce the quality of their products. While Mill No. 3 sat unused until 1865, due to the shortage of labor and goods, the construction of Mill No. 4 was completed in 1868. Following the war, production began again in earnest in four mills on the site. Despite a strike in 1867 in which operatives demanded reduced hours, Wamsutta continued to be profitable. Bennett remained on the board until 1874 when he retired, leaving the company operating with 150,000 spindles. Bennett, who started as superintendent of the company at \$15 a week, made \$10,000 a year by retirement.

By 1875, Wamsutta had \$2,500,000 in capital and once again was looking to expand. In 1875, Mill No. 5 was completed just north of Mill No. 4 on Acushnet Avenue following a motion by the stockholders which stated, that "the directors are hereby authorized and instructed to build and equip a mill north of No. 4 for the manufacture of cotton good, whenever in their judgment it is for the interest of the company." The four-story Mill No. 5 was 569 ½ feet long and 95 feet wide, and it housed 50,000 spindles and 1,000 looms that were operated by 600 employees. During this period, the No. 4 Picker House and No. 5 Picker House were also constructed.

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The 1870s and 1880s were profitable decades for the Wamsutta Mills and the City of New Bedford. The influx of French Canadians, Irish, and other European immigrants dramatically changed the make up of the city and the operatives at the mills throughout New Bedford. In 1876, Wamsutta began experimenting with "percale," a French term used to describe a high quality cotton sheeting with the appearance and feel similar to silk. The company began production of the Wamsutta Percale in 50-yard batches, and it immediately became a best seller. By 1881, Wamsutta had grown to employ 2,600 people and operated 203,000 spindles and 4,500 looms.

By 1882, the Wamsutta Company had \$3,000,000 in capital. It used 19,000 bales of cotton, producing 20 million yards of cloth and 12,000 miles of shirting and sheeting. Spurred on by the increase in dividends, ground was broken on Mill No. 6, designed by Edward Kilburn, increasing the production of cloth to 23 million yards. Not long after this expansion, Joseph Grinnell, the president of the corporation, died in 1885. Fellow boardmember Andrew Pierce took over the presidency until 1889, when he was succeeded by William Crapo.

Under the direction of Crapo, the Wamsutta Mills saw ups and downs at the turn of the century and through World War I. By 1889, Wamsutta was powered by a 300-horsepower Corliss upright engine, a pair of 800-horsepower engines, one pair of 1100-horsepower engines and a huge pair of 2000-horsepower engines. Within a few years, the company was operating with four engines totaling 6,500-horsepower and used 18,000 pounds of coal a year. The company produced at least 80 products, including cambrics, muslins, sateens, and plain, twilled, and double warp, in widths up to 124 inches. Investors also saw the pinch during this period when Wamsutta stock fell from 157 $\frac{3}{4}$  in 1869 to 83 $\frac{1}{2}$  in 1878. By 1881, however, the value of stock had recovered to 142 $\frac{1}{2}$ .

The Lewis Brothers, Wamsutta's leading distributor, went bankrupt in 1889 and cost Wamsutta \$300,000 in losses. Despite this loss, and typical of the forward thinking company, Wamsutta built two more weave sheds and added 2,000 looms to increase production for its other distributors. Workers lived in nearby tenements of six to seven rooms with rents roughly \$6.50 to \$9.00/month. By 1891, Wamsutta operated 220,000 spindles and 4,200 looms in six mills. Twenty-two thousand bales of cotton were spun into 25 million yards of fabric by 2,200 operatives. With a weekly payroll of \$15,000, the average worker made \$6.80 a week. In 1894, the General Strike hit Wamsutta as a result of a 10% cut in wages. Recovering from the strike by the turn of the century and taking advantage of the profitable wartime economics, Wamsutta remained one of the largest employers and most successful textile operations in New Bedford, which had become a truly immigrant city with large French Canadian, Polish, Irish, Italian, Scottish, Portuguese, and Greek communities.

### The Modernization of the Mills

In 1918, Oliver Prescott succeeded William Crapo as president. Prescott had an entirely different approach to operating the mills and believed that modernization of the aging factories and equipment was paramount. Between 1918 and 1927, Prescott spent \$2,500,000 on modernization of the mills. He immediately began a land survey of the property and developed a new, more efficient layout of the floors with the aid of advanced engineering that included removing walls of the mills if necessary.

An inventory of machinery was undertaken and all outdated equipment was removed. The pickers and spinning and weaving departments were revolutionized with 2,000 modern looms and 18,000 new ring spindles. Fewer new pieces of equipment were installed as the old has been removed. Additional work space was freed up, which resulted in an increase

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in production and a savings in labor costs. Perhaps the most revolutionary change to Wamsutta Mills, however, was the replacement of steam-driven machinery with electric-powered equipment.

In addition to physical changes to the mills, Prescott also pioneered market research. Under his direction, market surveys on the quality of Wamsutta's sheets and pillowcases were undertaken. The survey determined that businesses wanted Wamsutta to maintain the high quality of their products. Another significant change occurred in distribution. Until 1921, Wamsutta marketed and sold "grey goods." Grey goods were sent unfinished to bleaching factories and clothing manufacturers, or sold as unfinished cloth. The practice of dealing in grey goods allowed the distributor, through licensing, to use any label on the cloth they purchased. In general, only half of the products distributed were sold under the Wamsutta label.

Prescott took over the distribution of the materials, brought in supervisors knowledgeable in fabricating finished goods, and retrained workers to do the job. Distribution of the finished products was licensed to Ridley Watts and Co. of New York, a company owned by Ridley Watts who had worked for Grinnell Willis. Wamsutta had closed the circle and now controlled production of its products from raw cotton to finished sheets and pillowcases to distribution.

In order to increase distribution and profits for the company, Wamsutta began advertising directly to consumers. Full-color ads in women's magazines such as the *Ladies' Home Journal* said "Your great grandmother bought Wamsutta Sheets." Direct advertising proved an effective way to increase sales and production, and therefore, increased profits and employment. In 1920, New Bedford's textile manufacturing reached its peak of production with a total of 121,217 workers.

