

JUN 17 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name WILLIAM CONNORS PAINT MANUFACTURING COMPANY BUILDING
other names/site number Troy Paint and Color Works; American Seal building

2. Location

street & number 669 RIVER STREET not for publication
city or town TROY vicinity
state NEW YORK code NY county RENSELAER code 083 zip code 12180

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Ruth A. Purpout DBHPO 6/1/16
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register

other (explain): _____

Jon Edson R. Beall 7-28-16
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

WILLIAM CONNORS PAINT MANUFACTURING CO.
 Name of Property

RENSSELAER CO., NEW YORK
 County & State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
 (Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	1	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**

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

No Style

foundation: STONE/BRICK

walls: BRICK

roof: SYNTHETIC

other: WOOD, GLASS, METAL

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Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The former William Connors Paint Manufacturing Company building is a 44,344 square foot, three-story brick masonry factory building located on the east bank of the Hudson River in the City of Troy, Rensselaer County, New York. This flat-roofed building with square footprint is located at 669 River Street, a major north-south thoroughfare in what is commonly referred to as the city's North Central neighborhood. The nominated property is located amid a mix of both nineteenth century and more modern commercial buildings. It was not built in a single campaign, but instead is composed of three distinctive sections; the difference in fenestration on the east-facing façade makes evident the distinction between two of these three sections. The south portion, built about 1897 to accommodate the grinding of pigments, joins two smaller, earlier sections to the north which were configured as perpendicular rectangles. These two sections once functioned as a nickel-plating works (Troy Nickel Works) and were built, separately, before 1885. When Connors moved his business to River Street in 1889, the nickel-plating works existed alongside a former sash and blind factory that became Connors's first headquarters. In 1897 Connors acquired part of a former paper mill and the Troy Nickel Works and additionally constructed the grinding building to their immediate south. The east-facing façade has a total of 13 bays; the south section has four bays, the balance being associated with the northeast portion. With the exception of wood loading doors in the first and second bays of the first story moving south to north, pairs of rectangular double-hung windows are situated on all stories and occupy all bays of the south section. The northeast section has first-story entrances in the first, fifth and ninth bays moving south to north; the fifth bay contains loading door openings at second and third-story level. Otherwise, one-over-one rectangular windows occupy the remaining bays in all three stories. A denticulated pressed-metal cornice aligns the façade and serves to unify the two sections aesthetically. The north elevation is devoid of any features save for a window just east of a vertical seam in the masonry, indicative of the location where the northeast and northwest sections of the nickel works met. The south elevation has 10 bays, which are occupied by rectangular windows in a regulated rhythm. The west (rear) elevation faces the Hudson River and has 12 bays, regularly spaced and punctuated at all stories by single rectangular window openings. With a few exceptions, such as where remnants of six-over-six sash remains, the openings on this elevation are either boarded up or otherwise fitted with makeshift glazing. Openings for double loading doors are located in the fourth bay moving northward, while bays nine through 12 contain openings intended for pairs of rectangular windows. Brick corbelling at the roof line is this elevation's sole ornamental feature. A concrete tailrace, which channeled the water used for hydraulic power back to the Hudson River, is built into the hill between the building and the shore. This, in addition to an archaeological investigation conducted along this section of River Street, indicates the presence of a hydraulic canal that once supplied water power to River Street paper and flour mills and later yet to the Connors building. Inside, an arched penstock for water drawn from that canal still exists in the basement, though the channel behind it has been filled in with materials such as building debris, coal slag, ash, sand and clay. As for the largely unfinished open spaces of the first, second and third floors, they remain largely as they were historically. Bricked-up window openings and punched-in connecting entrances show where the three sections were married to form the nominated building. Though the sections were constructed at different times, the internal floor framing is uniform throughout. Wood columns support substantial beams, which in turn carry closely spaced joists, some of which are cross-braced. Several pieces of water-powered equipment used in the grinding and mixing of paint survive in situ. In addition to the main building, there is an adjacent single-story building that abuts the northeast corner; this building served for a time as an office but has been altered in more recent times.

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Narrative Description

The nominated building occupies an irregular lot at 669 River Street, between Middleburgh and Rensselaer streets. Within the immediate neighborhood are, most prominently, the former Searle, Gardner & Company factory (NRHP listed), an imposing brick masonry Romanesque Revival building on the west side of River Street; to the south is a new low-slung building situated on a large paved parking lot. A one-story commercial building with rectangular footprint abuts the Connors building at its northeast corner. This structure for a time (after 1922) served as the company office; there is not, nor was there ever, internal communication between the two buildings, and it appears to have been significantly altered from its configuration as depicted on the 1922 and 1955 Sanborn maps. Continuing southwards, past the Connors building on the west side of River Street, are two modern one-story automobile repair garages. On the east side of River Street, across from the subject property, are a ca. 1920 city fire station, then, southward, several nineteenth-century commercial buildings now occupied by a tavern, as well as by private homeowners and vacant lots. Immediately west of the building is the Hudson River, the shore of which is accessed by a trail descending from a hill overgrown with bramble.

The William Connors Paint Manufacturing Company building is flat-roofed brick walled building which rises three-stories above a fully excavated basement. Its principal elevation, the east façade, is set back from the street; storage and related business buildings once occupied the paved frontage. As summarized in the overview section, the building is divided into three distinctive sections: the south section, 1897, constructed for grinding pigment for paint, and two adjacent rectangular blocks, both of which predate 1885. The 1885 Sanborn fire insurance map shows that these were at one time occupied by a nickel-plating firm. A sash and blind factory – Connors's first headquarters in 1889 – is no longer extant. The east façade is a result of the 1897 expansion. The 1903 Sanborn map also shows the three sections joined as one, as well as Connors's first building, which by 1903 was a laundry; that building was lost to fire between 1917 and 1922, according to newspaper accounts.

