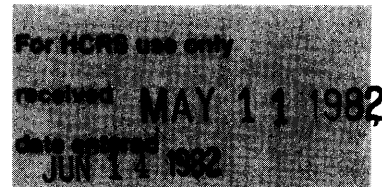


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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



1. Name

historic Willimantic Freight House & Office

and/or common Willimantic Freight House & Office

2. Location

street & number Bridge Street N/A not for publication

city, town Willimantic N/A vicinity of congressional district 2nd

state Connecticut code 09 county Windham code 015

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: VACANT

4. Owner of Property

name Charles Klewin & Russell Pratt

street & number Babcock Hill Road

city, town South Windham N/A vicinity of state CT 06266

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Windham Town Clerk

street & number Town Building - Main Street

city, town Willimantic state CT 06226

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission

city, town Hartford state CT

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The property consists of two adjacent buildings: a 1½-story, Second-Empire style brick office, built c. 1870, and a 1-story, gable-roofed frame building with seven sets of double sliding doors, the former freight house. Both buildings are quite far back from Bridge Street and are on the south side of the present single-track railroad right-of-way. They have been vacant for some time and are now boarded up.

The long freight house has the ridge of its roof parallel with the track, with a wide overhang at the eaves supported on large, simple braces (Photo 3). It is 25' wide and 170' long. Though portions of the ends are covered with plywood, most of the exterior is clapboarded above a band of narrow vertical-board siding. The doors on both sides of the building are mostly original and are of batten construction with the boards placed on the diagonal. On the north or track side, and extending toward a ramp to the east and the freight office to the west, is a wooden platform in very deteriorated condition.

The office is located at the southwest corner of the freight house (Photo 1). It measures 31' by 37' in plan and is built on a foundation of rough-faced granite blocks. The elevations are arranged as three bays on the shorter east and west sides and as four bays on the longer sides. Window openings are round-arched in shape and have two-over-two sash and granite sills. There are entrances (Photo 2) on both the west and south sides, both near the southwest corner. Each is sheltered by a rounded hoodmold on large carved consoles. The south entrance is not boarded up and reveals original double paneled doors with a transom above. There are two rounded dormers on each side of the Mansard roof, which is shingled with fish-scale slates and flares outward toward the eaves. Below the bracketed cornice is stringcourse in the brick. Interior woodwork (Photo 4) includes a dado or wainscot of narrow beaded boards and large rounded moldings surrounding the window and door openings. There has been some fire damage and all plaster and lath have been removed. There is a large walk-in safe surrounded by thick brick walls and near the southwest corner, a partition with a half-door, probably a cash window or a package-counter (Photo 5).

The boundaries of the nominated property coincide with the property lines of the parcel as defined in local records. To the south is a modern shopping center, a vacant lot lies to the west, and Bridge Street and the railroad's right-of-way combine to isolate the structure both visually and physically from Willimantic's other distinguished nineteenth-century buildings.

8. Significance

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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates c.1870; 1892 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Willimantic Freight House & Office is a site with local historical significance (Criterion A): it is the last major railroad-related structure from the 19th century remaining in Willimantic. Moreover, the office building has architectural significance as a good example of the Second Empire Style (Criterion C).

The importance of the freight house and office as an artifact of the Railroad Age is heightened by Willimantic's position in the 19th century as eastern Connecticut's busiest railroad center. Three major trunk lines converged on the city -- the Air Line from Boston to New York, the Hartford to Providence line, and the New London Northern. In addition to more than 40 passenger train departures daily, there were numerous freight trains serving the city. As early as 1874, local citizens complained to the Railroad Commissioners about the inadequate freight facilities in Willimantic, which at that time consisted of a small depot near the passenger station at the foot of Railroad Street (both now demolished). The New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad, which controlled two of the lines, promised to improve the situation, but it was not until 1892 that land for a new freight house was purchased. In that year, an agreement was reached with the Windham Cotton Manufacturing Company, which included in the sale not only a large strip of land but also the stylish building which had served as the mill's office since about 1870.¹ The railroad built the present freight house next to the office, which was used as the freight office until the demise of the railroad in the 1960s.

