Form 10-300 (Dec. 1968)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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American Screw Company Factories	RECEIVED 1970	. /**
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DESCRIBATION								
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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This is a complex of factory buildings of brick, timber and iron construction with stone and wood trim, dating mainly from c. 1840 to 1873. These factories were erected on land at the north end of Providence sloping upwards for the east from the Moshassuck River, which, at the time the earliest of them were built, formed a part of the Blackstone Canal system. The principal buildings are three or four storeys in height, mostly rectangular in form, with gable roofs and protrucing stair towers, and generally with vast undivided loft space.

The first of these to be built was that of the Eagle Screw Company a lengthy oblong with its long side fronting on Stevens Street. This is of three storeys topped by additional useable space under a full-length clerestorey or monitor astride the gable roof, giving the brick endgables a stepped effect. The façades are pierced by numerous regularlyspaced windows having the simplest of stone sills and lintels. A sizeable square entrance- and stair-tower projects from the centre of the north front, and was originally surmounted by a wooden belfry or cupola of modest but dignified Greek Revival design. At the west or gable end is another stair tower of smaller dimensions, with recessed brick panels giving it minimal but noticeable adornment on its outer face. This tower has lost its original low wooden parapet or capping but retains its cornice. The original long building was given a gabled south wing of three storeys -- making a T-shape -- with an additional stair tower, but this was apparently not adequate for very long. (Much later this addition itself was extended and given a mansard roof.) To the south-east of the c. 1840 structure another similar factory was built, probably within ten years of the first one; but this does not have a clerestorey or a belfry. (Samuel M., Green writes, 1966, in his American Art that Thomas A. Tefft may have the Eagle Screw Company. 1840 is too early a date for Tefft. It is possible that he worked on this second factory, however.) These oldest buildings remain intact in their fabric and handsome in their functional simplicity and severe dignity.

Further factory space became needed after 1860, when the Eagle Screw Company merged with another firm to form the American Screw Company, and a second phase and style of building took place. A large triangular mill or factory was built higher up the slope, east of the c. 1840 building and north of the second factory. Enlargements were also made to the previously existing buildings. All this work is thought to be by a prominent mid-century Providence architect, Alpheus Morse, and could be dated c. 1865-1870. Morse was the designer of 30, Benefit Street (1869), the home of William G. Angell, president of the American Screw Company for many years. Detail on his house is like that of the mill buildings. The additions to the mills consist of two- and three-storey runs and corner blocks topped by decked mansard roofs, high and

(See Continuation Sheet)

Form 10-300a (Dec. 1968)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)-1

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(Number all entries)

7. Description.

angular in profile. These mansards cap still-severe brick walls with plain window openings; but there are at the eaves wooden architrage bands our mounted by projecting wooden cornices carried on curving brackets; these are bold capping cornices also at the break of the mansards; and all of the dormers are pedimented or gabled, with overhanging eaves, some being of the bracketted as well.

In 1873 expansion was again necessary, and the so-called Pay State Mill, believed also to be by Morse, was built on the north side of Stevens Street. This is a long gabled structure like its facing neighbourand is of four storeys and attic. There are the same numerous, regularly-spaced windows, though here with segmental brick arches instead of stone lintels. There is a projecting frontal stair tower as well. But at this point similarity ends, for in the 1873 building we have an "ornamental" factory and one which is meant to appear picturesque, however economically this is achieved. It is achieved through the use of certain features and details from the north Italian architectural vocabulary which Morse and others (notably Tefft) had previously used on public, church and domestic buildings locally--all of this adornment carried out in the manipulation of brickwork. The main portion of the factory and its tower have projecting cornices of brick courses supported on brick corbels or brackets closely spaced; the tower has a projecting brick "architrave" or wide belt at the eaves supported (visually, at least) by engaged brick posts on corbels; the sides of the tower are panelled, with brick fretwork at the tops of the panels. Round-headed windows are used in the tower, narrowed and paired in a Lombard Italianate manner at the fourth level. The tower, which is meant to soar above the main building like a campanile, has a very steep hipped roof originally topped by metal cresting, and eclectically displaying a metal bull's-eye dormer window of Louis XIII type in its front. At each end of the main building, in the gables, is a series of five round-headed windows, grouped, and growing smaller from centre to ends--another borrowing from Italy.