Expanded advertising, market research, and inspection of products increased sales in 1925 to 87% over the previous year. Meanwhile, Wamsutta maintained the prices of their goods. This is a particularly stunning accomplishment, as the Wamsutta Mills suffered a huge fire in 1924 that destroyed Mill Nos. 1, 2, and 3. As the largest textile-related fire in the history of New Bedford, it might have been expected that the effects on Wamsutta Mills would have been devastating; on the contrary, in the fire's wake, modernization continued, and a year later, in 1925, Wamsutta was worth \$4,000,000, operated 236,000 spindles and 4000 looms, employed 2,700 people, and manufactured an array of products from percale sheets to lingerie.

The effects of modernization and technology did not stop at the doors of the Wamsutta Mills. In the 1920s a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology tested a number of brands of sheets for strength, lustrousness, and softness. He determined that the Wamsutta brand was the strongest, most lustrous, and softest sheet on the market. A Wamsutta-sponsored market study in ladies' magazines directly asked the housewife if Wamsutta should cheapen the quality of their sheets for a lower price, a tactic taken by many textile mills in the wake of the Great Depression. The readers' overwhelming response was "no." Bolstered by these studies, Wamsutta abandoned its three other grades of sheeting and manufactured only percale.

During the 1920s many mills were forced to liquidate, and the majority were faced with the Great Strike of 1928. At least twenty mills in New Bedford alone were forced to close their doors during the Depression, but Wamsutta survived once again due in large part to innovative technology. In the 1930s, Wamsutta adopted the "Equi-tension" method of handling yarn. This process pulled dry thread from section beams and delivered them into a box for sizing and then to drying cylinders. During the entire process, all threads were kept under even tension thereby maintaining their elasticity. Not long after, Wamsutta registered "Equi-tension" as a tradename.

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Wamsutta also continued to purchase high-quality cotton and to run production lines at speeds and pressures that produced the best results. In 1934, under the direction of President Broughton, a laboratory was established at the mills to develop new and better products. In 1935, the company instituted a new Wamsutta standard of "Supercalc." However, after two years of research, the lab developed a new broad cloth named "Lustercalc," which had the appearance of silk but was made entirely of cotton.

During World War II, Wamsutta, like most the country's manufacturers, helped in the war effort. Wamsutta produced products ranging from balloon cloth to gas-mask fabric, devoting 400 of its looms to the production of war products. The company also wove lighter fabrics used for powder bags, camouflage purposes, and ponchos. Wamsutta even produced nylon flak cloth for the war.

In 1946, Wamsutta celebrated its centennial, but the celebration was short-lived. In 1954 Wamsutta Mills was bought out by M. Lowenstein and Sons. In 1958, as a result of unfavorable tariff laws, Wamsutta Mills closed its doors, its machinery was shipped off to other mills, and the buildings sold in the following years to a number of clothing companies who produced textiles on the site. The most recent tenant, Shephard Clothing Company, went bankrupt in 2001. Mill Nos. 4 and 5, and Picker Houses 4, 5, and 6 are currently undergoing a substantial rehabilitation into 250 units of loft-style rental units.

### Operatives of the Mills

While in operation, the Wamsutta Mill was the site of a number of labor disputes and employed a mostly low-wage, immigrant community in New Bedford. Poor working and living conditions, long hours, low wages, and the occasional pay cut led to the occasional upheaval of a workers' strike. Wamsutta initially provided housing for its workers, first constructing housing on Front Street (no longer extant), but with the decline in profits and as a result of numerous labor problems, the need for housing was eventually met by small-scale landlords, some of whom were mill workers themselves who built multi-family houses and boardinghouses. Health conditions for workers was equally poor with one in five children born into a low-wage family dying by its first birthday compared to one in seventeen for a wealthy family.

Working conditions for an average New Bedford mill worker consisted of a 54 hour week if working full time and 40 hours a week if working part time. Generally all members of a family worked starting as early as age ten. Most children at the mills were taught weaving by their parents, but their labor during this period was unpaid. To address some of these issues, unions were established relatively early on in the New Bedford textile history, however, these unions were generally defined by independent crafts such as weavers, spinners, loom fixers, or other skilled workers. Most of these early unions were made up of skilled workers who spoke English, leaving the majority of mill workers who did not speak English unrepresented due to discrimination by American-born workers. Like many communities and individual mill corporations, New Bedford and Wamsutta were the sites of multiple strikes by its employees.

### Strike of 1866-67

One of the first labor disputes at Wamsutta was in 1866-1867. Fall River textile workers formed the Fall River Amalgamated Short Time Committee to petition mill owners for a 10-hour day. When the owners refused, the committee went on strike and mills were closed for two weeks. State Senator Samuel Chase mediated the strike, and the owners agreed to the 10-hour day without a pay cut.

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In New Bedford, Thomas Bennett, Jr. agreed to 10-hour work day if other mill owners across New England also did. They refused and workers threatened to strike. Local clergy and newspapers brokered a compromise of a 10-hour work day with comparable pay cut. Bennett accepted the compromise, which created a rift between skilled and unskilled workers. Skilled workers, paid by the piece, could work faster and maintain their old wages. Unskilled workers, paid by the week, would work for lower wages at a pace directed by the skilled workers. Due to the internal strife in the mill, Bennett fired five of the strike leaders, causing all workers to walk off the job. Workers demanded that he rehire the leaders and institute a 10-hour day without a pay cut. Strikers offered a compromise of a three-month trial of a 10-hour day without a pay cut to see if other cities followed. Bennett accepted but refused to rehire the strike organizers. Despite threats to continue the strike, most workers returned to work under the original conditions.