The portion of the façade corresponding with the 1897 south section is divided into four bays. First and second-story fenestration is separated by recessed, corbelled panels that provide a vertical emphasis which is furthered by the treatment of the third-story windows as narrow pairs. The two southernmost bays of the first story contain overhead wood loading doors. Pairs of six-over-six rectangular wood windows, with three-light transoms above, occupy the two northernmost bays of this section at first-story level. The second-story windows are paired and are fitted with six-over-six sash; square-headed, they are set beneath segmental arched heads that span both windows of each bay. The third story also has six-over-six rectangular wood windows, which are grouped, but not joined, as pairs. A seam, running from the roofline to grade, demarcates the division between the northeast and south sections. The entire façade is laid up in common bond brick masonry, but the courses do not match at the seam. The nine-bay northeast section has single modern metal and glass doors in bays one, five and nine moving south to north. Openings in the fifth bay were dedicated to wide loading doors, but those openings now are fitted with modern doors and a pair of windows at third-story level. Remaining openings are fitted with one-over-one modern metal replacement windows. A plastic sign, located at the second story between the second and third bays, advertises a former, relatively recent tenant, John B. Garrett, Inc., a supplier of medical equipment. A brick dentil bank and pressed metal cornice is the façade's principal ornamentation; the cornice dips where the two buildings are joined. Metal anchor plates resembling armored shields and stylized "S" shapes anchor the internal wood framing of the 1897 building to the brick envelope. At one time a large sign reading "WILLIAM CONNORS" aligned the full width of the façade, above cornice level.

The north elevation has just one window and is otherwise devoid of features. Three bricked-up window openings are vertically placed where there were once bays in the first third of this elevation. A jagged vertical

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seam, around which substantial spalling has occurred near the mismatched brick courses there, confirms that the northeast and northwest sections were built at different times.

The south elevation is ten bays deep. Single window openings with segmental arches occupy each story of each bay. Most are boarded up, though there are remnants of six-over-six wood windows in a few of the openings. A metal fire escape ladder, starting at the roof and ending at the top of the second story, is located between the fifth and six bays. A weed-filled strip of land and chain-link fence separates the property from the tire supplier and car repair shop to the south.

The 12-bay west (rear) elevation, which facilitated the loading of goods to and from the Hudson River, is separated from the river by an overgrown hill. The window openings of the building's raised basement have been filled with concrete. There are two metal fire escapes, one in the third bay and the other in the eleventh bay moving south to north. The fourth bay was reserved for loading via double doors situated at each story. Two sets of doors remain at second and third-story level. The first-story opening has been fitted with a window. The vestige of a hoist exists at the roof line of the fourth bay as well. Regularly spaced single window openings punctuate all stories of bays 1-3 and 5-8. Remnants of six-over-six wood rectangular double-hung windows exist in several openings, but other openings are boarded up, empty, or are altered, many with ill-fitting and hastily constructed sheets of glass. Pairs of these same windows were intended for bays 9-12. All openings are surmounted by segmental arches.

The shoreline contains important remnants of the power canal system that directed water to, and diverted it from, the Connors plant. Extant is a sizeable concrete tailrace that directed water back to the river; a portion of the canal's stone wall and another arched stone tailrace near this wall are extant. Portions of the stone sea wall also remain. Inside, at basement level, is the arched penstock which allowed water to move through the building and power hydraulic machinery. Water flowed through the building and out through the channel behind it; the entry point, situated at the east basement wall of the factory's ca. 1885 north section, is now bricked-in. The dirt-floor basement is otherwise empty with the exception of a central freight elevator. A massive brick chimney marks where the newer south and earlier north sections meet. Several wood columns in the south section of the basement show severe deflection, which is causing pronounced dips in the second and third story floors.

The interior floor plan of the three upper levels is generally open, and evident are physical indicators of the building's three section chronology in the form of bricked-in openings and apertures made in what were formerly brick walls. The first-floors of both the front northeast and rear northwest sections are divided by twin entrances constructed of modern millwork and gypsum wall board. The open first-floor volumes of each building have been partially divided by walls of 2" x 4" studs and gypsum wall board to create small offices. Columns have been encased in modern wood paneling. Highly deteriorated carpeting covers plywood sub floors, but a large area of original plank floors is exposed towards the front of the building. The principal point of access to the first floor from the façade is via the door located in the fifth bay of the north section. The entrance there has a bead-board ceiling that is highly deteriorated in some areas. Exposed framing shows closely spaced sawn joints running east to west, supported by a system of heavy wood beams and columns. What were once the exterior south masonry walls of the north sections are exposed, revealing openings that were bricked in at the time the 1897 south section was added. These former openings and connecting entrances are most clearly visible from inside the south section, on the north wall. There are three bricked-in and boarded up window openings and an added arched doorway in the front of the building. The rear of this section shows five boarded up window openings of different sizes (one is obscured by the chimney). A central metal fire door was installed where a window once existed. The first-floor is characterized by voluminous

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open space. Sawn wood joists run north to south and are supported by heavy wood beams and seven columns lined up in five bays, north to south, and in eight bays, east to west. Some cross bracing exists between joists. Floors are composed of wide wood planks.

The first-floor plan, construction and original features, such as largely exposed brick masonry walls and highly abraded wood plank floors, are repeated on the second and third floors of all three sections. Evident are some minor and reversible modifications. Once again, arched doorways connect the three sections and bricked up window openings are present on what were the outer walls of the two north buildings. The second floor of the northeast section has two front offices; the smaller of the two is merely painted brick with an acoustical tile ceiling and the larger office has a bead board ceiling, which is stained dark brown, and bead-board walls with a chair rail, all painted white. The third floor of this section contains a similarly constructed office, but planks have been substituted for bead board. Brick corbelling there supports the joists where the two north sections meet. In the south section there is a pronounced dip in the flooring system at this level, resultant from sagging in the internal wood framing.

The former office, a one-story stucco-clad building, abuts the Connors building perpendicular to the northeast corner. It is present on the 1922 Sanborn map and again in 1955, but appears to have been reduced from its original two stories to one in more recent times. These two buildings do not communicate internally. The north elevation is fronted by a large paved parking lot.