Two of the three tall, tapering, square smokestacks of this factory group still stand—simply and monumentally handsome—though few of the steel and wooden bridges once connecting various buildings across lanes and alleys remain. There are some other minor brick buildings or extensions which have not been individually described.

The basic condition of all these buildings is good. Recently vacated, they have been slightly damaged in the vacating process and moderately vandalised since. However, most damage appears limited to broken window glass or sashes and smashed doors. Their rugged masonry is in good order, and where there is wood trim it seems to have survived quite sturdily. The buildings mainly require a housecleaning and the restoration of ordinary continuous maintenance in order to serve or house any new use or uses to which they may be converted.

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These buildings are an intact grouping of XIX Century industrial architecture—functional, economical, interesting and vigorously handsome. They form a monument to Providence's and Rhode Island's early industrial inventiveness and development (the American Screw Company having been outstanding in inventiveness and success), so important in the history, prosperity and prominence of both city and state. Additionally, by their size and siting, they are an anchor or centre to an area of the city which badly needs a tangible, visible focal point more than its does the characterless expanses resulting from overeager demolition and uninspired rebuilding.

This group of factory buildings, with its streets, alleys, open areas and pockets, sloping up from a still-flowing segment of the walled Blackstone Canal, has become a familiar landmark to local persons and to those driving in from the north-west--a landmark which would be much missed if destroyed. It has a certain rugged picturesqueness, certain visual delights and surprises not unlike those of an Italian hill village--rather unexpected but evident.

Many other larger or smaller factory groups—an important phase of American architectural performance from the very beginning of the XIX Century—have not survived or else have been swallowed within vast and uninteresting XX Century structures. The Moshassuck Square buildings stand, still, together as a once begun and finally completed group telling an industrial, civic and architectural story precisely placed within the period 1840-1873, unrevised, unenlarged.

The past significance of these buildings is in their history and original use. Their present significance lies in their architectural and landmark qualities. Their future significance will be in their continued existence and re-use.

(See Continuation Sheet)

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Form 10-300a (Dec. 1968)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) -2

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8. Significance.

Plans have been put forward for their preservation, internal conversion and use. These buildings, as they stand, are suitable to a variety of present-day purposes. They could house offices, studios, perhaps some retail shops and—not least—commodious and desirable dwelling units (cf. Boston's converted Atlantic Avenue wharf warehouses). Walkways for convenience and open areas for relaxation already exist; sufficient space for automobile parking already exists in adjacent, already—levelled areas.

It is much to be hoped that, when redevelopment of the Randall Square district is put in work, the Moshassuck Square--American Screw Company grouping will be retained as a very useful part and extraordinarily enhancing centre of the new community.

Plans to restore the Blackstone Canal from this section of Randall Square to its source near Market Square will also affect the restoration of the mill buildings. Restoration of a section of the Blackstone Canal in Lincoln is now under way.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) -3

STATE	
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(Number all entries)

1. Name.

Common: Moshassuck Square--Additions to Original Nomination
And/or Historic: Stillman White Brass Foundry; Fletcher Manufacturing
Company Office; 127 Charles Street Commercial Block; Hewes
Street Additions to the Bay State Mill

2. Location.

Street and Number: 1 Bark Street, 47 Charles Street, 127 Charles Street, Hewes Street

City or Town: Providence

State: Rhode Island, 02904 Code: 44 County: Providence Code: 007

3. Classification.

Category: District; Ownership: Public; Status: Unoccupied; Acessible to the Public: Yes--Restricted; Present Use: Formerly industrial and commercial, now unoccupied

- 4. Owner of Property: Same as on original nomination
- 5. Location of Legal Description: Same as on original nomination
- 6. Representation in Existing Surveys: Same as on original nomination
- 7. Description.