The Willimantic freight house is typical of its period: a plain, functional building with platforms, a ramp, numerous loading doors, and a wide overhanging eave to offer some protection from the weather. As a historical artifact it represents a transportation system which has disappeared. Unlike today, in which railroads provide service almost exclusively to industrial and wholesale customers with their own sidings, the 1890s was a time in which nearly all goods moved by rail and public access to central freight depots was needed. In a commercial and industrial city like Willimantic, nearly all the small merchants and manufacturers would have received shipments by rail, and much of the business was probably of "less-than-carload" quantity. Today, only the freight house and office survive from a large complex of passenger, freight, and maintenance facilities built by the railroads.

The site also has architectural significance, as the office building embodies many representative features of the Second Empire Style. Its Mansard roof, rounded dormers, arched windows, and bracketed cornice are all typical elements drawn from the revival of French 17th-century architecture. Although not elaborate, the building was solidly constructed with expensive materials, such as the slate roof and the granite foundation. Despite fire damage and a long vacancy, the building is relatively well-preserved, with nearly all its original exterior and interior features intact. The dado and molded window surrounds are typical Victorian woodwork, and the vault and cash window illustrate well the building's function as an office. The architectural value of the office complements the site's important historical associations, making the freight house and office a notable part of Willimantic's built environment.

9. Major Bibliographical References

"Bird's-eye View of Willimantic, Conn." H.H. Bailey & J.C. Hazen, 1876.

Connecticut Railroad Commissioners. Annual Report, 1874, 1892.

"The Thread City." Willimantic: H.W. Rich, 1894. Photographic brochure.

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property one acre

Quadrangle name Willimantic

Quadrangle scale 1:24 000

UMT References

A

1	8	7	3	1	2	1	0	4	6	2	1	3	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

The property includes the land and buildings shown as Lot 7, Block 136, Map 12-3 in the Windham Assessor's records and further described in a deed in the Windham Land Records, Volume 264, page 228.

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bruce Clouette, partner
Historic Resource Consultants

organization Historic Resource Consultants date August 16, 1981

street & number 103 Mansfield Hollow Road telephone (203) 423-8903

city or town Mansfield Center state CT 06250

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

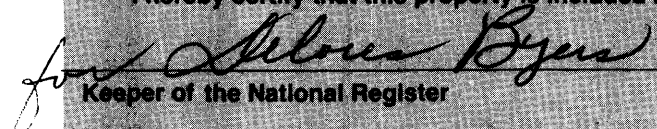
title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission date April 26, 1982

For HCRS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

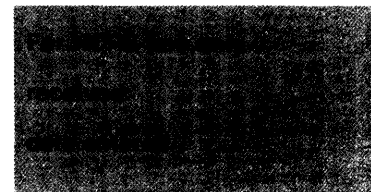
date 6/14/82

for 
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service****National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Continuation sheet Willimantic Freight House & Office
Willimantic, CT Item number 8

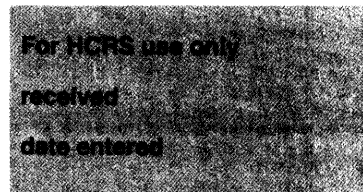
Page 1

Notes to Significance:

¹The Windham Cotton Manufacturing Company was one of the oldest and largest industries in Willimantic, though it was overshadowed by the even larger Willimantic Linen Company (which later became American Thread). The Windham Cotton Company built several huge stone mills near the river, a number of tenement houses, and some stone storage buildings. Except for a few tenements and storage buildings, these have disappeared. The office building of this company therefore also has some historical significance as part of an important enterprise which has vanished almost without a trace. The curious arrangement of two entrances at one corner may reflect the building's use as a mill office, where presumably a weekly line of workers would file through past the pay window, in one door and out the other. (Photos 6 and 7).

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Continuation sheet Willimantic Freight House & Office
Willimantic, CT Item number 9

Page 2

Bibliography (continued):

Willimantic Journal Souvenir Edition. Willimantic, 1894. Page 17 shows
the office before it became part of the freight facility.

Windham Land Records, Volume 59, page 635 (1892).