### Strike of 1877

After three wage cuts in three years, a strike committee was organized in 1877. The majority of Wamsutta workers threatened to walk out after the third wage cut, and the company retracted the latest cut. Buoyed by their success, workers threatened to strike unless the other wage cuts were rescinded and the speedups in production reduced. The company refused and the workers walked out. It is noteworthy that William Henry Johnson, an ex-slave who had become a lawyer, served as legal counsel for the striking workers.

The strike collapsed as a result of the English workers' own issues with immigrants, the English spent most of their strike relief funds paying the French Canadians to stay out of the mills. To wait out the strike, the mills simply sold off their stock. When need for work won out, many French Canadians returned to work at the mills. The strike collapsed, and workers continued under the wage cut.

### Strike of 1898

A 10-percent wage cut was instituted by New Bedford's textile mill owners in 1898. According to the 18 owners of New Bedford's fine-cloth textile mills, it was required as a result of increased competition from the South and large inventories of finished cloth in the storehouses. In the years since the 1877 strike, craft unions for textile workers grew, including the American Federation of Labor (AFL). As a result, on January 17, the day the wage cut was instituted, 6,000 spinners, weavers and loomfixers walked out of the New Bedford mills, followed by 9,000 unorganized mill workers. Workers were paid from donations by other unions outside of New Bedford who were not on strike and from the Overseers of the Poor who were legally allowed to pay one third of a wage for eight weeks.

Despite the bad press resulting in the strike for the mill owners, they refused to give in. Owners refused requested negotiations with striking workers and called upon the city's mayor to fine workers \$300 (a year's wages) if they picketed outside the gates. In addition, the Overseers of the Poor stated that anyone accepting aid would be considered a pauper and would not be allowed to vote.

Conflicts between craft unions and nonunion workers also erupted. Some unions wanted to add demands to the strike, while still more unions complained of the political nature of other unions. Non-union employees demanded a share of relief funds from unions. After three months, strike and relief funds were gone. Tenement owners, pressured by the government, began evicting tenants. Wamsutta evicted workers from their mill-owned housing. Retail grocers stopped offering goods on credit. Although some mill owners appeared to be giving up ground by stating that the cut was somewhere between three and ten percent, giving the unions a compromise, other owners refused and announced the mills would reopen. The strike was dead and workers returned to any wages they could get.

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### Strike of 1928

Following the Strike of 1898, the Textile Council, a group of several independent unions of skilled workers, emerged to assist workers in discussing concerns over wage and working conditions with the owners. The Council managed to broker several deals successfully with the owners for the benefit of the workers. However, on April 9, 1928, a notice at 27 mills in New Bedford, including Wamsutta, announced a 10% wage cut effective the following week, which was contrary to the agreement of 30 days notice the Council had brokered with the owners.

The mill owners once again claimed the cut was the result of overstock and the recession that hit New Bedford's textile manufacturers in 1926. Conditions in the mills worsened when smaller mill owners, who could not reduce the speed of production and stay solvent like larger mills such as Wamsutta, broke their longstanding agreements and began to increase production, further glutting the market. As a result of this overproduction, the textile market for the cartel plummeted and the strike was imminent.

Less than a week after the announcement, the unions associated with the Textile Council voted to strike. Although the unions represented only the skilled workers (weavers, spinners, etc.), on the Monday morning of the pay cut, unskilled workers at Wamsutta Mills followed the lead of the unions and did not show up for work. On the second day of the strike, the mills closed their gates. In order for the strike to be successful, the Textile Council was forced to raise money to support the unskilled, low-wage mill workers to keep them from returning to the mills.

Union members from non-striking mills in New Bedford pledged 10 percent of the weekly earnings. The Textile Council sent out people to raise money from other unions across the country during the strike. A citizen Strike Relief Committee was established to distribute funds to non-union workers. Donations came in, grocery stores offered credit to striking workers, and soup kitchens opened. The Textile Council even convinced the city's public welfare board that the mill owners had closed the gates so nonunion workers could not work and were therefore eligible for relief.

The mill owners were charged with creating their own problems by the "American Cotton and Wool Reporter" which stated that the New Bedford mills were using selling methods of 50 years ago. In addition, the editor of Fairchild Publications (a leading publisher of textile magazines) noted that a wage cut would not stimulate demand and mill owners should not punish mill workers for their own mistakes. Members of the Manufacturers' Association (the mill owners) also divided between the old guard, including Wamsutta Mills, and the new, which produced cotton for automobile tires, a booming business in the 1920s. Despite these divisions, many of the mill owners were kept afloat by simply continuing to sell off the overstocked goods that had initiated the pay cuts.

The Textile Manufacturers Committee (TMC) soon arrived in New Bedford. The TMC, born out of the early Communist Party in the United States, entered the scene to support the nonunion Portuguese, Polish and other immigrant workers in New Bedford. The TMC united the unskilled, low-wage workers against the mill owners at Wamsutta and other mills. The TMC organized pickets, handed out leaflets, and made more demands on the mill owners such as requesting 40-hour work weeks and 20% pay increases. In retaliation, the Textile Council started to spread rumors in the press of "reds," alluding to communists, about the TMC. The feuding led up to a fight between two leaders of the organizations at the gates of the Wamsutta Mills during a day of picketing. Unlike the Textile Council, which was considered law-abiding by the city government, the TMC was harassed by police, and picketers were constantly arrested. Eventually, even singing at

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Wamsutta Mills  
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pickets was considered disturbing the peace. One rainy day during the summer of the strike, a brawl erupted outside the Wamsutta Mills when a member of the TMC was put under arrest for singing while picketing. Other picketers became enraged and a melee broke out. It became obvious as a result of these arrests, the government was backing the mill owners.

Following these disturbances and their subsequent trials, members of the Textile Council began to arrive at TMC pickets. On June 18, members of the rival organizations picketed together at Wamsutta Mills. Not long after the July 1 parade of TMC mill workers, which was blocked by police vehicles, the inventories of the mill owners went dry. The mill owners announced they would open the mills for production on July 9 with the 10% pay cut. On that morning, thousands of workers showed up to picket, and the mill owners closed the gates in defeat. Soon after, the mill owners pressured the mayor and city police for support. Hundreds of picketers and parade marchers were arrested and tried in court over the next two months.