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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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

ENGINEERING

INDUSTRY

Period of Significance

1897- 1966

Significant Dates

1897 (addition/expansion)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1897, at which time the William Connors Paint Manufacturing Company acquired the two earlier buildings and erected the south section, and terminates at 1966, the 50-year cutoff mark, given that paint manufacturing ended at the site in 1971.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The William Connors Paint Manufacturing Company building is a historically and architecturally significant resource located in the City of Troy, Rensselaer County, New York. While perhaps better known for its once robust iron industry and the manufacture of textiles, and in particular detachable cuffs and collars, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Troy was also once home to other industries, among them the highly successful Connors paint business. Taking advantage of the development of ready-mixed paints in the 1870s, Connors rose to national pre-eminence and continued to produce paint well into the twentieth century. The nominated building meets NRHP Criterion A in the area of Industry for its association with Connors's successful business enterprise, which came at a time when paint manufacturing was becoming increasingly automated. In addition, the Connors Paint Manufacturing Company building is significant under NRHP Criterion C, in the areas of Architecture and Engineering. Among the last of the River Street factories to use water drawn from the Hudson River to power its machinery, it remains a largely intact specimen of period industrial architecture which evolved over multiple building campaigns. While the east elevation, fronting on River Street, served as the building's principal public elevation, commercial functions were dispensed on the opposite rear west elevation; there a narrow stone quay provided communication with the Hudson River, thereby facilitating water-borne shipping and receiving. Parts of this sea wall and the quay still exist. As for its engineering importance, a tail race in the form of a 15-foot wide stone and concrete vault extends from inside the turbine room of the building through the sea wall and is incorporated into the building's foundation; this is by all indications the last existing hydraulic tailrace in Troy and thus recalls the importance of water power to the city's industrial development.

Narrative Statement of Significance

What later became the City of Troy was incorporated as a village in 1789 from the vast Hudson Valley land holdings of the Vanderheyden family. This region, first settled by the Mohican Indians, was part of the seventeenth century land holdings of Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, who spurred early Dutch colonization efforts there. Troy's prosperity depended first on the Hudson River for sloop trade, later on the Erie and Champlain canals, and, finally, on the convergence of four major railroads. These modes of transportation were critical to its manufacturing concerns and their development during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and into the twentieth century. Troy's first principal industry, iron and steel processing and manufacturing, peaked during the mid-nineteenth century but lost traction in the 1870s due to labor unrest and the rising fortunes of steel-making in Pennsylvania.¹ It was at this time that the manufacture of detachable collars and cuffs blossomed as the main industrial enterprise in Troy and a principal employer of city residents. By 1900 some 15,000 people were employed in the collar and cuff industry in the city and by 1901 there were some 26 cuff and collar factories and 38 laundries located there. At the height of its production, in 1916, Troy manufactured 90 percent of the nation's collars and cuffs.²

William Connors's paint concern was in some regards an industrial anomaly among Troy's primarily textile manufacturing interests. Troy's industry ranged from the making of pharmaceuticals to stoves, but Connors stood apart as the major paint manufacturer, and one whose products were sold nationwide. According to its own advertising in 1916 – "Have Been Right for 64 Years" – William Connors's Troy Paint and Color Works was established in 1852. It is likely that the advertisement was referring to his company's predecessor, Mason Burr, an ink manufacturer located on Hollow Road (present-day Spring Avenue). Born in 1856, William Connors was one of eight children born to Mary Flannery and John Connors. Three of the brothers – William,

¹ Thomas Phelan, *The Hudson Mohawk Gateway* (Northridge, CA: Windsor Publications, 1985), 78.

² *The Encyclopedia Americana*, entry on Troy, NY (The Encyclopedia American Corp., 1920), 99.

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Thomas J., and Martin F. – became life-long partners of Connors Paint. City directories and period advertisements do not identify William Connors's business or home until 1875, when he was identified as a "painter" and shown boarding on Hill Street in South Troy. The following year, he was listed as a "paintmaker" in the city directory. In 1877 Connors likely acquired the Mason Burr factory on Spring Avenue and by that time he owned a home nearby, at 152 Hill Street. At that time, Connors advertised a somewhat limited color palette, ranging from umber and sienna to shades of yellow, red, brown and ultramarine blue. In 1878 Connors built a modest factory at 171-173 Hill Street, where his factory could make use of water power harnessed from the Poestenkill Creek, as did numerous other mills that lined its banks.³

This early growth was tied to the advent of ready-mixed paints. The mechanization of the paint industry after the Civil War introduced ready-mixed paints, which were available in a wide range of colors and sold in sealed cans. Prior to 1860, painters used stone slabs on which they ground pigments in oil. Though henceforth ground at the factory, the basic ingredients of pigment, oil (typically linseed), red or white lead, and turpentine, did not change.⁴ The invention of ready-mixed paint is attributed to D.R. Averill, an Ohio businessman who patented the prepared paint in 1867.⁵ Ready-mixed paints, however, were not fully introduced to the market until the late 1870s. In 1877 the Cleveland-based paint manufacturer Sherwin-Williams invented a method of grinding pigments so fine that they stayed suspended in the preparation, thereby halting the separation process.⁶ Consumers from that point forward had access to affordable, re-usable paint of consistent quality. The development of ready-mixed paints was coupled with changes in taste in exterior residential paint colors. Consumer taste shifted from the somewhat ubiquitous color scheme of white clapboards with green shutters, instead preferring richer colors applied to the body, trim and details of their homes. This trend was closely associated with the expansion of transportation routes and the availability of cheaper paper stock on which to print brochures and color samples. Through sample cards, magazines and pattern books that often recommended particular color schemes, manufacturers heavily promoted the use of this array of colors to create demand for ready-mixed paint. Connors was no exception. An 1889 trade journal reported that it had received circular sample cards of American Seal for interior, exterior and floor paints. Connors made 60 standard shades, but its slogan was "Any Desired Shade or Color." Connors's advertisements were colorful and flamboyant, featuring likenesses of Uncle Sam and an emblem, with eagle and shield, very similar to the seal of the United States. The U.S. Court of Appeals, District of Columbia, in 1906 supported the U.S. Patent Office's decision not to permit the trademark because of this similarity. However, American Seal continued to feature this graphic in its advertising well past the court ruling.⁷

Though more than 25 years had passed since ready-mixed paints came on the market, in 1906 one trade journal still felt compelled to point out the superiority of ready-mixed paints to hand-mixed paint. Simply stated, ready-mixed paint was more consistent and less expensive than hand-mixed paint. The writer estimated that 30,000,000 gallons were sold between 1860 and 1906. Unpainted wooden houses were the exception rather than the norm. "It is cheaper and safer for a property owner to neglect his fire insurance than to neglect painting, because while few buildings burn, all buildings decay unless protected with paint ... here we are led inevitably back to ready-mixed paint as the logical, up-to-date conclusion."⁸

³ Arthur James Weise, *The City of Troy and Its Vicinity* (Troy: W.H. Young, 1886), 228.