Condition: Fair; Integrity: Unaltered; Original Site

This group of brick industrial and commercial buildings is all that now remains of a once-large industrial district surrounding the Moshassuck Square—American Screw Company mills. Some of the American Screw Company structures were entered on the National Register in September, 1970, as part of a large urban renewal project comprising rehabilitation of the mill buildings along the Blackstone Canal as a center for a complex of new housing. All but two of the structures originally entered were destroyed by fire on July 5, 1971. Even now the surviving buildings comprise one of Providence's most visible links with its industrial past. In an effort to help maintain the character of the original innovative plan, adjacent surviving buildings are now to be rehabilitated.

Earliest of the buildings now being nominated is the mill office and warehouse of the Fletcher Manufacturing Company (Building 1 on the accompanying map). Located on a narrow trapezoidal lot between Charles Street and the Moshassuck River, it is the only surviving element of an extensive textile mill complex operated by this firm. The company, founded in 1793, moved to this area in the 1840's, incorporated in 1865 and, in 1869, erected a tall, mansarded, three-story brick office and warehouse. This

(See Continuation Sheet 4.)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)-4

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7. Description.

severe, yet imposing, structure was clearly a "show-piece," surrounded as it was by the plain, squat mill buildings which up to then typified the Fletcher complex. Its crisp brickwork is relieved by regularly-spaced segmental-arched windows ornamented with brownstone and brick projected caps and sills. A handsome paneled brick frieze runs beneath the moulded wood cornice. The mansard is robustly ornamented with bracketed dormers, patterned slate-work and moulded deck capping. In the attic story of the Charles Street side is a freight door with hoist. The company flagstaff, that once-ubiquitous adjunct to any XIX-century factory complex, rises above a chimney on the narrow north façade. The mill office entrance, at 47 Charles Street, is set in a wood-paneled recess. Above it on a brownstone cartouche is proudly displayed the name of the firm in bold, projected lettering. A similar plaque on the north façade bears the date of construction--1869. A lower, more modest, three-story brick warehouse abuts the south end of the office. Visually and functionally, it complements the main building.

On the opposite embankment of the Moshassuck River from the Fletcher Manufacturing Company office stands the Stillman White Brass Foundry (Building 2). Separating, yet relating, the two is the Mill Street Bridge. Together, these formidable buildings suggest by their bulk and position a northern gateway into downtown Providence. Passing between them, one senses that he is leaving the outskirts and coming into the city itself.

The foundry occupies a constricted site bounded by Bark Street, the Moshassuck River and the Mill Street Bridge. Stillman White, who became a prominent Providence civic leader, began business here in 1856. The firm continued at this location through 1949. Construction and detail of the extant building, however, suggest that its three sections date in the late XIX and early XX centuries. (External evidence, e. g. the Providence atlases of 1875-1918, supports this assertion.) Though the roof profile varies from section to section, the coherent overall appearance of the building is due to its uniform brickwork, window openings and corbeled cornice. Lintels and sills are cast concrete throughout the building, save in some portions of the middle section where stone may be found. The twostory middle and south sections contained office, storage and work spaces. The north section was the foundry-room proper. It is identified by its tapering square chimney and four large wind-adjustable sheet-metal vents mounted on the roof. Though the interiors are badly damaged, they retain a series of overhead I-beam tracks used to transport castings to the Bark Street and Mill Street entrances. This straightforward working building is an effective contrast to the ornamented office across the bridge.

North of the bridge, at 127 Charles Street (Building 3) is a threestory brick commercial building. Erected c. 1900, it was designed to have stores on the ground floor and apartments above. Sandwiched between the Moshassuck River and Charles Street, it was originally flanked by numerous (See Continuation Sheet 5.)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)_5

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7. Description.

structures serving similar ends. Now it stands alone. The Charles Street façade presents two plate-glass store windows on either side of a narrow doorway. The second and third stories have regularly-spaced blind-segmental-arched windows. Finishing the flat roof-line of this modest building is a broad brick band decorated with corbeled string courses and capped with a moulded iron gutter. The side walls of the structure, not intended to be viewed from the street, have irregular fenestration and a stepped roof-line. A two-story wooden back porch projects from east side of the building at second- and third-floor levels. Supported on three massive diagonal braces, this wide porch has square posts with moulded caps and a characteristically simple balustrade with closely-spaced square balusters. The posts on the third-floor level support a sham arcade surmounted by a minimal entablature. This porch-loggia provided tenants of 127 Charles Street with a relatively pleasant open living space, overlooking the canal, markedly contrasting with their cramped indoor quarters.