With the coming of winter, mill workers worried about survival. The strike had been going on for six months. Mediators were called in to broker a deal between the mill owners and the Textile Council. The TMC was not invited. As a result of mediation, the two agreed to a five percent wage cut. The strike was over and the mills reopened. Despite the urgings of the TMC leaders on October 8 (the day the mills reopened) to keep the strike going, workers returned to the mills. The strike was over.

### Cotton Cloth Production

The manufacture of cotton cloth at Wamsutta required hundreds of skilled and unskilled workers over the course of its history. The process from delivery of bales of cotton to the mills to shipment of completed cloth to vendors was undertaken in a complex process divided into three distinct operations: preparation, spinning, and weaving.

#### Preparation

##### *Cleaning*

Upon receipt, bales of cotton were taken from the storehouse to the opening room in the picker house. The cotton bales were opened and placed into the opening machine, which with a beating action loosened the fibers and separated impurities from the fibers. 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 were rolled into a cylinder-like shape called a 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 makes the product (which was 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.

##### *Carding*

The next step in the process of preparation of the fibers, was performed by a carding machine. This 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.

(continued)

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### *Drawing and Combing*

The drawing frame operation, immediately following carding, partly 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. They then passed 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 into one until it met the desired weight.

### Spinning

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 yard which runs crosswise in the cloth).

In preparation of the stock for spinning, two or more laps, slivers, or rovings were doubled or combined and fed into the next operation from which it 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, which utilized a method of spinning yarn utilizing a ring and traveler that inserted the twist and guided the winding of the yarn onto a bobbin in a continuous and simultaneous spinning operation from the roving to the spun yarn on a bobbin. The mule spinning machine, with intermittent in 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.

Next, the yarn was warped to prepare it for the next operation. Beam warping consisted of winding the yarn in a sheet on section beams for the slasher or sizing operation. Next, the warp yarn was sized through the slashing machine. The yarn was taken in an even sheet from the section beams, passed through the size liquid and through squeeze rolls, then around hot cylinders and fans to dry the sheet, and finally was pressed solidly on to the loom beam, or harness.

### Weaving

Weaving was the interlacing of warp and fill or woof. Warp yarn from the loom beam and woof yarn from the spools or bobbins were woven on a loom. The loom beam had to be drawn in, a process where each of the warp filaments was treaded from the loom beam into the loom. When the harness was emptied, the ends of the yarn were twisted to yarn from a new loom beam by hand. As the loom ran, it raised every other strand of warp yarn while the shuttle, a pointed block of wood, pulled the woof yarn through. The position of the warp strands was reversed and the shuttle pulled through in the reverse direction. Spools or bobbins were replaced when emptied by this process, and the empty bobbins returned to the spinning room.

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Wamsutta Mills  
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Cloth from the looms was then sent to the cloth room where it was inspected and graded for quality before being shipped.

### Utilization of the Mills (1910)

Although portions of the mill buildings at Wamsutta changed uses over the years, the following is a snapshot of the Wamsutta Mills operation during a busy production year.

The basement of Mill No. 1 (not extant, destroyed in 1924 fire) was utilized as a machine shop. Speeders were located on the first floor, while shipping activities were undertaken on the second floor. The third and fourth floors housed mule spinning operations. Several small shops were located off the northern end of Mill No.1 which consisted of an engine room, belt shop, and tin shop servicing the complex.

Attached by multistory passageway to Mill No. 1, the first floor of the **Cloth/Harness Room** was dedicated to cloth inspection. Meanwhile, the second floor of the building was divided in a Harness Room at the far northern end, a cloth room at the center adjacent to an overhead passage to the **No. 4 Picker House**, and offices at the southern end of the building.

The supply room, storage, and shipping areas in Mill No. 2 (not extant, destroyed in 1924 fire) were relegated to the basement. On the second floor, speeders were located on the west end of the building while the drawing frames were on the east. Similarly, the combing and doubling operations shared the third floor. Also on the third floor, ring spinning was carried out. Mule spinning was located on the entire fourth floor.

Power for Mill No. 3 (not extant, destroyed in 1924 fire) was provided by the dynamo at the west end of the basement, a space shared by the twisting and warping operations. The entire first floor of Mill No. 3 was delegated to the carding operation while the second floor was dedicated to mule spinning. The third floor was shared by the ring spinning on the west end and mule spinning on the east end, an operation that also took up the entire fourth floor.

The two-story No. 3 Picker House (not extant, destroyed in 1924 fire) consisted of openers and picker machines on the first floor and finishing pickers on the second. Adjacent to the No. 3 Picker House was the No. 2 Engine House (not extant), which included engines and a boiler room.

The basement of **Mill No. 4** was shared by the carding, combing, and fly frames operations. Upstairs on the first floor, the carding operation was located immediately above the carding operation in the basement at the southern end of the building. Doubling, slubbers, drawing, and fly frames utilized the remainder of the first floor area. The entire second floor of Mill No. 4 was utilized for weaving cloth. The far northern end of the third floor was dedicated to mule spinning, which also occupied the entire fourth floor. The remainder of the third floor was shared by the spoolers and ring spinners.

Attached by passageway from Mill No. 4, the No. 4 Picker House was furnished with openers and picker machines on the first floor. The second floor consisted of finishing pickers, while the third floor was dedicated to slashing.

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The earthen-floored basement of **Mill No. 5** was utilized as a machine room and storage of loom beams. Just above on the first floor, weaving took place on the entire level. From the southern end northward, the second floor was shared by the carding, drawing frames, slubbers and combing machines, and fly frames at the northern end. Fly frames were also located at the far north end of the third floor. Ring spinning, spooling and warping were also located on this level. On the fourth floor, mule spinning encompassed the entire floor.

