

MAY 15 1989

595

Form numbers in this area | Area letter

203

B

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 Washington Street, Boston, MA. 02108

SOUTHBRIDGE MASS

MEA

Town Southbridge

Name of area (if any) Central Mills District

Present Use: industrial and commercial

General Condition: Good

General date or period 1837-ca. 1915

Acreage: 1.15 Acres

Photo (3x5" or 3x5")
Staple to left side of form

Photo number _____

Sketch map. Draw a general map of the area indicating properties within it.
Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed.
Label streets (including route numbers, if any) and indicate north. (Attach a
separate sheet if space here is not sufficient)

UTM Reference

Ⓐ 18/745 620/4662 450

Ⓑ 18/745 610/4662 320

Ⓒ 18/745 560/4662 300

Ⓓ 18/745 540/4662 300

Ⓔ 18/745 510/4662 300

Ⓕ 18/745 520/4662 440

USGS Quadrangle

Southbridge, Mass. - Conn.

Scale: 1:25,000

Recorded by E. Woodford, S. Ceccacci
ed. S. Ceccacci
Organization Southbridge Historical Com-
mission

Date May 1986

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Describe physical setting, general character, and architecturally significant structures).

Set at the intersection of several streets near the central business district of Southbridge, the Central Mills complex is a highly visible remnant of the town's industrial past. The complex consists of a low Romanesque Industrial style brick block (1908) which stands on the north side of North Street facing on Foster Street and which includes a two story facade tower with Roman arches and arched brick corbelling. In front of it is a small one story office in the same style. Attached to its rear is a rebuilt section which dates from 1837. On the south side of North Street, facing Foster Street is a (ca. 1915) brick storehouse.

This handsome industrial complex is more typical in feeling of 19th-century factories than of 20th-century factories. When the design of the 1908 brick front section is compared to the relatively sleek design and modern materials used in the reinforced concrete American Optical Company Lensdale plant of 1909-1910, it seems of another era. However, buildings built by American Optical around the turn of the century, such as the north and south sections of the Main Works on Mechanic Street, display the same taste for picturesque elements which disguise the utilitarian purpose of the building. Both of these complexes were built during a transition period when new technological developments and insurance regulations were bringing about

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Explain development of area, what caused it, and how it affected community; be specific). (See Continuation Sheet)

The Central Mills factory was completely rebuilt at a time when many New England textile mills were not even reinvesting in machinery and were losing business to the more competitive South. The size of the expansion was significant. About forty feet of the southern portion of the 1837 mill was demolished along with sixty feet of the east ell. An ell on the west side was removed along with the 1837 office and some tenements. The new mill had a frontage of 285 ft. on Foster and Central Streets and 300 ft. on North Street. Equipped with electricity, the new plant had 400 looms and produced 6,500,000 yards of cotton sheeting annually.

The presence of this mill so near the central business district is due to its location on the water privilege where Moses Marcy had built the town's first saw mill in 1732. Marcy's log dam was taken out to build a more substantial one when Central Mills erected its buildings on this site in 1837. Centre Village grew up first around Marcy's saw and grist mills and later around other early 19th-century mills which were located in this area. After the establishment of the Central Mills at this location, the town continued to grow, ultimately surrounding the mill.

The Central Manufacturing Company was incorporated in 1837 as a result of the reorganization of the Dresser Manufacturing Company following the deaths of both Harvey Dresser (1835) and his son, Henry (1836). The Dresser Manufacturing Company was a descendant of an early Southbridge cotton mill established near here about 1814 by William Sumner. The organizers of the new Central Manufacturing Company were Ebenezer D. Ammidown and Linus Childs, both of whom were associated with the Dresser Manufacturing Company. The purchase of waterpower and about twelve acres from Royal Smith in 1836 was conveyed from Ammidown to the Dresser Manufacturing Company and then to the Central Manufacturing Company. During the remainder of the 19th-century, the company was reorganized several times with many of the same persons being involved each time.

(See Continuation Sheet)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

maps, atlases

Ammidown, H. Historical Collections, Vol. II, pp. 381-383.