Northeast of 127 Charles Street stands a large brick industrial building put up in two stages on a roughly triangular lot bounded by North Main Street, Hewes Street, and what was the upper end of Stevens Street. Erected as an addition to the Bay State Mill by the American Screw Company, the first section was completed c. 1882 (Building &). This three-story brick block has a broad pitched roof and fine corbeled cornice. Its once-regular fenestration and wagon entrance on Stevens Street, illustrated in old wood-engraved views of the American Screw Company complex, are now masked or altered. Cable catwalks which formerly connected the 1882 building with the Bay State Mill have been demolished. Fine proportions and appropriate detailing make this building a worthy reminder of the area's industrial past.

An addition which appears on the insurance maps of 1918 (Building 7) runs north of the 1882 building on Hewes Street and curves around the original building and down its North Main Street side. Its later date is evidenced by the simpler cornice and near-flat roof. The northern end of this XX-century addition forms an impressive arc at the intersection of Hewes and North Main Streets. It is a landmark visible for some distance down North Main Street.

The condition of these buildings is varied: The Fletcher Manufacturing Company's mill office is occupied and in excellent condition. The additions to the Bay State Mill and 127 Charles Street are awaiting redevelopment and are unoccupied; though somewhat vandalized, their condition remains good. The Stillman White Brass Foundry, however, has been gutted by fire; the north wall and several window frames are missing.

(See Continuation Sheet 6.)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)-6

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8. Significance.

Because of restrictions imposed on the extent of the first Moshassuck Square nomination by an already-initiated urban renewal program, the buildings described on these Continuation Sheets 3-8 were not included at that time. Present renewal plans, however, make it possible to safeguard the remaining structures in the area, and they all merit preservation. These buildings, together with the shells of the burned-out American Screw Company mills, are the survivors or the formerly-vast Randall Square industrial district. They stand as a symbol of the diversity and vitality of Providence's industrial heritage.

Historically, the buildings provide an essential physical bond between the present and the origins of Providence's industrial prosperity. The first gristmill in the town of Providence was erected by John Smith in 1616, just north of the Stillman White Brass Foundry. East of the foundry site, Providence's first tannery was established in 1655. By the XIX century the Moshassuck River had become a part of the Blackstone Canal system, and numerous mills, factories and foundries had located in what became known as the Randall Square district. The commercial establishments along Charles Street served these firms and their employees. The Fletcher Manufacturing Company mill office, the Stillman White Brass Foundry, 127 Charles Street and the extant portions of the Bay State Mill complex all have a part in that history.

Rebuilding on cleared portions of the Randall Square area has already begun and makes the importance of retaining these surviving buildings as focal points in the proposed redevelopment fully evident. The sense of "presence" they lend to the area is remarkable—most tellingly in the visual relationship resulting from the position of the Fletcher office in relation to the White foundry. In their relationship to the Blackstone Canal, which it is hoped will be developed as a linear park amenity extending beyond the bounds of the Moshassuck Square project, the buildings now additionally proposed for nomination reinforce the visual and historical import of the area. Their inclusion in redevelopment plans for this area is, therefore, intended to add these just-mentioned visual and historical dimensions to the new complex.

9. Major Bibliographical References.

Hall, Joseph D., Jr., ed.: Biographical History of the Manufactures and Business Men of Rhode Island ... (Providence, Rhode Island, 1901), pp. 38, 54, 119.

The Providence Directory, and Rhode Island Business Directory, for the years 1856-1950.

The Providence House Directory, for the years 1895-1905.

(See Continuation Sheet 7.)