Adjacent to Mill Nos. 4 & 5 is the **No. 5 Picker House**, the first floor of which was dedicated to shafting, consisting of threading the loom harnesses. The first floor of the building housed openers and pickers. Finishing pickers were dedicated to the second floor while slashing was located on the third floor.

The first floor of the **No. 6 Picker House** was shared by the opener and picker on eastern end of the building, the dust storage at the center, and waste storage at the western end. Above the waste storage on the second floor was the drawing in room that shared the floor with the Intermediate Picker. Finish picking was located on the entire third floor, and warping and spooling took place on the fourth floor.

The first floor of the **Old No. 6 Picker House** was dedicated to the openers and pickers. The intermediate pickers and finishing pickers were located immediately above on floors two and three. The carding operations were located on the third floor above the monumental archway. The fourth floor was shared by the warping and spooling operations.

The machinery in **Mill No. 6** was partly powered by the dynamo located on the first floor of the building. The majority of the first floor, however, was dedicated to shafting, loom, machine and miscellaneous storage. The entire second floor was dedicated to weaving. The third floor of the mill was shared by the carding, combing, doubling and slubbers, and drawing frames operations. Meanwhile, the majority of the fourth floor was dedicated to mule spinning, while ring spinning was located at the far western end of the floor. The one-story **Mill No. 8**, also known as the Weave Shed, was entirely dedicated to weaving.

The majority of activity in Mill No. 7 (demolished in 2005) was dedicated to weaving activities located on a half of the first floor, the entire second floor, and the majority of the third floor. Other operations in the building included a cloth room on the first floor and a slashing and drawing in room on the third floor. The No. 6 Engine House and its square smokestack, located on the north side of west end of the Old No. 6 Picker House, housed large boilers to power the mill (demolished in 2007).

Several other buildings, no longer extant, located within the complex included the gatehouse (demolished between 1958 and 1968), located along Wamsutta Street; a carriage shed (demolished between 1958 and 1968), located near the Cloth/Harness Room; a storehouse, located near Mill No. 6 (demolished between 1924 and 1950); and the No. 3 Storehouse, formerly the gasometer providing gas to the mills, which was converted a second time to a restaurant by 1924 (demolished by 1950). In addition, the No. 4 Storehouse (demolished by 1924), located near Mill No. 7, a storehouse on North Front Street, and several storehouses and sheds on the west side of the former railroad tracks, now Route 18 (demolition dates unknown), and several other small structures were located within the complex and utilized in a support role for the mills. The 1½-story No. 6 Engine House (ca. 1888 and 1893) extended northward from the west end of Mill No. 6. The removal of the boilers significantly altered the south and west elevations of the building, and the smokestack was significantly truncated after 1958 when the complex was sold.

(continued)

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**Wamsutta Mills**  
**New Bedford (Bristol), MA**

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Mill Nos. 4 and 5 and Picker House Nos. 4, 5 and 6 are currently undergoing a substantial rehabilitation utilizing state and federal historic preservation tax credits. These buildings will be converted into 250 units of market rate, loft-style apartments, a health club, and the Wamsutta Mills textile museum. No change of use is currently proposed for Mill Nos. 6 and 8, Old No. 6 Picker House, the Cloth/Harness Room, or the Waste House, all currently utilized for commercial and light industrial uses. Improvements to the parcels of land associated with the rental units include new surface parking, landscaping islands, lighting, and streetscape enhancement.

**Archaeological Significance**

Historic archaeological resources described above may contribute important information related to the architecture, technology and manufacturing process associated with the first cotton manufacturing facility in the City of New Bedford. Structural evidence of Mill Nos. 1, 2, and 3 and a number of industrial outbuildings associated with the mills may contribute important information related to the architectural characteristics of early steam-powered cotton mills in New Bedford and techniques used in their construction. Detailed analysis of structures and artifacts associated with industrial-related structures and trash areas may contribute important evidence related to power technologies in use at the mills and the textile technologies used in the manufacturing process. Historical and archaeological resources may contribute important information related to all phases of the manufacture of cotton cloth, from the delivery of cotton bales to the shipment of completed cloth to vendors. Archaeological resources may contribute detailed information related to the three distinct operations that characterized the complex manufacturing process for cotton cloth: preparation, spinning and weaving.

(end)

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Wamsutta Mills  
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(end)

Wamsutta Mills

Name of Property

Bristol, MA

County, State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx 19.3 acres

### UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 19 339420 4612640  
Zone Easting Northing

2. 19 339700 4612660  
Zone Easting Northing

3. 19 339720 4612360  
Zone Easting Northing

4. 19 339440 4612320  
Zone Easting Northing

— 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

name/title Taya Dixon, Epsilon Associates, with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date July 2008

street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone 617-727-8470

city or town Boston state MA zip code 021125

### 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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name multiple: see attached list

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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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New Bedford (Bristol), MA

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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the former Wamutta Mills are outlined in bold on the accompanying site map and includes plot-lot 72-261, 78-125, 78-218, 78-219, 78-220 78-224, 78-225 in the City of New Bedford.

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes land totaling approximately 19.3 acres which include the eleven buildings and structures historically associated with the Wamsutta Mills operated in New Bedford, MA, including Mill Nos. 4, 5, 6, 8, Picker House Nos. 4, 5, 6, Old Picker House No.6, the Cloth/Harness Room, the Waste House (located on the south side of Wamsutta Street), Rodman's Pond, and one noncontributing metal storage building.

