CMP NO. 1024-8018 EXP. 12/31/84

United States Department of the InteriorNational Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

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<u>3. Clas</u>	sification	Thematic Group		
Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
district building(s)	public private	_X_ occupied _X_ unoccupied	agriculture x commercial	museum park
structure	_x_ both	_x_ work in progress	educational	_x_ private residence
site object	Public Acquisition in process	Accessible _X_ yes: restricted	entertainment government	religious scientific
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7. Description

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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Amoskeag Manufacturing Company Housing Thematic Group Nomination consists of five districts located in the city of Manchester, New Hampshire. Its sixty-seven buildings represent all of the surviving clusters of tenement blocks and overseers' residences erected by the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company for its employees between 1838 and 1916. The nomination does not include the half-dozen single family residences scattered throughout the city that were built by Amoskeag for agents and superintendents; in their character, setting, and the use to which they were put, these structures differ sharply from those within the nomination. Also omitted are three frame tenements on the west side of the Merrimack River¹, which, due to lack of architectural distinctiveness and recent alterations, are not eligible for the National Register.

The districts lie within parameters roughly bounded by the Amoskeag Dam, Elm, Granite and Main/McGregor Streets. District E is located on the west side of the river, and the remaining four on its east side. District boundary lines encircle major groups of company housing, following streets or lot lines. The few modern intrusions are indicated on the district sketch maps by letter designation.

URBAN DESIGN

The layout of the Amoskeag mills, canals and housing followed a predetermined plan established by Amoskeag. It was based on principles first employed in Lowell, Mass., fifteen years earlier. Stretched along the river's east bank and two parallel canals, which have since been filled, are the mills. East of the mills, and directly across from the particular mills for which they were built, are long brick blocks of similarly designed tenement housing. Most of the blocks are sited longitudinally, east-to-west, on parallel streets extending away from the millyard and toward the city center. accommodate the hilly sites, the majority are constructed as stepped units. At the ridge of the hill, above the tenement blocks, are pairs of smaller overseers' blocks set back-to-back and sited perpendicularly to the tenement blocks. In front of the east-facing overseers' blocks there were landscaped gardens with arbors, ornamental trees and geometrically designed flower beds. None of the yards survive. 2 Further east and just behind the commercial blocks on Elm Street were the early agents' residences, none of which survive. 3 The hierarchical layout of housing resembled other New England manufacturing communities of the period, but the Amoskeag plan was unusually consolidated and systematic. The placement, design and materials of the buildings gave the area the look of a rural college. To its inhabitants the millyard and housing areas provided a sense of enclosure and security.

After an initial construction boom which ended in the late 1850s, the early plan was abandoned. The last instance of its use was in the mid-1860s, when two tenement blocks,

¹ These three story tenements on Douglas Street were built in 1866 for workers at the Manchester Mills.

²The yards, now paved as parking lots, have been included within district bounds since the original relationship of open space to housing is extant.

³The sites have been built over and are not included in this historical/architectural nomination.

8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 X 1800–1899 X 1900–	Areas of Significance—C — archeology-prehistoric — archeology-historic — agriculture X architecture — art — commerce — communications		landscape architectur iaw literature military music philosophy politics/government	religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	1838-1916	Builder/Architect n/a		,

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Amoskeag Manufacturing Company Housing Districts possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials and workmanship. They are significant historically for their association with one of the nation's earliest major cotton manufacturers, which later became the largest textile manufacturer in the world. In addition, Districts A and B are significant architecturally as the most extensive and intact complexes of pre-1850 company housing in the country.

The Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, which developed the large complex of mills and housing along Manchester's river front and laid out the city itself, grew out of the Amoskeag Cotton and Woolen Manufacturing Company. Incorporated in 1810, it was located on the west bank of the Merrimack River. In the 1820s the company expanded its operations to include sheeting, tickings and shirtings. It soon recognized that the east bank offered more advantageous prospects for large-scale industrial development. In 1831 when the company was reorganized and incorporated as the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, it purchased a 1500 acre tract on the east side from local farmers. It also bought out the interests of the four canal companies which previously had constructed canals alongside the river. With these acquisitions, Amoskeag took title to all the potential mill sites and obtained water rights for approximately three miles of the river's length. It had prepared itself well for the major expansion in industrial development which was to follow.