⁴ Editor Harriet Whelchel, *Caring for Your Historic House* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1998), 96-97.

⁵ "Sherwin Williams Company." Available from <http://www.paint.org/about-our-industry>.

⁶ "A 400-Mile Journey to See a Paint Can." Available from <http://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/400-mile-journey-see-paint-can>.

⁷ Charles Cowle Tucker, *Report of Cases Adjudged in the Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia* (New York: The Lawyers Co-operative Publishing Company, 1906), 389.

⁸ "Interest of the Trade: The Why and Wherefore of Ready-Mixed Paints," *Painter And Decorator*, vol. 27 (New York: The Arabol Mfg. Co., 1906).

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In 1889 Connors moved his business from a modest commercial row building in South Troy to the factory vacated by the W.A. Collins Sash & Blind Factory at 677-679 River Street, in north Troy, to take advantage of water power drawn from the Hudson River at the nearby New York State dam. Connors occupied the north portion of property, with Troy Nickel Works located in two adjacent sections that joined with the south side of Connors's new building. The 1885 Sanborn fire insurance map, city directories, and contemporary accounts in trade journals and books explain Connors's early tenure on River Street. From Middleburgh Street, south to Rensselaer Street, the 1885 Sanborn map shows the closely spaced Mount Vernon and Olympus paper mills, the W.A. Collins Sash & Blind Factory, the Troy Nickel Works, the Crystal Palace Paper Mill, and the O. Boutwell and Son Flour Mill, all powered by water drawn from the hydraulic canal that ran between the front of these properties and River Street.

Troy industrialists quickly seized the opportunity to generate water power when, in 1826, New York State built a dam (constructed of log crib work filled with stone at the head of tidal waters), about a mile and one-half from Troy's center.⁹ The dam – at 9 feet high and with its 1,100-foot span between Troy and the Village of Green Island, and with a lock 25 feet high and 114 feet long—created an impoundment but allowed passage of steamers south to New York City and canal boats north to the Champlain Canal.¹⁰ That same year Oliver Boutwell, the owner of a flour mill, and Alexander M. Orr, a paper mill owner, formed the Troy Hydraulic Company, which arranged a 999-year lease from New York State to draw surplus water from the dam to power industries located on this section of River Street, between Ingalls Avenue south to North Street. A hydraulic canal, which ran parallel to the river, first appears on an 1836 map drawn by Thomas F. Gordon for the *Gazetteer of New York State*. The beginning of the 1,200 foot, 7-foot deep canal is shown just south of the Piscawen Kill. The canal gradually narrowed, channeling water through a 20-foot arch and then a tunnel at North Street that returned the water to the river.¹¹

An early cotton factory and several flour mills were first powered by the canal, but those were lost to fire or otherwise closed before 1836. The following year Boutwell built a two-story mill along its course, and in 1857 Orrs & Company, a manufacturer of newsprint, book and wall paper, erected a five-story building. William Orr, referred to in one journal as the “father of the trade,” is credited with mechanizing the printing of wallpaper through use of engraved cylinders. Manning & Paine built the Olympus Mills and the Crystal Palace Mill in 1866 and 1886, respectively, for the manufacture of manila rope paper. Manning was identified as the world's largest manufacturer of manila rope, which was used to create flour sacks, sandpaper and insulation. Shareholders of the Hydraulic Lock Company each paid a portion of the state lease, with the amounts adjusted according to the number of lots each business owned along the canal. Though described as delivering an “incalculable” amount of power, water power was highly unreliable due to several factors. Low water and high water, as well as ice jams, together caused these businesses to shut down for four to six weeks a year.¹²

The replacement of the aging New York State dam with the federally operated Troy Lock and Dam in 1916 spelled the end of the water power channeled by means of the hydraulic canal. The dam had been proposed as early as 1909, and in the ensuing years, the federal and state governments skirmished over which would build and control it; it was conceived purely to enhance navigation by providing a deeper channel. State officials worried about giving up water rights, which included the leases to the Troy Hydraulic Company. The Troy Hydraulic officers strenuously argued that extinguishing its leases would put their concerns out of business. Powerful interests weighed in: the Troy Common Council supported the project, but was careful to extend its

⁹ Weise, *The City of Troy and its Vicinity*, 302.

¹⁰H. Wilson, *Wilson's Illustrated Guide to the Hudson River* (New York: Wilson, Publisher and Proprietor, 1850), 54.

¹¹“Reports on the Water Power of the United States,” *Census Reports. Tenth Census*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1885.)

¹²Ibid.

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backing to the “General Government.” The Chamber of Commerce pledged \$500,000 in related improvements. Other industries stated that improved navigation would entice them to again ship their merchandise by water, a mode of transportation they had abandoned long before in favor of rail.¹³ The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has operated the dam since its inception, which was closely followed by the opening in 1918 of the New York State Barge Canal, which “canalized” the natural waterways avoided by the preceding Erie Canal. The dam provides 12-foot deep harbors in Troy and Albany, and a 14-foot channel in the vicinity of the dam and lock, north to the Village of Waterford, where the Erie Canal begins its westerly route towards the Great Lakes.¹⁴

The concerns of the Troy Hydraulic Company ultimately came to pass, as by 1922 the mills were gone. Nevertheless, the Connors factory remained as the sole surviving business, and, ironically enough, continued to thrive. In 1916, the city administration moved to fill in the abandoned canal, in order to replace an “unsightly place,” at the vacant Orr paper mill, with a riverfront park, which was never built.¹⁵ The federal government at that time had begun filling in parts of the canal. Archaeological investigation conducted in 2004 by Hartgen Archeological Associates uncovered two sets of the Orr mill’s brick foundations. Documentation of the area in 2002 by the Nature Conservancy also revealed stonework associated with the canal, as well as an exposed arched tailrace.