(end)

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Wamsutta Mills  
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## ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

### LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

MA\_New Bedford(Bristol County)\_Wamsutta1.tif

- Name: Wamsutta Mills\*
- Location: Acushnet Avenue, Logan, Wamsutta and North Front Streets, New Bedford, Bristol County, Massachusetts\*
- Photographer: Brian Graves, Epsilon Associates\*
- Date: December 6, 2007\*
- Location of Negative: Original Digital Image at Epsilon Associates, Maynard, MA\*
- Description of View: View northeast of west elevations, Mill No. 4, No. 5 Picker House, Mill No. 5

MA\_New Bedford(Bristol County)\_Wamsutta2.tif

- Description of View: View east of interior, Mill No. 4

MA\_New Bedford(Bristol County)\_Wamsutta3.tif

- Description of View: View of south stairtower, Mill No. 4

MA\_New Bedford(Bristol County)\_Wamsutta4.tif

- Description of View: View northeast of Rodman's Pond

MA\_New Bedford(Bristol County)\_Wamsutta5.tif

- Description of View: View northwest of east elevation, No. 6 Picker House and Mill No. 5

MA\_New Bedford(Bristol County)\_Wamsutta6.tif

- Description of View: View southeast of north elevation, Weave Shed

MA\_New Bedford(Bristol County)\_Wamsutta7.tif

- Description of View: View northwest of south elevation, Mill No. 6

MA\_New Bedford(Bristol County)\_Wamsutta8.tif

- Description of View: View southwest of east and north elevations, Waste House

MA\_New Bedford(Bristol County)\_Wamsutta9.tif

- Description of View: View southwest of east elevations, No. 4 Picker House and Mill No. 4

MA\_New Bedford(Bristol County)\_Wamsutta10.tif

- Description of View: View northeast of west and south elevations, Cloth and Harness Room

\*Applies to all photographs

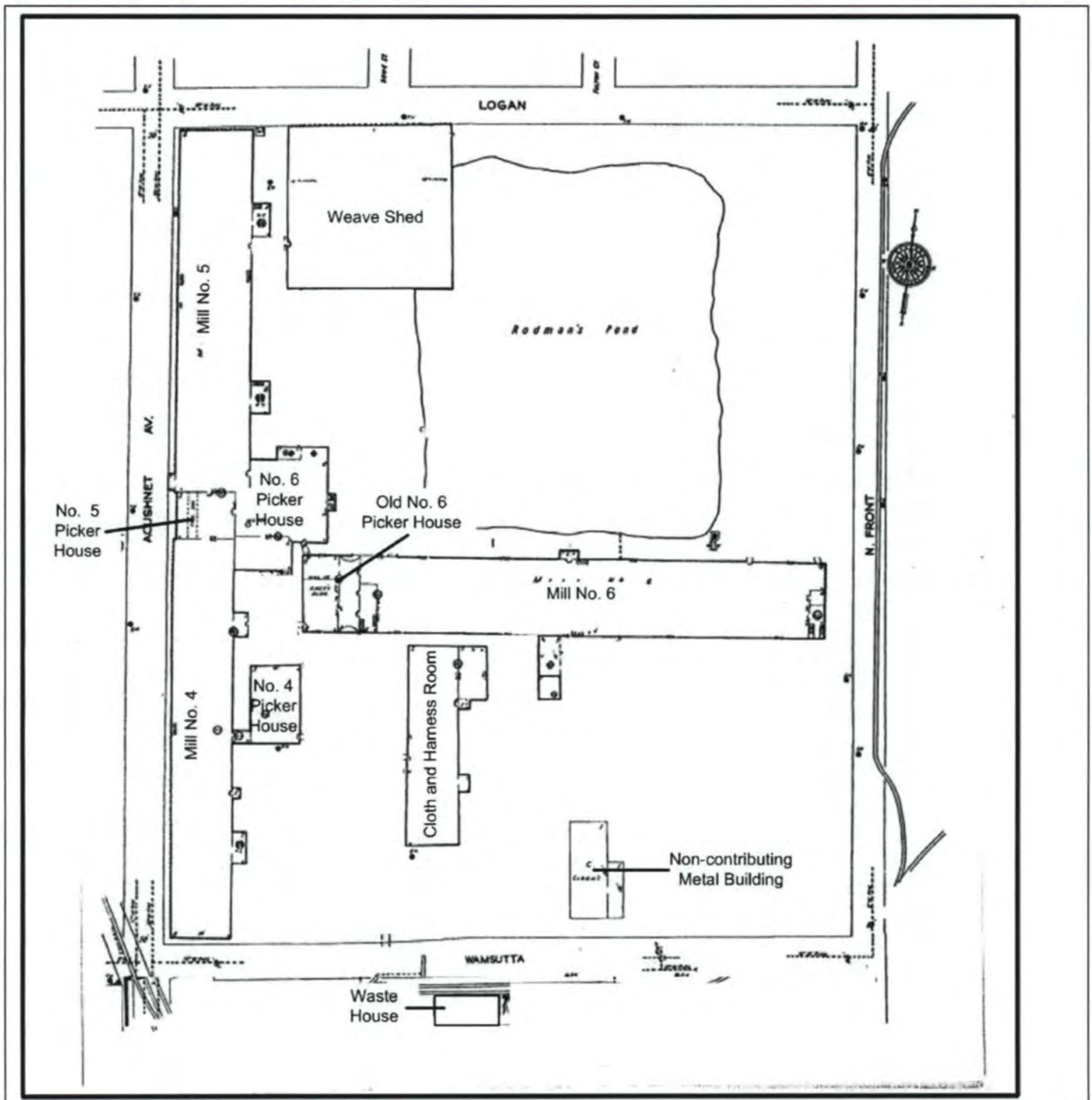
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Wamsutta Mills  
New Bedford (Bristol), MA

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## SKETCH MAP



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Wamsutta Mills  
New Bedford (Bristol), MA

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### PROPERTY OWNERS:

Armand A. Rheaume Trust  
c/o George Rheaume  
48 Wamsutta Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740

Coggeshall Investment, LTD  
PO Box 61008  
New Bedford, MA 02746

Wamsutta Pond Corporation  
PO Box 690307  
Quincy, MA 02269

William Street Corporation  
100 North Front Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740

Wamsutta, LLC  
PO Box 690307  
Quincy, MA 02269

Wamsutta II, LLC  
PO Box 690307  
Quincy, MA 02269

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Wamsutta Mills  
New Bedford (Bristol), MA**