Among the stockholders of the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company was a group of Boston merchants known as the Boston Associates. The Boston Associates had financed and supervised the construction of the first American cotton mill capable of converting raw cotton into finished cloth, in Waltham, Massachusetts in 1812. When they sought a larger site for expanded textile manufacturing, the Boston Associates purchased 400 acres of farmland on the Merrimack River in 1821. At that site, a year later, they founded Lowell, the first planned textile city in America.

The Waltham-Lowell textile manufacturing system was unique. It depended on the technology of power looms, ample capitalization, and the availability of a labor force composed of single women from surrounding farms. Its success led to the founding of other textile centers along the major rivers of New England. Manchester, founded sixteen years after Lowell, soon became one of the leading textile manufacturing cities in New England. Its plans for the mills and company housing were modeled directly after Lowell. Its layout, however, along canals parallel to the river, turned out to be significantly different and became, in turn, the prototype for other textile cities, such as Lawrence, Massachusetts.

The Amoskeag Manufacturing Company aimed to create an attractive environment that would prove conducive to both work and relaxation. By 1838, an entire city had been platted and named after Manchester, the prosperous textile center in England. The formal grid plan of the new community was bisected by Elm Street, the north-south commerical artery.

9.	Major Bibliographical References
Amos Ma	keag Manufacturing Company records & plans, Manchester Historic Association collection, unchester, NH & Baker Library, Harvard University.
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OMB No. 1024-0018 Exp. 10-31-84

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only received date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

6

Page

DETERMINATIONS OF ELIGIBILITY

Properties included in two of the districts have been determined eligible as follows:

District A: Blocks #1,2,6 and 7 were determined eligible under Criteria A and C on October 26, 1976. The properties are referred to as the "Amoskeag Millyard Complex". Request for determination was made by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

District C: Blocks #40,41,42 and 43 were determined eligible under Criteria C on November 12, 1980. The properties are referred to as the "Bridge Street Corporation Housing".

NPS Form 10-900-a (7-81)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

EXP. 12/31/84

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OMB NO. 1021-COIS

Continuation sheet Amoskeag Mfg. Co. Housing

Item number

Page 3

an overseers' block and agent's house were constructed for the Langdon Mills (District D).

In 1881, seven rows of tenement blocks were erected north of Bridge Street (District C). These blocks marked a departure from the traditional layout scheme in several respects. The blocks were sited on north-south axes, and there were no accompanying overseers' blocks. Furthermore, they appear not to have been associated with a particular mill. The practice of siting paired blocks in rows was continued in the next and final group of blocks erected by Amoskeag in 1916 (also District C).

A row of five (originally six) overseers' residences on the west side of the river (1883; District E) represents the only housing included in the nomination not sited back-to-back. Here, the usual repetitiveness of design within a group was broken by alternating two different designs down the street.

ARCHITECTURE: 1838-1860

The Amoskeag Manufacturing Company erected most of its housing stock between 1838 and 1857. With few exceptions, the housing falls into two types: 3 1/2 story tenement blocks and 2 1/2 story overseers' blocks. All were constructed of brick and employed similar stylistic features.

The tenement blocks were modeled after those constructed in other textile communities developed by the Boston Associates, most notably in Lowell. Given the proximity of that other Merrimack River community and the intertwined relationships among the backers of the two cities, Lowell's mill housing may fairly be described as the direct antecedent of the Amoskeag blocks. Indeed the earliest blocks in Manchester resemble those erected in Lowell in the 1830s in nearly every respect.

The forty-four tenement blocks (of which twenty-four survive) erected by Amoskeag during this initial twenty year period are nearly identical in appearance. They are Greek Revival in style, but interpreted in a conservative and restrained manner common to urban seacoast cities in New England. Planar wall surfaces crisply broken by windows and doors, rectangular stone lintels and sills, entry transoms and occasional sidelights are primary characteristics. Interior trim also exhibits evidence of Greek Revival fashion.

