

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

MAY 3 1984

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Wellington Piano Case Company Building

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number 54 Green Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Leominster

N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts

code 025

county Worcester

code 027

3. Classification

Category

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

Ownership

- public
- private
- both
- Public Acquisition**
- in process
- N/A being considered

Status

- occupied
- unoccupied
- work in progress
- Accessible**
- yes: restricted
- yes: unrestricted
- no

Present Use

- agriculture
- commercial
- educational
- entertainment
- government
- industrial
- military
- museum
- park
- private residence
- religious
- scientific
- transportation
- other: Vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Wellington Trust

street & number 25 Mohawk Drive

city, town Leominster

N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Worcester County Registry of Deeds

street & number 84 Elm Street

city, town Fitchburg

state Massachusetts

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of the Historic Assets
title of the Commonwealth #233

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1983

federal state county local

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission

city, town Boston

state Massachusetts

7. Description

Wellington Piano Case Company Building, Leominster, MA

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Wellington Piano Case Company Building is located on a 1.5 acre irregularly-shaped parcel on the west side of Green Street, approximately 2/3 mile north of Leominster's central business district. The property is bounded on the north, east, and south by modest late 19th-early 20th century frame housing and on the west by the tracks of the Old Colony Railroad which separates the property from North Main Street, and an open shopping center.

The brick factory building consists of three attached major sections ranging from two to four stories. The original building, erected in 1895, forms the middle and north sections (see attached site plan). The middle section, which is the principle edifice, is four stories with a flat roof and measures 22 bays wide by 6 bays deep. It features a six-story, centrally located stair tower with a crenelated parapet. Though architecturally the structure is typical of the functionalism of late 19th century mill buildings the walls are enlivened with full length recessed window bays which terminate in four rows of corbelling and a cornice of alternating recessed brick. Fenestration is regularly spaced, with 6/6 rectangular sash set within segmentally arched window openings with granite sills. The upper sash has been replaced with plywood panels. At the ground level of the tower's east wall is the main entrance: a replacement door beneath a four-light transom on the left, and ca. 1920s paired wood-paneled loading doors resting on a granite sill on the right. A granite lintel with painted lettering spans the two openings. Remaining doors, located at the southeast and northwest corners of this section, are mid-late 20th century. On the west (rear) elevation is an attached one-story frame shed, added ca. 1940.

At the north end of the original four-story section is a two-story, flat-roofed wing, extending approximately 150'. The south end, built of brick, was constructed as a dry house contemporaneously with the original building. Windows are small and widely spaced, with segmentally arched heads, granite sills and fixed four-light sash. The north end of the wing was originally frame; sometime in the 1940s it was rebuilt of concrete block and faced with brick. It was used for lumber storage. Window openings are rectangular with brick sills; most of the twelve-light sash exists behind plywood panels. The west elevation contains a later loading door, and the north elevation two windows and an exposed patch of concrete block. A number of the ground story windows of the east elevation have been bricked-up.

Spanning the middle and north sections on the east elevation is a single-story, five-bay boiler room, also part of the original structure. Like the rest of the building, it has segmentally arched window heads, granite sills and 6/6 sash. The single window on the south elevation has lost its arched head. A door with granite lintel east end is a 90' brick chimney.

Attached perpendicularly to the south end of the main building is a five-story brick addition. Constructed in 1901, it measures six bays wide by twelve bays deep. A sixth story was removed following extensive damage caused by the 1938 hurricane; only a single bay on the west elevation was left. Wall treatment and fenestration are identical to the original building. Metal spray booths, added ca. 1940, project from the south wall.

8. Significance

Wellington Piano Case Company Building, Leominster, MA

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

Specific dates 1895

Builder/Architect

Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Wellington Piano Case Company Building possesses integrity of location, design, setting materials, and workmanship. The building is associated with one of Leominster's major industries of the period, piano and piano case manufacturing, and is representative of the type and method of construction typical of late 19th century industrial structures in New England. The property thus meets Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

Piano and piano case manufacturing was introduced in Leominster in 1845 as a cottage industry. Within a few decades it had expanded into a half-dozen major companies and had become a vital part of the industry of northern Worcester County; both relied on raw materials from northern New England and a good supply of skilled craftsmen. Leominster was the leader in Worcester County in the manufacture of pianos and piano cases. Other communities involved in the industry at the turn of the century were Barre and Dana (now submerged under Quabbin Reservoir) but none approached the scale of the works in Leominster. In 1875 pianos and piano for cases accounted for about 6% of Leominster's total value of goods manufactured (\$130,000 out of \$2 million). In 1895 a total of six firms with an unknown value existed in the city. By the 1920s, production probably exceeded \$1 million.