Section number DS Page 1

**DISTRICT DATA SHEET**

| Parcel ID No. | Property Address    | Building Name                             | Date     | Construction       | Architectural Style | C/NC |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------|--------------------|---------------------|------|
| 78 219        | 800 Acushnet Avenue | Mill No. 4                                | 1868     | Heavy timber frame | Industrial          | C    |
| 78 225        | 800 Acushnet Avenue | Mill No. 5                                | 1875     | Heavy timber frame | Industrial          | C    |
| 78 224        | 1 Wamsutta Street   | Mill No. 6                                | 1882     | Heavy timber frame | Industrial          | C    |
| 78 218        | 22 Logan Street     | Weave Shed (aka Mill No. 8)               | ca. 1905 | Heavy timber frame | Industrial          | C    |
| 78 224        | 800 Acushnet Avenue | No. 4 Picker House                        | ca. 1875 | Heavy timber frame | Industrial          | C    |
| 78 219        | 800 Acushnet Avenue | No. 5 Picker House                        | 1875     | Heavy timber frame | Industrial          | C    |
| 78 225        | 800 Acushnet Avenue | No. 6 Picker House                        | ca. 1924 | Heavy timber frame | Industrial          | C    |
| 78 224        | 1 Wamsutta Street   | Old No. 6 Picker House                    | 1888     | Heavy timber frame | Industrial          | C    |
| 78 125        | 61 Wamsutta Street  | Cloth and Harness Room                    | 1889     | Heavy timber frame | Industrial          | C    |
| 72 261        | 48 Wamsutta Street  | Waste House                               | ca. 1900 | Heavy timber frame | Industrial          | C    |
| 78 220        | Logan Street        | Rodman's Pond                             | 1847     |                    |                     | C    |
| 78 224        | 1 Wamsutta Street   | Metal Storage Building (non-contributing) | ca. 1990 | Steel frame        | Industrial          | N/C  |

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Wamsutta Mills  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Bristol

DATE RECEIVED: 7/09/08 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/28/08  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/12/08 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/22/08  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 08000794

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 8/19/2008 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA

REVIEWER

DISCIPLINE

TELEPHONE

DATE

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



MA New Bedford (Bristol County) - Wamsutta 1.tif

Wamsutta Mills

Acushnet Avenue, Logan, Wamsutta and North Front Streets, New Bedford

Brian Graves, Epsilon Associates

Dec. 6, 2007

Epsilon Associates, Nacmard, MA

View northeast of west elevations, Mill No. 4, No. 5 Peter House, Mill No. 5



MA - New Bedford (Bristol County) - Wamsutta 2.tif

Wamsutta Mills

Acushnet Avenue, Logan, Wamsutta and North Front Streets

Brian Graves, Epsilon Associates

Dec. 6, 2007

Epsilon Associates, Maynard, MA

View east of interior, Mill NO. 4



MA - New Bedford (Bristol County) - Wamsutta 3.tif

Wamsutta Mills

Acushnet Avenue, Logan, Wamsutta and North Front Streets

Brian Graves, Epsilon Associates

Dec. 6, 2007

Epsilon Associates, Maynard, MA

View of south stair tower, Mill No. 4



MA - New Bedford (Bristol County) - Wamsutta 4.tif  
Wamsutta Mills  
Acushnet Avenue, Logan, Wamsutta and North Front Streets