Each block was built according to a standard depth of 36' for a 3 1/2 story block and 27' for 2 1/2 stories. The lengths range from 68' to 160' depending on the number of units. Most blocks average 85' (three units) to 110' (four units). Fenestration is regularly spaced with six over six spring sash set between split, rectangular granite lintels and sills. Window glass was obtained from the Chelmsford (Mass.) Glassworks, but the granite was quarried locally. The blocks are surmounted by medium-pitched gable slate roofs (now largely replaced by asphalt), punctured at regular intervals by gabled dormers. Paired chimneys extend from the brick party-walls dividing interior units. The gable ends of each block are treated distinctively. End chimneys are bridged, and the parapet is capped with granite. The facade cornice is stepped, and the returns terminate in granite caps. Along the raking eaves, the brick cornice projects, linked to the main wall plane by an angled brick at the end of each course. This cornice detail was a popular device used on both residential and commercial blocks in Manchester and Lowell during the mid-19th century and appears on all Amoskeag tenement and overseer blocks built before the

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Amoskeag Mfg. Co. Housing

Item number 7

Page :

Civil War. It proved especially effective on stepped units, where the angled cornice ornament is repeated successively on each elevated gable.

All the surviving tenement blocks erected between 1838 and 1840 consist of three units.⁴ Typically, the central unit, which extended the full depth of the block, was operated as a boarding house, with a common kitchen, dining room and parlor on the first floor and small bedrooms on the upper three floors. The end units were subdivided vertically and used either as an apartment or boarding house. Placement of a single centrally located entry on the facade and a double entry at each gable end reflects the interior arrangement. The entries resembled those in Lowell, with paneled doors beneath a three or fivelight transom and framed with a simple wooden surround. Each entry is capped with a granite lintel. The blocks built in the late 1840s and 1850s often have paneled or glazed sidelights at end entries, and the placement of facade entries is no longer symmetrical.

Sometime in the late 19th century, shallow-pitched wooden door hoods supported by curved iron brackets were installed over the entries. Many are still in place; others have been replaced with reproductions. Wooden stickwork and iron scroll brackets also date from the late 19th century. Bent iron stair rails fashioned like pipes flank many front and rear steps. All of the iron items were cast in the Amoskeag foundry.

Original Greek Revival interior trim of the tenement blocks is sparse, consisting of plain, wide door and window trim boards, turned wooden newel posts, simple spindle balusters, four-panel doors and fireplace mantels made from a single pine board.

Behind each block stood long rows of frame sheds, in which woodsheds and privies were located. Like the main blocks, the sheds were frequently stepped to adapt to the site. All of the sheds were removed in the early 20th century when indoor plumbing was introduced. A wooden picket fence with stone posts encircled each tenement's yard, but none remain. The blocks also had shallow one-story rear ells extending from the kitchen, a number of which survive in varying degrees of preservation. In the early 20th century, frame and iron three-story porches were appended to the rear of some of the blocks.

Between 1838 and 1860 eighteen smaller blocks were erected for overseers of the individual companies. Eleven survive, and since each is located within District B, they are described in the district data section of this nomination.

1860-1920

The Amoskeag Manufacturing Company continued to construct company housing through the early 20th century, though the pace of building in the early period never resumed. Three stepped-mansard roof blocks erected in 1865-66 (#33,49,50) marked the first departure from the gable-roof Greek Revival blocks of the previous decades. Deeply recessed entrances behind arched openings and segmental arched windows were introduced. Shortly

⁴A group of eight blocks built for Machine Shop workers between 1839 and 1844 were only 2 1/2 stories and were subdivided into 5 or 6 tenements. Since all have been demolished they are not discussed further in this nomination.

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United States Department of the InteriorNational Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS ups only received data entered

Continuation sheet Amoskeag Mfg. Co. Housing

Item number

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thereafter, several of the earlier blocks were remodeled with arched recessed entries and an added fourth story with segmental arched windows (#8-13). A mansard roof was added to an 1840 block in 1872 (#18). Two overseers' blocks erected during this period also employ late Victorian stylistic details (#19,51).

In 1881, seven blocks of tenements were constructed (District C). Their design reflects strong late Victorian Stick and Italianate influence in richly textured wall surfaces with contrasting black brick, projecting window hoodmolds, corbels and stick-like entry porticoes.

Stick Style influence is also evident in the only cluster of single-family overseers' houses built in 1882 on the west side of the river (District E). The houses are of particular interest because of their unusual suburban character.