The company’s major building campaign occurred in 1897, when Connors obtained the former nickel-plating concern, which had since moved to Albany, and it added the large grinding building to the south and bought the Olympus Mill to the north. *Metal Worker* magazine lauded the project, reporting as follows:

The Olympic Mill property, 669, 671, 673 and 675 River Street, Troy, NY, has been bought by William Connors for \$40,000. This is one of the best manufacturing sites in Troy and has been owned by Orrs & Co. since 1835. It has two large water wheels of 150 horsepower each. Mr. Connors proposes to remodel the present building and equip it especially for the manufacture of American Seal paint, and erect a separate building, which will be used exclusively for the grinding of dry colors. The machinery to be used in operating this plant will be entirely new, of which Mr. Connors is the sole owner and patentee. This extensive improvement is actuated by the steadily increasing demand for American Seal paints, and when completed will be one of the finest plants of its kind in this country.¹⁶

It cannot be ascertained how Connors used the old Olympic mill building. The 1903 Sanborn map still lists the building as part of the paper mill properties and, while extant, its use was not labeled on the 1922 Sanborn map.

Views illustrating the property in both 1895 and 1897 show features and embellishments that never came to be, but an 1899 newspaper photograph documents the main block of the building much as it appears today, with the exception of a brick commercial row house to the north (likely Connors’s first plant and, later yet, the laundry) that existed at a significantly lower grade than the rest of the plant. One of two major fires, one in 1916 and the next in 1922, destroyed the building that Connors first occupied, as evidenced by its absence on the 1922 Sanborn fire insurance map. The vast Mount Vernon Mill is also absent from that map. The same article extolled the advantages of the location, including its proximity to the water power drawn near the state dam and riverfront loading at the rear of the building.¹⁷

¹³Congressional Edition, Senate Documents, *Improvements of the Hudson River*, no. 887 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1912.)

¹⁴“Fact Sheet: Hudson River New York Operations and Routine Maintenance of Troy Lock and Dam.” Available at <http://www.nan.usace.army.mil>.

¹⁵“Park Near Old State Dam,” *The Troy Times*, 25 July 1916.

¹⁶“William Connor’s (sic) New Works,” *The Metal Worker*, vol. 48 (New York: David Williams Company, 1898).

¹⁷“Diversified Industries,” *The Troy Daily Times*, 18 April, 1899.

WILLIAM CONNORS PAINT MANUFACTURING CO.

Name of Property

RENSSELAER CO., NEW YORK

County & State

The company at this time reached the pinnacle of its success. In addition to traditional paints, Connors manufactured metallic paints, roofer's cement, mortar coloring, stains, and stove and furnace putties. A trade journal in 1898 surmised that Connors broke a shipping record when it loaded 500 tons of paint on a barge destined for New York City, where it would be used to paint large structural works.¹⁸ Connors manufactured most of the furnace cement and stove putty used to mount those appliances in both the United States and Canada. In 1900, William Connors and his brothers, Martin F. and Thomas J., incorporated the business as the William Connors Paint Manufacturing Company, with capital of \$100,000.¹⁹ The company had branches in New York City, Chicago, Rochester and St. Louis. Despite its growing size, Connors equally catered to small orders, selling pints of paint to modest buyers. He also had an accommodating attitude toward all clients, as intimated in a speech titled, "Attending to and Following Up the Little Complaints," which he delivered to his sales team in 1914.²⁰ The factory at about this time employed 45 workers.

As the company grew, William Connors became wealthy. In 1897, he bought an elegant Eastlake-style town house at 216 Third Street in Washington Park, a fashionable neighborhood then populated by the city's most prominent and prosperous industrialists. Connors assumed the role of upper-class businessman, becoming a director of the Security Trust Company, an early predecessor of the longstanding Manufacturers' National Bank. He was a member of the Chamber of Commerce and Paint Manufacturers Association.²¹

Connors owned other enterprises. His Amalgamated Gum Company manufactured starch for laundering textiles and Connors patented the plant-based product, Silkene, in 1907. Amalgamated also had a registered trademark, which depicted a tiger inside concentric circles. The company, capitalized with \$50,000, was listed as based at the paint factory in 1909. In addition, Connors's original space in 1903 was occupied by Olympus Laundering, which was of a size to take in the large orders placed by collar makers, since washing was the final step in the collar-finishing process. While a direct link between Connors and the laundry is not documented, the presence of a large laundering, starching and ironing facility makes better sense, given Connors's manufacture of plant-based starch. The 1903 also identifies a long building (no longer extant) that once fronted the paint factory and which served as a "gum room," part of the starch-making process. By 1912, The Amalgamated Gum Company established a factory with 12 employees at Liberty and River streets in south Troy. In another short-lived venture, William Connors and another brother, Edward A., partnered to publish the *Troy Standard Press*. The newspaper, the result of a 1912 consolidation, was short-lived and folded in 1915.²²

Martin Connors died in 1909, and William Connors, described by the press as "practical" and "progressive," died in 1916. Thomas J. Connors next led the business, continuing in that capacity until his death in 1934. In 1939 the Cleveland-based firm, Passonno Hutcheon Company, bought the business, which the partners incorporated as the Connors Corp.²³ Fred Passonno was a Troy native who had moved to Cleveland to pursue his career in the Benjamin Moore paint firm. He founded his own company with Hutcheon in 1926 but did not return to New York State until 1946, when he and his three sons started Passonno Paints in Watervliet. That company since has maintained a strong regional presence.

¹⁸"A Ponderous Shipment of Paint," *Hardware: A Review of the American Hardware Market*, vol. 18, (New York: Hardware Publishing Company, 1898).