Cady, John Hutchins: The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence, 1636-1950 (Providence, 1957), p. 7, 171.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

Rhode Island				
COUNTY				
Providence				
FOR NPS USE ONLY				
ENTRY BER	DATE			
SEP 8				

(Continuation Sheet)-7

(Number all entries)

10. Geographical Data.

(Revised) Latitude and Longitude Coordinates Defining a Rectangle Locating the Property.

Corner	Latitude			Longitude			
0011101	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	
NW	41	50	14.21	71	24	44.86	
NE	41	50	12.34	71	24	35.02	
SE	41	49	52.85	71	24	40.38	
SW	41	49	51.34	71	24	50.26	

Approximate Acreage of Nominated Property: 10

11. Form Prepared by

David Chase, Consultant Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, John Brown House, 52 Power Street

Providence, Rhode Island, 02906

May 24, 1972

Code: 44 -

12. State Liaison Officer Certification: Same as on original nomination.*

MOSHASSUCK SQUARE,
Between Stevens and Hewes Streets
to the north and Smith Street to
the south; between North Main Street
to the east and Charles Street to
the west,
Providence, Rhode Island.

INVENTORY OF BUILDINGS.

(Revised as of May, 1972, to exclude structures destroyed since 1970 and to include four buildings now added to the original nomination to the National Register. Buildings are numbered below in accordance with the sketch-map of the revised district.)

La Jul

1. Fletcher Manufacturing Company Office, 47 Charles Street, 1869. Brick office and warehouse building of three stories carrying a mansard. (See description above.)

(See Continuation Sheet 8.)

see continuation sheet #8 for new certification

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

STATE			
Rhode Island			
COUNTY			
Providence			
FOR NPS USE ONLY			
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE		
SEP 8 1970			

(Continuation Sheet)-8

(Number all entries)

Moshassuck: Square. Inventory of Buildings.

- 2. Stillman White Brass Foundry, 1 Bark Street, 1856 ff. Gable-roofed brick structure with tall chimney. (See description above.)
- 3. 127 Charles Street Commercial Block, c. 1900. Simple brick storeand apartment-building of three stories with wooden porch-galleries across the back elevation. (See description above.)
- Remaining portion of a southerly extension, of brick, of the second--1850's--factory of the Eagle Screw Company, which was gutted by fire in July, 1971, and subsequently razed. (See original nomination.)
- 5. Shell (roofless) of the original factory building, c. 1840, of the Eagle Screw Company. This was completely burned-out in the fire of July, 1971, but the brick carcass stands firmly, however, and will be re-used. (See original nomination.)
- 6.-7. Hewes Street Additions to the Bay State Mill (the latter now demolished: see original nomination), c. 1882 ff. Two-story range of brick annex buildings whose considered simplicity achieves distinction. (See description above.)

STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

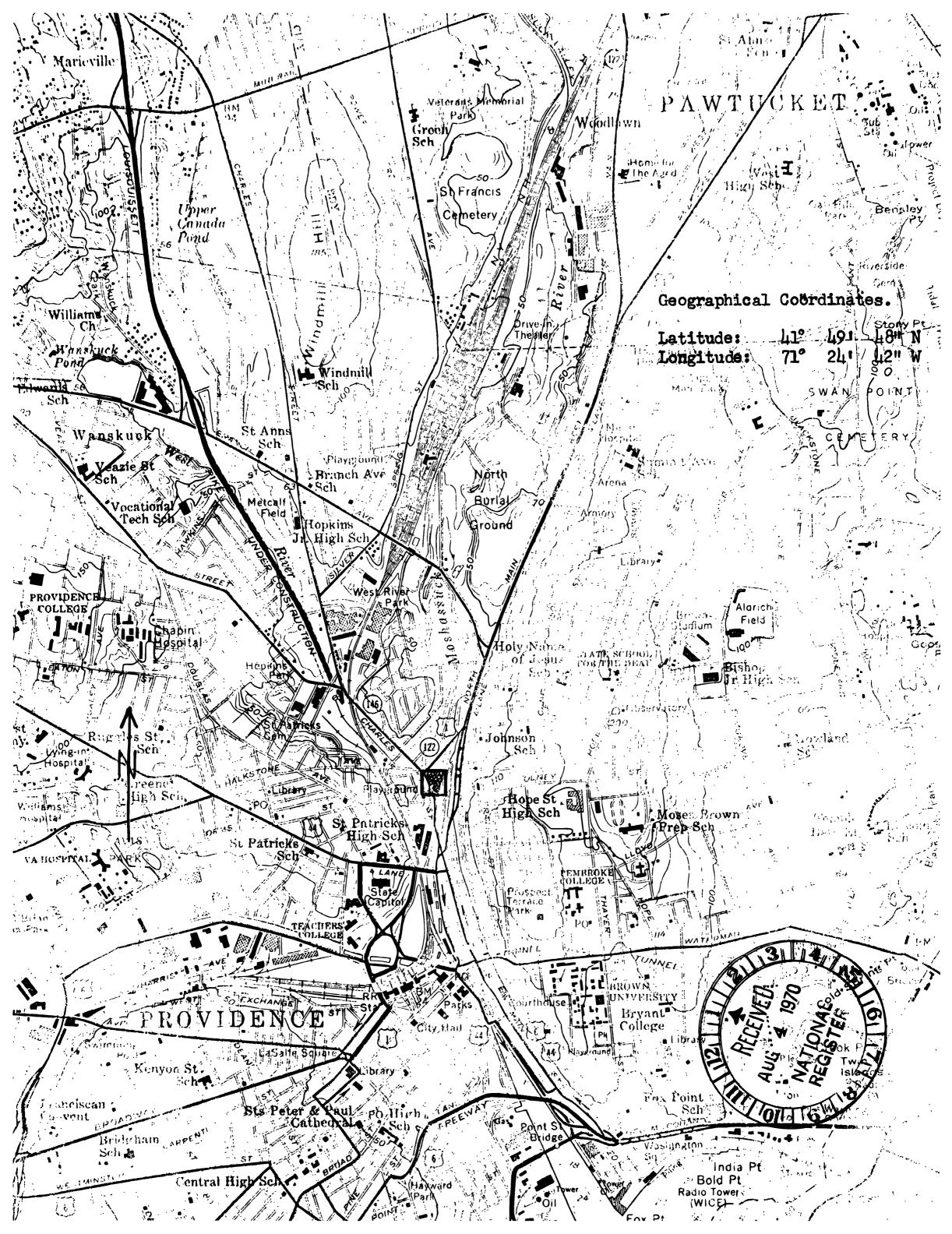
As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.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