ALTERATIONS

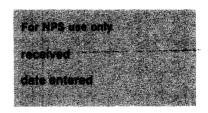
None of the housing blocks survives unaltered. As early as 1869, Amoskeag itself began remodeling and renovating blocks built twenty-five years earlier. It raised several roofs and attached a large wing to one block. All Greek Revival exterior doors were replaced by glass and wood paneled doors and door hoods supported by iron brackets were installed. In the early 20th century, many of the entries were modernized with Colonial Revival surrounds. Most of the corporation's alterations, however, were relegated to interior improvements. Several of the blocks have 20th century one-story masonry additions to the side or rear elevation, but none undermines the overall integrity of the building. None of the early ells survives, but some later ells are still intact. Recent alterations have been largely limited to sash replacement, entry remodelings and some modern dormers. Major alterations are described in full in the District Data section of this nomination form.

SURVEY AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Amoskeag Manufacturing Company Housing Thematic Group Nomination is based on field work and research conducted in the spring of 1982 by Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, a preservation consultant. Comprehensive inventory forms were completed for each building included in the nomination and have been deposited with the Amoskeag Neighborhood Association and the State Office of Historic Preservation.

The primary research source for nomination material was the extensive records of the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, most of which are deposited at the Manchester Historic Association. Local histories, city maps and atlases were also consulted. Over the past fifteen years, as urban renewal threatened and eventually demolished many of the buildings in the millyard, several articles on the area's uniqueness and its important role in the nation's industrial revolution appeared in local and national magazines. While these do not offer detailed information on specific buildings, they were useful for their overview of the company's growth and excellent photographs of buildings and spatial relationships now lost. A HABS survey conducted in 1967 documented all the existing mill structures, but it did not include any of the company housing.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Amoskeag Mfg. Co. Housing

Item number

Page 4

The probability of locating archeological sites within the districts is low due to the high degree of land disturbance in the area over the past 150 years. Though the Merrimack River Valley is known to have been inhabited as early as the Early Archaic Period (ca. 10,000-8,000 BP), the presence of pre-historic materials within the nominated area is unlikely. The area contains three undeveloped sites of 19th century Amoskeag blocks (VL-1&2 and #43: western half of lot). However, examples of each of these blocks still survive.

The nomination is sponsored by the Amoskeag Neighborhood Association, a local, private non-profit organization which, since its founding in 1979, has taken a major leadership role in fostering support for the preservation and revitalization of the Amoskeag mills and housing. The Manchester City Council and Housing Authority have been supportive of this nomination and have participated in revitalization programs within the districts. In 1980, a local historic district was created, encompassing most of District B, and professionally prepared design guidelines were published a year later. Future plans include a National Register nomination for the millyard and investigating additional local districts.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet

Amoskeag Mfg. Co. Housing

Page 1

To the west lay streets intended for company housing. These ran east—to—west and terminated at the canals and millyard. East of Elm Street, the land was divided into lots for private houses. The company reserved space in the city for public squares and gave away lots for churches and public buildings. To attract private development it auctioned land at prices below fair market value; sales, however, were accompanied by restrictions regarding use, density and, in the commercial areas, building material.

Item number

Amoskeag had originally intended to follow the pattern set in Lowell and to act as a promoter and real estate manager of the millyard. Its first two mills and eight housing blocks, completed in 1838-39, were actually built for the Stark Manufacturing Company, a textile corporation organized in 1838 by a group of partially overlapping stockholders. In 1840-41, a second group of mills and housing blocks were finished. Amoskeag intended to dispose of them in a similar manner, but its plans were altered by an economic depression in the commercial and manufacturing markets. The company instead retained ownership of the buildings and thus began its role as primary manufacturer in the millyard. Other textile companies were subsequently formed, financed and managed independently, but always under the corporate umbrella of Amoskeag. Eventually, all were absorbed by Amoskeag.