¹⁹"Trade Notes," *The Metal Worker*, vol. 53 (New York: David Williams Company, 1900.)

²⁰"Connors Salesmen Meet," *American Paint and Oil Dealer*, vol. 6, No. 1 (St. Louis, 1913.)

²¹"William Connors, One of Troy's Prominent Manufacturers, Who Died Last Night," *The Troy Times*, 1 October, 1916.

²²"The Troy Standard Press Passes Away," *The Fourth Estate*, no. 1088 (Philadelphia: N.W. Ayer and Son, 1915).

²³"Connors Paint Co. Sold Out to Firm from Cleveland," *The Times Record*, 21 January, 1939.

WILLIAM CONNORS PAINT MANUFACTURING CO.

Name of Property

RENSELAER CO., NEW YORK

County & State

The Connors concern was sold twice more after that point. In 1950 the Goldberg family bought the company and continued to manufacture American Seal paint.²⁴ In 1971 it was again sold, this time to Monsey Products, a manufacturer primarily of roof coatings that nonetheless kept the American Seal line of paints until at least 1989. Monsey moved operations to Waterford in 1979 and was subsequently swept up in major acquisitions by California-based Henry Company, which makes a wide variety of protective coatings and barrier systems.²⁵ A residential re-use is planned for the Connors plant, which has been underused or vacant for at least a decade.

The building's architecture represents conventional late nineteenth century industrial construction, combining as it does a load-bearing exterior brick membrane with internal wood framing. Its principal River Street elevation, with its distinctly asymmetrical fenestration, immediately betrays its multi-phase construction chronology and recalls its transformation from an earlier incarnation. Ornamentation and stylistic references are largely absent, save for the pressed-metal cornice of the façade and the corbelled cornice on the opposite, river-front, elevation. The most fully developed aspect of what is otherwise a largely utilitarian building is the design of the south section's façade, and the manner in which the fenestration was resolved. Windows and doors at first-story level are grouped within bays with corbelled paneling between first and second-story level, and at third-story level are smaller paired windows, thereby lending vertical emphasis to that elevation. Inside, the framing is also of somewhat conventional nature, and is not of the fully developed "mill construction" type. Instead, lighter sawn joists are use in concert with larger scale posts and principal beams.

Conclusion

The former William Connors Paint Manufacturing Company building satisfies NRHP Criterion A, in the area of Industry, given its direct association with the mechanization of paint manufacturing, which by the late 1860s produced ready-mixed paints. Ready-mixed paint met with instant success because it offered consumers the convenience of re-useable paint in sealed cans, and the array of available colors satisfied the increasing trend of polychrome schemes for the exteriors of homes. While not the inventor, Connors capitalized on and sold these paints on a national scale. Further, the Connors building meets NRHP Criterion C in the areas of Architecture and Engineering because of the rare surviving structure and apparatus associated with the industrial harnessing of water power in the nineteenth century, and as an example of period factory construction. The extant tailrace, penstock and water-driven equipment needed to grind pigment and mix paint all contribute to the engineering importance of this resource. Positioned on the east bank of the Hudson River, the factory's rear elevation, with its loading door openings and extant hoist, evoke a close association with Hudson River industry. These elements contribute to the architectural integrity and historic significance of the nominated resource. It also remains a largely intact example of nineteenth century industrial design, combining load-bearing walls of brick masonry with internal wood framing; in this case, the building as it relates to the Connors period was not entirely purpose-built, but instead included one new construction phase which was married to the two earlier sections to achieve the desired functional arrangement.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

N/A

²⁴*The Troy Record* 4 January, 1950.

²⁵About Henry," available from us.henry.com.

WILLIAM CONNORS PAINT MANUFACTURING CO.

Name of Property

RENSELAER CO., NEW YORK

County & State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

“A Ponderous Shipment of Paint.” *Hardware: A Review of the American Hardware Market*, 1898.

“A 400-Mile Journey to See a Paint Can.” Available from <http://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/400-mile-journey-see-paint-can>.

“About Henry.” <http://us.henry.com>

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“Connors Paint Co. Sold Out to Firm from Cleveland.” *Times Record*, 21 January, 1939.

“Connors Salesmen Meet,” *American Paint and Oil Dealer*, 1913.

“Diversified Industries.” *The Troy Daily Times*, 18 April, 1899.

“Fact Sheet: Hudson River New York Operations and Routine Maintenance of Troy Lock and Dam.” Available from <http://www.nan.usace.army.mil>

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“Park Near Old State Dam.” *Troy Times*, 25 July 1916.

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Weise, Arthur James. *The City of Troy and its Vicinity*. Troy, NY: W.H. Young, 1886.

Whelchel, Harriet, editor. *Caring for Your Historic House*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998.

Wilson, H. *Wilson’s Illustrated Guide to the Hudson River*. New York: Wilson, Publisher and Proprietor, 1850.

Tucker, Cowle Charles. *Report of Cases Adjudged in the Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia*, New York: The Lawyers Co-operative Publishing Company, 1906.

WILLIAM CONNORS PAINT MANUFACTURING CO.
Name of Property

RENSSELAER CO., NEW YORK
County & State

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre (.49)
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>18</u>	<u>607652</u>	<u>4733321</u>	3	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is depicted on the enclosed mapping, which was drawn at a scale of 1:24,000, 1: 12,000 and 1:3,000. All maps are entitled "William Connors Paint Manufacturing Company Building, City of Troy, Rensselaer Co., NY."

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary has been drawn to reflect historic circumstances, with one exception: the former office building, which has been significantly denatured to an extent that it no longer reflects its historic-period characteristics, and its associated parcel have been excluded. As such the nomination boundary only includes the factory building and its historically associated land.

WILLIAM CONNORS PAINT MANUFACTURING CO.
Name of Property

RENSELAER CO., NEW YORK
County & State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael Lopez; edited by William E. Krattinger, NYS Division for Historic Preservation
organization TAP, Inc. date _____
street & number 210 River Street telephone (518) 274-3050, X19.
city or town Troy state NY zip code 12180
e-mail mlopez@tapinc.org

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Photographs by Michael Lopez, TAP Inc. (August 2015) and William E. Krattinger (May 2016)
Original digital files, TIFF format, maintained at NYS Division for Historic Preservation, Waterford, NY 12188.