The Wellington Piano Case Company Building is one of three surviving piano complexes in the city, and one of two identified as eligible for the National Register in a recent citywide survey. Incorporated in 1895 by Frank E. Wellington and capitalized at \$500,000, the company was the last firm of that industry to be founded in Leominster, though its period of operation coincided with the height of piano manufacturing in Boston. The company's factory building was considered locally to be the most modern, the best equipped and at 80,000 square feet, one of the largest in the world devoted to piano case manufacturing; the same sources estimated that in 1915 over 65% of the nation's piano cases originated in Leominster.¹ During its thirty-six years of operation, the Wellington factory made cases for both upright and grand pianos. The company employed 150 people and annually produced 12,000 cases, using 2,000,000 feet of lumber. The finished cases were shipped to New York City, the center of the piano industry, for installation of the action and final sale by the company's New York partners, Charles and C. Albert Jacobs.

Frank Wellington was born in 1853 in Rindge, New Hampshire. Following a business start in wood and coal in Winchendon, Massachusetts, he arrived in Leominster in 1880. For two years he worked for the Colbeigh Piano Case Factory before entering the employ of the F.C. Smith Piano Case Company as bookkeeper and assistant manager. In 1895 he founded the Wellington Piano Case Company. Following his death in 1920 his son, Curtis F., continued the business.

1. "Leominster 175th Anniversary Souvenir Program," 1915. (Though this figure is undoubtedly expansive, it does indicate the volume of cases manufactured in the city.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Dolge, Alfred, Pianos and Their Makers, New York: Dover, 1972 (first published 1911)
 Emerson, William, Leominster Historical and Picturesque, Gardner (MA), 1888.
 Miller, J.D., "History of Leominster." In History of Worcester County by D.M. Hurd,
 Philadelphia: J.W. Lewis & Company, 1888 (continued)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.5 acres

Quadrangle name Fitchburg, MA

Quadrangle scale 1:25,000

UTM References

A

1	9	2	7	3	6	7	0	4	7	1	2	6	5	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing						

C

Zone			Easting				Northing						

D

Zone			Easting				Northing						

E

Zone			Easting				Northing						

F

Zone			Easting				Northing						

G

Zone			Easting				Northing						

H

Zone			Easting				Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Attached Continuation Sheet. *See sketch map for VBD*

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Candace Jenkins, Preservation Planning Director with
 Nancy L. Doonan and Elizabeth Durfee Hengen

organization: Massachusetts Historical Commission date: February, 1984

street & number: 294 Washington Street telephone: (617) 727-8470

city or town: Boston state: Massachusetts

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature: *Patricia R. Westowski*

State Historic Preservation Officer

title: Massachusetts Historical Commission

date: 4/25/84

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
 National Register

date: 5/31/84

for *Delores Byers*
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**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 Wellington Piano Case Company Item number 7 & 8 Page 1
Building

The interior of the building complements the exterior in its functional appearance. With the exception of recent temporary partitions on the lower two stories and brick kiln walls added ca. 1940 on the second floor, the floor space is open and intact. Square posts with chamfered corners are set at 17' intervals. The soft wood flooring, laid both straight and on the diagonal, is in poor condition. The walls are brick and unfinished. The tower staircase has a plain wooden newel post and enclosed tongue and groove railing.

8. Significance (con't)

The piano industry began to slump in the mid-1910s. Faced with competition from player pianos, the victrola, and the radio, as well as a changing social environment in which piano playing was no longer considered an essential feminine accomplishment, piano sales dropped sharply nationwide following World War I. The depression dealt the industry its final blow. Along with many other companies, the Wellington Piano Case Company ceased operating in 1929, and the building remained unoccupied for a decade. Plans for reuse were thwarted in 1938 when the hurricane wreaked extensive damage. The factory was threatened with demolition until a group of over seventy local businessmen and professionals who, recognizing the building's enormous size as a tremendous asset for creating employment opportunities in the economically depressed region, formed a development corporation to purchase and repair the building. Shortly thereafter, the building was leased to the Selig Manufacturing Company, manufacturers of chairs and upholstered furniture, who remained here until February 1983.

The factory building has recently been purchased by a local developer whose plans include a certified historic rehabilitation and conversion to housing.


**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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

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date entered

Continuation sheet Wellington Piano Case Company Building Item number 9  Page 1

9. Major Bibliographical References (Con't)

Smith, Nancy A., "Pianoforte Manufacturing in 19th century Boston," Old Time New England, Vol. 69, Nos. 1-2, Summer-Fall, 1978, pp. 37-47.

Spillane, Daniel, History of the American Pianoforte: Its Technical Development and the Trade, New York: D. Spillane, Publisher, 1980.