The growth of millyard and company housing areas in Manchester followed a consistent pattern. New textile companies would be organized by a group of stockholders that included several from the parent company. The companies would subsequently purchase land and mill powers from Amoskeag for factories and housing. All the buildings were designed and constructed by Amoskeag, presumably with the needs of the specific company in mind. Few architects were involved. The earliest housing blocks were built from plans drawn by Samuel Shepard. John Kimball, a local millwright, designed the Stark Mills' agent's house and the first machine shop block in 1839. All of the carpentry, framing, finish work, granite preparation and excavating was contracted out. Amoskeag employees did the slating, bricklaying and plastering. In the latter part of the 19th century, George W. Stevens, the civil engineer for Amoskeag who often was also referred to as architect, designed most of the mills and housing. By that time, construction work was performed entirely by outside firms.

Because the design and layout of buildings was controlled by Amoskeag, an orderly, coordinated approach was maintained, despite the eighty-year construction period. Throughout, consistently high design standards are evident. Both within individual districts and viewed as a whole, the corporation housing retains an integrity of design and urban planning on a scale unknown elsewhere in New England during that period. The blocks offer an understanding of the paternalistic system under which they evolved and reflect a major company's approach toward its housing during the course of its operations.

The first employees in the Amoskeag millyard were primarily native New Englanders. As was true in Lowell, many were young women from nearby farms and were attracted by the opportunity to earn wages before they married. Most of the single workers were housed in company-provided boarding houses. Yet, until 1855 none of the Amoskeag blocks was designed solely as boarding houses. 1

 $^{^{1}}$ A possible, though unlikely exception, would be some of the Manchester Mills housing (District A and #38) for which no interior plans are known.

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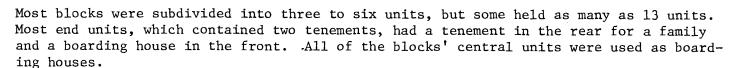
United States Department of the InteriorNational Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Amoskeag Mfg. Co. Housing

Item number 8

Page 2



The boarding house units were maintained as separate entities. Amoskeag leased them to "boarding house keepers," usually widows, who rented rooms to single workers at rates set by the corporation. Strict rules governing conduct, hours and the segregation of the sexes in separate tenements were established. The lessee of each unit was required to keep the yard in "good order"; horses, cattle and pigs were barred from the premises.

Beginning in the 1850s, Irish migration from the mill cities further south on the Merrimack began to reach Manchester and to alter the composition of its work force. Over a quarter of Amoskeag's employees were foreign-born by 1860, of which 75% were Irish. Shortly after the Civil War, large numbers of French-Canadians began arriving to seek jobs. Bringing large families with them, they constituted 35% of the labor force by 1910. To meet the changing needs for housing, Amoskeag converted many of its boarding houses into family apartments. In the remaining boarding houses workers of the same nationality were often housed together, earning the units names such as "French" or "Scotch" boarding house.

Residents of the company blocks enjoyed significant advantages. Rents were low and the blocks were convenient to the mills. The corporation provided for maintenance of the buildings. A major improvement project in 1913 outfitted the tenements with hardwood floors, up-dated kitchens, storm windows and screens, electrical, gas and sewerage hookups and central heating. New Colonial Revival entrances replaced the simpler 19th century entries on many of the blocks. Tree-lined streets and fenced yards provided a sense of enclosure and privacy.

Despite Amoskeag's continued growth in the late-19th century, it constructed only seven tenement blocks during that period. By then, it was no longer as imperative for the company to provide the majority of its workers with housing. Many of them had families, and the city of Manchester had grown sufficiently to offer a variety of housing opportunities.

By 1920, the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company had entered a final period of decline; it shut down its mills in 1935. Labor unrest, competition from southern mills and antiquated equipment have been cited to explain the corporation's collapse. The mills and the boarding houses were sold at auction a year later. A group of local businessmen, concerned about the loss of employment opportunities purchased the mills; they were renovated and resold to a variety of industries. The housing units were sold individually to private buyers. Over the next four decades, most of the blocks were only marginally maintained and the residential character of the area was eroded due to loss of trees and yards and the creation of parking lots. A recent revival of interest in the company housing has stimulated private and public investment, and many blocks have been rehabilitated to accommodate office and living space.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Amoskeag Mfg. Co. Housing

Item number

Page 1

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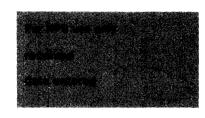
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NPS Form 10-900-a (7-81) OMB NO. 1024-0018 EXP. 10/31/84

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

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