0001 EXTERIOR, perspective view showing south and east elevations, view looking to northwest
0002 EXTERIOR, detail view showing fenestration, brick work and cornice of east façade, 1897 section
0003 EXTERIOR, detail view showing fenestration, brick work and cornice of east façade, pre-1885 section
0004 EXTERIOR, north elevation, view looking south
0005 EXTERIOR, west elevation, view looking north
0006 INTERIOR, 1897 section, first floor, view looking west
0007 INTERIOR, 1897 section, first floor, view looking north
0008 INTERIOR, 1897 section, second floor, view looking north
0009 INTERIOR, northeast section, second floor office area, view looking to southeast
0010 INTERIOR, northeast section, third floor, view looking to southeast
0011 EXTERIOR, concrete tailrace on Hudson River shore, west side of property

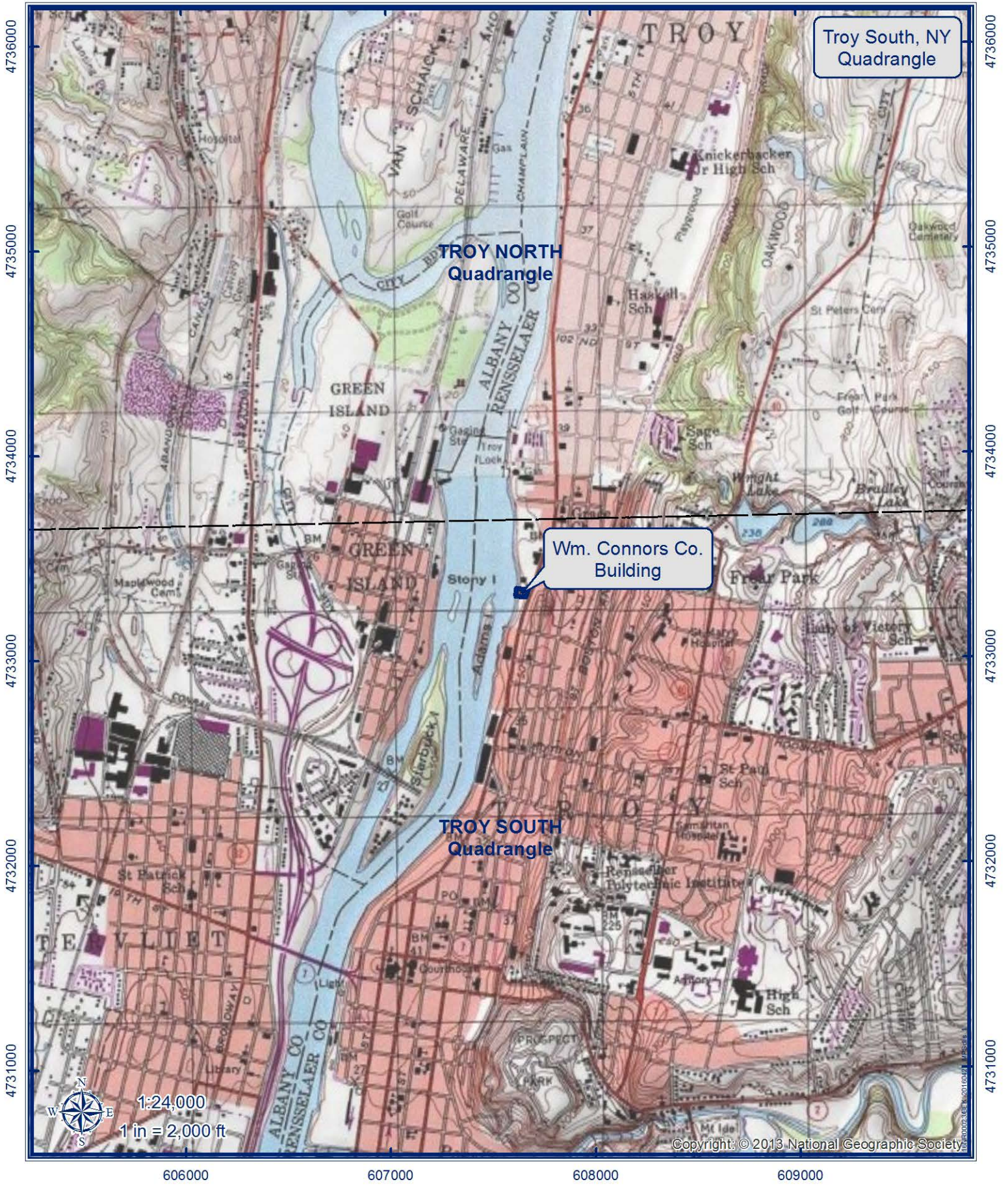
Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name 669 River Street LLC
street & number 130 Canvass Street telephone (518) 587-7120, X26.
city or town Cohoes state NY zip code 12047

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.460 et seq.).