Stone, Orra, History of Massachusetts Industries, Boston, 1930, Vol.2

Leominster City Directories, 1904-1910

"Leominster 175th Anniversary Souvenir Program," 1915

"Leominster 200th Anniversary Brochure, 1740-1940"

"Leominster Christmas Souvenir Booklet," 1902

Leominster Historical Society, "Papers Read at Meetings of the Leominster Historic Society by Members," September, 1930

Leominster Enterprises, August 10, 1895.

Wednesday Enterprise (Leominster), November 13, 1895.

The Daily Enterprise (Leominster), June 21, 1920, June 3, 1937, November 22, 1938.

Sanborn Insurance Maps of Leominster: 1896, 1901, 1906, 1912, 1931.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Wellington Piano Case Company Building
Worcester County
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. MAY 3 1984
Fed. Reg. Date: 2.5.85
Date Due: 5/31/84 - 6/17/84
Action: ACCEPT 5-31-84
 RETURN
 REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

**Entered in the
National Register**

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____
Reviewer _____
Discipline _____
Date _____
_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use
----------	---------------------------------	----------------------	-------------

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

Condition

- excellent
- good
- fair
- deteriorated
- ruins
- unexposed

Check one

- unaltered
- altered

Check one

- original site
- moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection



WELLINGTON PIANO CASE COMPANY BUILDING
54 Green Street, Leominster, MA

Photograph by Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, 1983
Negative filed at 39 Auburn St., Concord,
NH 03301

Photo #1 of 1: View looking southwest at
front facade of building.