 . Quinebaug Historical Society Leaflets, Vol. II, #15.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:	MRA	Form No:
	Southbridge	B-203
Property Name: Central Mills District		

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (cont'd)

changes in factory construction but aesthetic expectations still demanded some architectural pretense. During this period, the expectation of architectural pretense was typically greater in the case of factories, such as both Central Mills and American Optical, which were locally owned and operated.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (cont'd)

Central Mills became one of the town's important industries remaining so well into the 20th-century.

Through the years, some of the major investors and leaders in the operation of the company were Ebenezer D. Ammidown, Linus Childs, Manning Leonard and Chester A. Dresser, all local businessmen and important members of the community. Most were also major investors in other Southbridge enterprises such as the gas, electric and water supply companies. Ammidown was also a major shareholder in the Columbian Cotton Mill in Southbridge.

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT

The Central Mills District is significant as an example of the industry that dominated the Southbridge economy through the 19th and early-20th century. The mill privilege was first developed in 1732, and by the early-19th century its expansion contributed to the growth of the Centre Village. Rebuilt finally in 1908, the large brick factory is an excellent instance of the large-scale brick buildings that characterized this period. It meets National Register criteria A and C at the local level and retains integrity of setting, location, materials, workmanship, design, feeling, and association. The boundaries indicated on the attached assessors map are those of current ownership.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

Southbridge

Form No:

203 B

Property Name: Central Mills District

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

Central Mills Factory Area

70 Foster St.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

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

Section number _____ Page _____

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic GroupName Southbridge MRA
State Worcester County, MASSACHUSETTS

Nomination/Type of Review _____ Date/Signature _____

- | | |
|--|---|
| 11. Building at 38--42 Worcester Street
Entered in the
National Register | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89
Attest _____ |
| 12. Building at 52 Main Street
Entered in the
National Register | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89
Attest _____ |
| 13. Central Mills Historic District
Entered in the
National Register | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89
Attest _____ |
| 14. Chamberlain--Bordeau House
Entered in the
National Register | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89
Attest _____ |
| 15. Chapin Block
Entered in the
National Register | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89
Attest _____ |
| 16. Cheney, Alpha M. House
Entered in the
National Register | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89
Attest _____ |
| 17. Cheney, J.M., Rental House
Entered in the
National Register | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89
Attest _____ |
| 18. Clarke--Glover Farmhouse
Entered in the
National Register | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89
Attest _____ |
| 19. Cliff Cottage
Entered in the
National Register | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89
Attest _____ |
| 20. Cole, E., Merritt, House
Entered in the
National Register | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89
Attest _____ |

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Central Mills Historic District
NAME:

MULTIPLE Southbridge MRA
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Worcester

DATE RECEIVED: 5/15/89 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/31/89
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/16/89 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/29/89
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 89000595

NOMINATOR: STATE

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: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 6/22/89 DATE

Entered in the
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____
REVIEWER _____
DISCIPLINE _____
DATE _____

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

CLASSIFICATION

___ count ___ resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

___ historic ___ current

DESCRIPTION

___ architectural classification
___ materials
___ descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

___ summary paragraph
___ completeness
___ clarity
___ applicable criteria
___ justification of areas checked
___ relating significance to the resource
___ context
___ relationship of integrity to significance
___ justification of exception
___ other

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

___ acreage ___ verbal boundary description
___ UTMs ___ boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

___ sketch maps ___ USGS maps ___ photographs ___ presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

_____ Phone _____

Signed _____ Date _____



Central Mills G.D.

Form # B-203 1986 photo

Southbridge MRA, Mo

Central Mills Factory Area
view of rear sections, looking N.

Roll #5



central Mills W.D.

Form # B-203 1986 photo

Southbridge NR4/M4

Central Mills Factory Area
to Foster Street

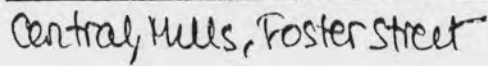
Roll #5



Central Mills H.D.

Form# B-203 1986 photo
Southbridge MRA, MA
Central Mills Factory Area
Main Bldg. facade & office
Roll # 5

M R A



SOUTHBRIDGE, MASS.

SCALE IN FEET

A horizontal scale bar with tick marks at 0, 100, and 200 feet. The text "SCALE IN FEET" is centered above the bar.

1990年1月1日 1990年1月1日

36

Please refer to the map in the
Multiple Property Cover Sheet
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000294