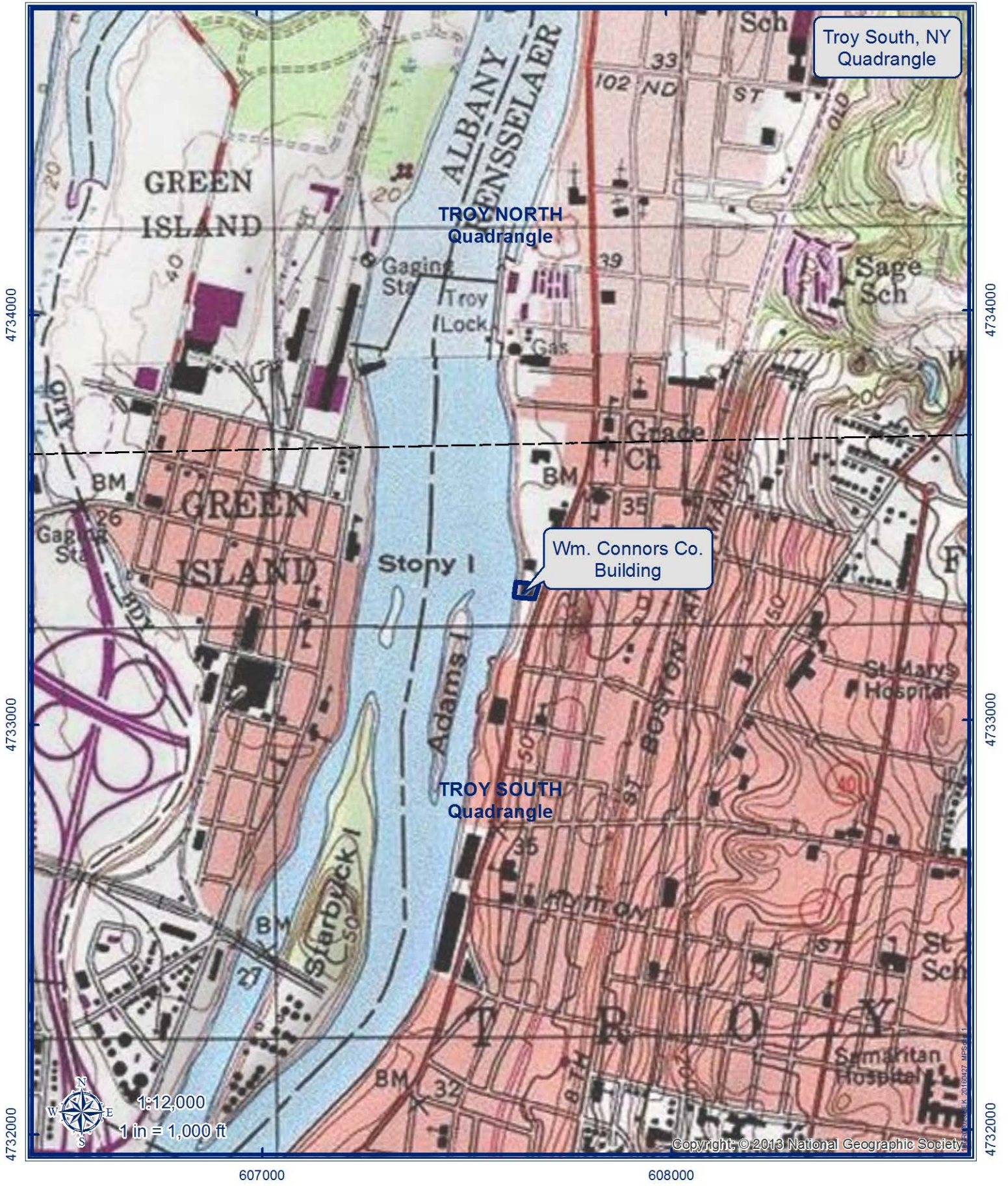
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation



$\Sigma = .49$ Acres

607652E 4733321N

1:3,000
1 in = 250 ft

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

4733000

4733000



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation



649
TIRE WAREHOUSE INC.

60K 90K
MAINTENANCE

Reston
Reston
Reston







White graffiti tags on the left side of the brick wall.

Large, colorful graffiti mural featuring stylized faces and figures in yellow, blue, and white.

Faded graffiti text on the right side of the brick wall.















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Connors, William, Paint Manufacturing Company Building

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Rensselaer

DATE RECEIVED: 6/17/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/02/16
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000486

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 7-28-16 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

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.



March 9, 2016

Ruth L. Pierpont
Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation
New York Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation
Division for Historic Preservation
Peebles Island, PO Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Dear Ms. Pierpont:

We are thrilled that the NYW&B property in Pelham, NY is being considered for nomination to the National and State Registers of Historic Places. We have been working since 2010 to convert this abandoned property into a highline style park. The historical significance is very important to us. The eligibility status we received from your office in March 2012 was a huge milestone for the Friends of Highbrook Highline.

We enjoyed hosting Bill Krattinger for a site visit in December. We were able to show him the site as well as the progress we have made in reopening one third of this property as a park. The neighbors are delighted with the progress.

We are eager to hear the outcome of your meeting on March 22nd.

Best regards,

Emily Freidberg
Susan Mutti
Sue Seither
Ann Dumas Swanson
Roger Wines

Michael J. Volpe
Mayor



Robert A. Yamuder
Administrator

March 11, 2016

Ruth L. Pierpont
Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation
New York Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation
Division for Historic Preservation
Peebles Island, PO Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189



Re: NY W&B Highbrook Avenue Bridge
Pelham, NY 10803
Westchester County, New York

Dear Ms. Pierpont:

We are in receipt of the notice to consider the NYW&B Highbrook Avenue Bridge located in the Village of Pelham for nomination to the register of historic places, copy attached.

The Village of Pelham has owned the bridge and adjoining property since the NYW&B railroad was decommissioned in the 1930s. Many attempts have been made over the years to open this space to the public in a meaningful way. We are fortunate to have a dedicated group of volunteers as well as the support of our Village Board of Trustees committed to opening this long abandoned property. Two years ago, a grant was obtained and one third of the property was opened to the public. Additionally, the Board of Trustees recently voted affirmatively to declare the majority of the property as parkland.

We look forward to the historical designation to aid us in grant writing. We plan to develop a "Highline-style" park where neighbors can enjoy the property as well as learn about the important part it played in our history. The bridge itself is a beautiful reminder of the grand architecture that was a part of this railway.

Please let us know the outcome of the meeting.

Sincerely,

Susan Mutti, Deputy Mayor

cc: Board of Trustees; Village Administrator



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner

RECEIVED 2280

JUN 17 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

8 June 2016

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nomination

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following three nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

New York, Westchester & Boston Railway Highbrook Avenue Bridge,
Westchester County
William Connors Paint Manufacturing Company Building, Rensselaer County
Civilian Conservation Corps Camp S-90 (Speculator), Hamilton County

Regarding the CCC Camp, the Hamilton County 200th Anniversary History Fair will be held on August 13, 2016, and the nomination sponsors have requested that, if feasible, the camp be listed before that date, so that the listing can be celebrated as part of the festivities. Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office