Brian Graves, Epsilon Associates

Dec. 6, 2007

Epsilon Associates, Maynard, MA

View northeast of Rodman's Pond



MA - New Bedford (Bristol County) - Wamsutta 5.tif

Wamsutta Mills

Acushnet Avenue, Logan, Wamsutta and North Front Streets

Brian Graves, Epsilon Associates

Dec. 6, 2007

Epsilon Associates, Maynard, MA

View north west of east elevation, No. 6 Pickhouse and Mill No. 5



MA New Bedford (Bristol County) - Wamsutta L. tif

Wamsutta Mills

Acushnet Avenue, Logan, Wamsutta and North Front Streets

Brian Graves, Epsilon Associates

Dec. 6, 2007

Epsilon Associates, Maynard, MA

View southeast of north elevation, Weave Shed



MA-New Bedford (Bristol County) - Wamsutta 7.tif

Wamsutta Mills

Acushnet Avenue, Logan, Wamsutta and North Front Streets

Brian Graves, Epsilon Associates

Dec. 6, 2007

Epsilon Associates, Maynard, MA

View northwest of south elevation, Mill No. 6



MA - New Bedford (Bristol County) - Wamsutta B.tif

Wamsutta Mills

Acushnet Avenue, Logan, Wamsutta and North Front Streets

Brian Graves, Epsilon Associates

Dec. 6, 2007

Epsilon Associates, Maynard, MA

View southwest of east and north elevations, Waste House



MA-New Bedford (Bristol County) Wamsutta 9.tif

Wamsutta Mills

Acushnet Avenue, Logan, Wamsutta and North Front Streets

Brian Graves, Epsilon Associates

Dec. 6, 2007

Epsilon Associates, Maynard, MA

View southwest of east elevations, No. 4 Pickert House and Mill No. 4



MA - New Bedford (Bristol County) - Wamsutta 10.tif

Wamsutta Mills

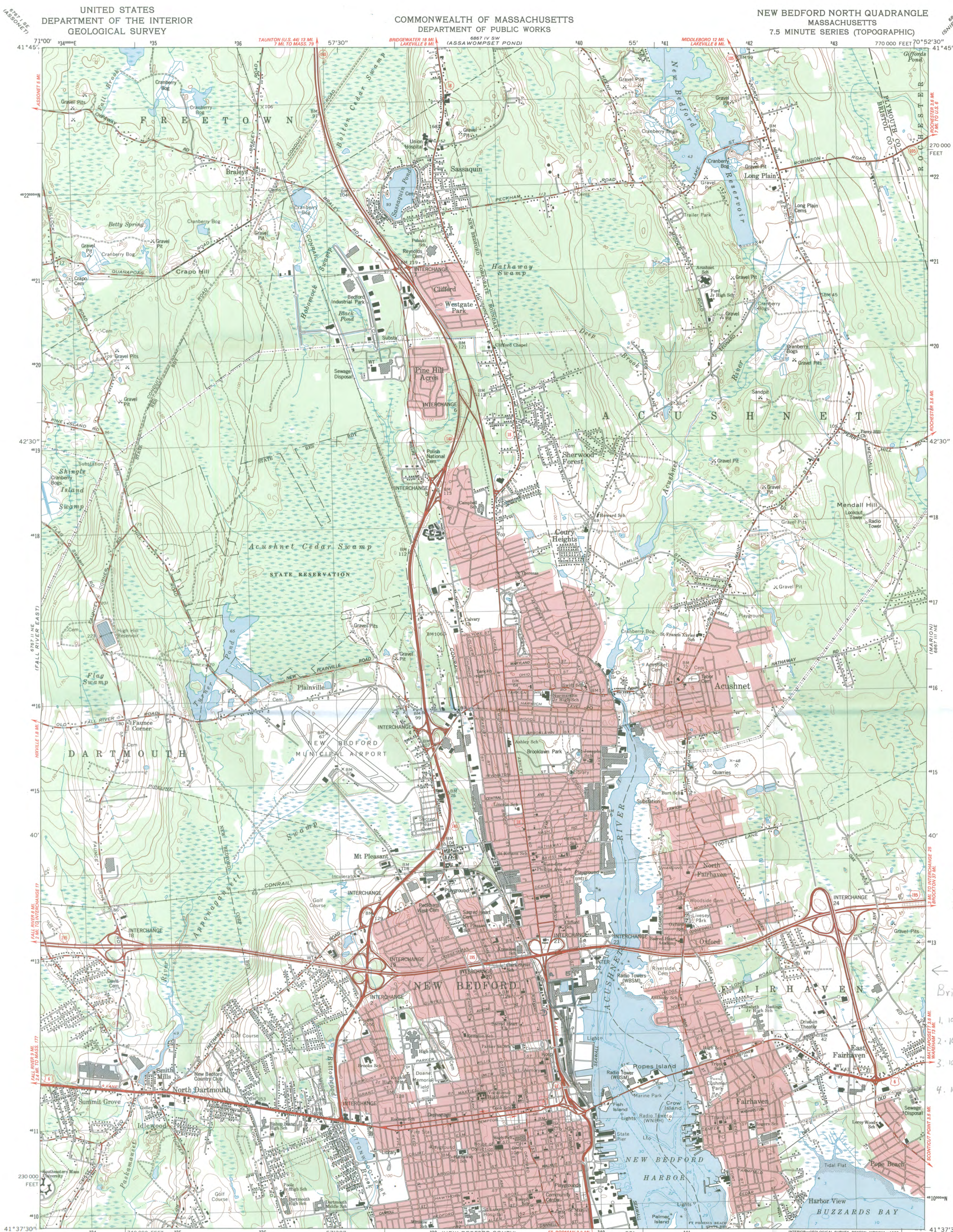
Acushnet Avenue, Logan, Wamsutta and North Front Streets

Brian Graves, Epsilon Associates

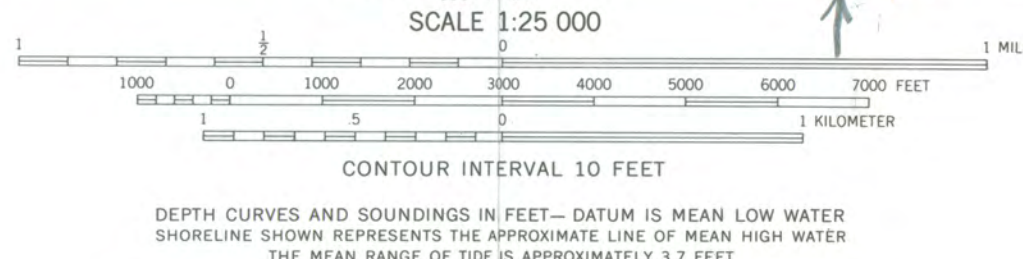
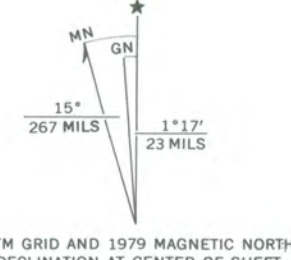
Dec. 6, 2007

Epsilon Associates, Maynard, MA

View northeast of west and south elevations, Cloth and Harness Room



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey  
Topography by planetable surveys 1936. Revised 1964  
Revised 1975 from aerial photographs taken 1974  
Field checked 1975. Map edited 1979  
Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS 353 (1973)  
This information is not intended for navigational purposes  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American Datum  
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983  
move the projection lines 6 meters south and  
42 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks  
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,  
mainland zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 19  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown  
Boundaries in tidewater areas from information furnished by  
Massachusetts Department of Public Works  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of  
the National or State reservations shown on this map



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway  
hard surface

Secondary highway,  
hard surface

Light-duty road, hard or  
improved surface

Unimproved road

Interstate Route

U. S. Route

State Route

NEW BEDFORD NORTH, MASS.  
N4137.5—W7052.5/7.5

1979

DMA 6867 III NW—SERIES 814





Wamsutta Mills  
Bristol County, MA



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



July 7, 2008

Mr. J. Paul Loether, Chief  
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 form:

Wamsutta Mills, New Bedford (Bristol), 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 New Bedford were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 60 to 90 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg  
National Register Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosure

cc: Taya Dixon, Epsilon Associates, consultant  
Anne Louro, New Bedford CLG Coordinator  
Joan Beubian, Chair, New Bedford Historical Commission  
Scott W. Lang, Mayor, City of New Bedford  
George N. Smith, Chair, Planning Board  
Armand Rheume Trust  
Wamsutta, LLC  
Wamsutta II, LLC  
Wamsutta Pond Corp.  
William Street Corp.  
Coggeshall Investment, LTD

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[www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)