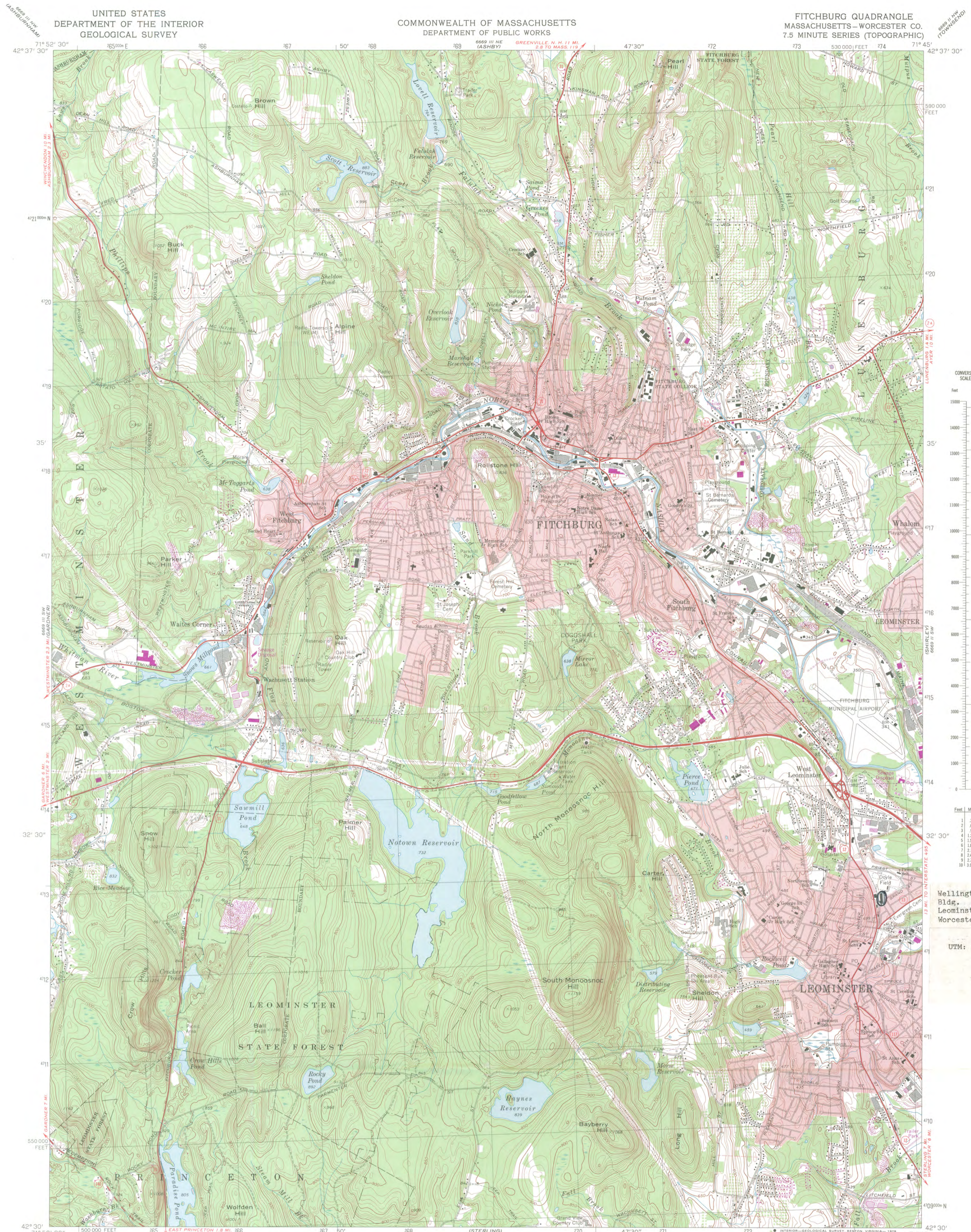
WELLINGTON PIANO CASE COMPANY BUILDING

54 Green Street, Leominster, MA

Photograph by Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, 1983

Negative filed at 39 Auburn St., Concord, NH
03301

Photo #1 of 1: View looking southwest at
front facade of building



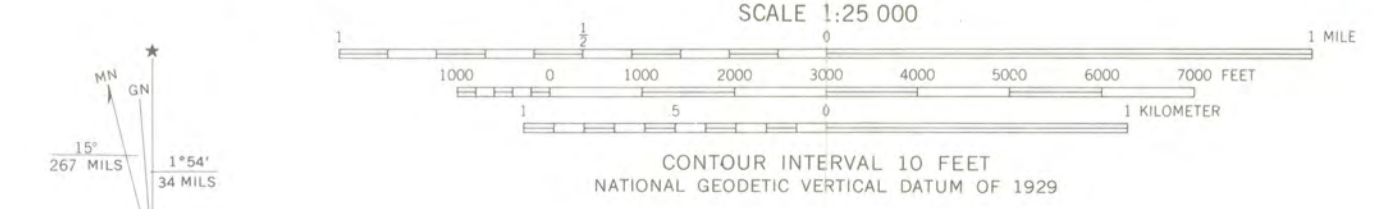
CONVERSION
SCALES



Wellington Piano Case Co.
Bldg.
Leominster
Worcester County, MA

UTM: 19/279670/4712650

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1938. Topography by planimetric surveys 1943 and 1944
Revised from aerial photographs taken 1968. Field checked 1969
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,
zone 19
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, all weather, hard surface
Secondary highway, all weather, hard surface
Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface
Unimproved road, fair or dry weather
State Route



FITCHBURG, MASS.
N4230—W7145/7.5
1969
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 6669 III SE—SERIES V814

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with the State of
Massachusetts agencies from aerial photographs taken 1975 and other
source data. This information not field checked. Map edited 1979

NORTH MAIN ST.

RICHARDSON ST.

OLD COLONY R.R.

GREEN ST.

GRAND ST.

WHITMAN ST.

70

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64

62

57

57

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49,020 Sq. Ft.
(This includes a 20' strip apart of the R.R. Rt. of Way as laid out)

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6
1797 Sq. Ft.

4
14390 Sq. Ft.

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#87

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108.±

77.50±

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Leominster Assessors' Sheet No. 63 Plan undated; revised to present Wellington Piano Case Co. SCALE 1 IN. = 60 FT.

Leominster Historical Commission
Leominster, Massachusetts 01453



CJ
GF

Valerie Talmage, Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission
Boston, Massachusetts. 02108

March 2, 1984

RECEIVED

MAR - 7 1984

Dear Ms. Talmage,

MASS. HIST. COMM.

We received your letter of February 27, 1984. The Leominster Historical Commission is pleased to learn that the Wellington Piano Case Company, 54 Green Street in Leominster will be considered by the State Review Board for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Wellington Piano Case Company was important to the industrial development and to the growth of our City of Leominster.

The Wellington Piano Case Company's nomination to the National Register of Historic Places meets with our approval.

Sincerely,

Chairman, Evelyn B. Hachey.

CC

Mayor Richard J. Girouard
Crowley Associates Inc.



CJ April
CED support

City of Leominster

Office of the Mayor

(617) 537-6311

MAR 22 1984

MASS. HIST. COMM.

Richard J. Girouard
Mayor

25 West Street
Leominster, MA 01453

March 12, 1984

Ms. Valerie Talmage, Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Dear Ms. Talmage:

As Mayor of Leominster, I just want to let you know that I support the nomination of the Wellington Piano Case Company, 54 Green Street, Leominster to the National Register of Historic Places.

As we stated in the letter from the Leominster Historical Commission, that the Wellington Piano Case Company was very important to the industrial development of the City of Leominster.

I certainly hope the Commission will look favorably on this nomination.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Girouard
Mayor

RJG/wg

cc: Mrs. Evelyn Hachey, Chairman
Leominster Historical Commission