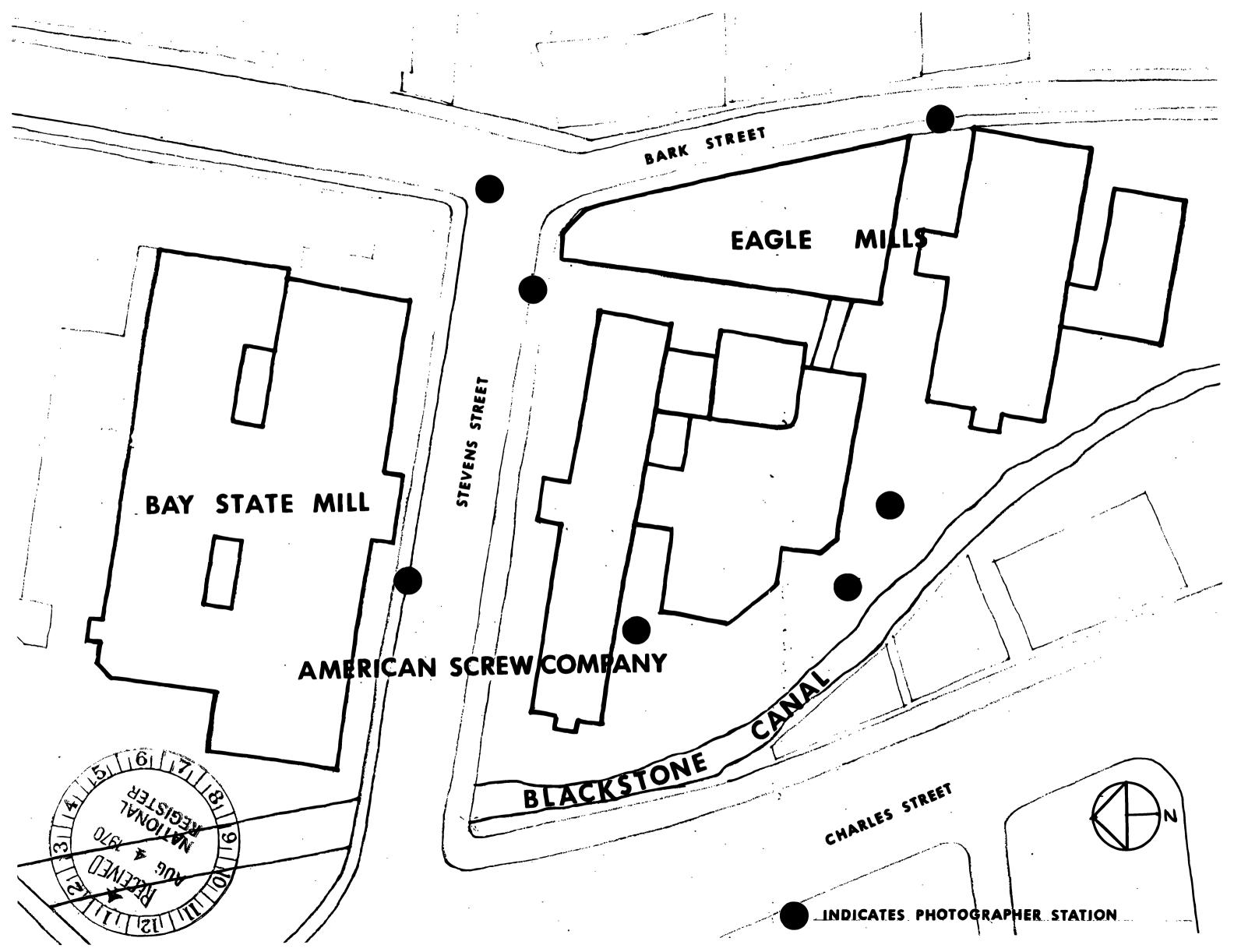
Name	The Carlotte and	
Title_	State Liaison Officer	
Date	June 5, 1972	
Liaison	by certify that these properties recommended by the Rhode Island State Officer for addition to Moshassuck Square are included in the Il Register.	e

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Keeper of the National Regist

GPO 921-724





STATE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE Rhode Island COUNTY NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES Providence PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM FOR NPS USE ONLY ENTRY NUMBER (Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph) S Z 1, NAME common: Moshassuck Square 0 AND/OR HISTORIC: American Screw Company Factories 2. LOCATION Stevens Street U CITY OR TOWN: Providence α COUNTY \vdash STATE: CODE CODE Rhode Island 38 007 S 3 PHOTO REFERENCE Z PHOTO CREDIT: City of Providence: Dept. of Planning and Urban Development DATE OF PHOTO: **1970** NEGATIVE FILED AT: City of Providence: Dept. of Planning and Urban Development, ш 10. Dorrance Street. Providence. Rhode Island 4. IDENTIFICATION Plan of the district, showing the important existing structures, the bounding streets and intervening lanes, surviving portion of Blackstone Canal at lower boundary.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

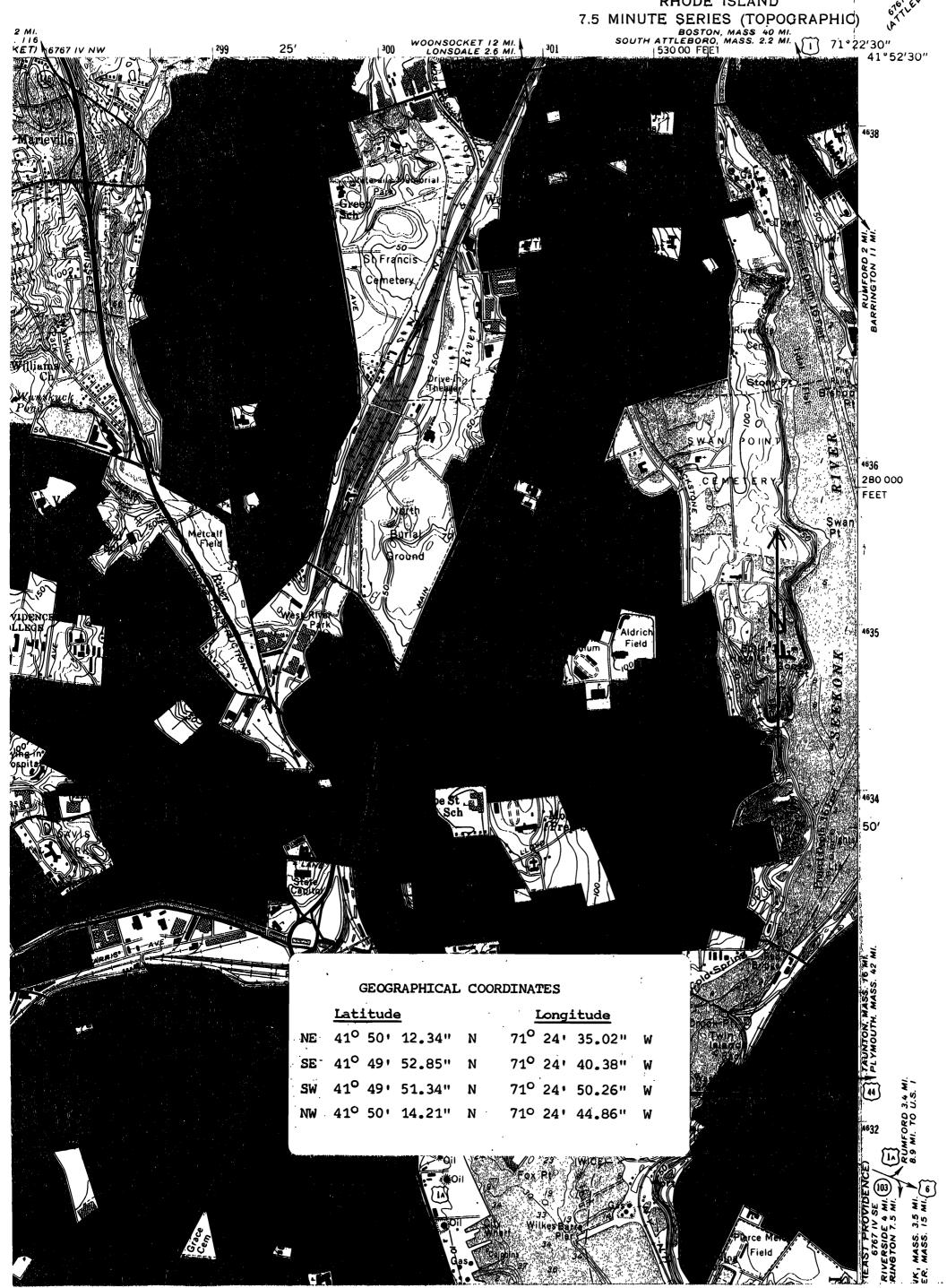
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

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Eric Hertfelder, Rhode Island	Historical	Preservation C	ommission	
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY MAP FORM

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Moshassuck Square Historic District -- Providence, Providence County Key to Map

Remaining Buildings:

- 1. Fletcher Manufacturing Company Office, 47 Charles Street, 1869.
- 2. Stillman White Brass Foundry, 1 Bark Street, 1856ff.
- 3. 127 Charles Street Commercial Block, c.1900.
- 6.-7. Hewes Street Additions to the Bay Street Mill, c.1882 ff.

Demolished Remnants (as shown on amended nomination map, May 24, 1972)

- 4. Remnants.
- 5. Remnants.

Additional Buildings:

- A. Condominiums.
- B. Condominiums.
- C. Moshassuck Medical Center



