

MAY 23 1989

692

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

AREA

FORM NO.

A	118
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Town Wakefield

Address 134 Water Street

Historic Name Wakefield Rattan Co.

Photo (3"x3" or 3"x5", black and white) Indicate address of property on back of photo. Staple to left side of form.

Use: Present Multi-use manufacturing

Original Rattan Factory

DESCRIPTION

Date 1889

Source 1890 Map

Style Late 19th early 20th vernacular industrial.

Architect NA

Exterior Wall Fabric Brick

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s).
Indicate north

Outbuildings Late 20th concrete L addition (1 story) connecting bldgs 10 & 11; late 20th c. concrete block warehouse. Late 20th c. wood comm'l
Major Alterations (with dates) bldg--all noncontributing.

Some openings filled, some new openings, #10 lowered.

Condition _____

Good

Moved NA Date NA

Acreage 5 1/2 acres

Setting Near railroad tracks and center depot, in large open space between two old roads.

UTM REFERENCE 19/330220/4707480

USGS QUADRANGLE Reading, MA

SCALE 1:25,000

Recorded by Architectural Preservation Associates

Organization Wakefield Historical Commission

Date March 1985

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

This complex of 4 buildings is all that remains of what was once the largest producer of reed and rattan products in the world. Aside from its contributions to the local economy, the Wakefield Rattan Co. also influenced residential, commercial and industrial development in the town. The company's founder, Cyrus Wakefield, made so many contributions to what was then South Reading that the town was renamed in his honor in 1868. The buildings retain integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and the complex meets Criterion A (on the national and local levels) and Criterion C (on the local level) of the NRHP.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community. The yard of the Wakefield Rattan Company and the Heywood-Wakefield Co. developed between 1856 and the 1930s into a complex of many buildings. Of these only four significant structures remain; all are brick, flat roofed and late nineteenth-early twentieth century utilitarian in style. Buildings 10, 11, 12, and 13, constructed after 1890, are located along roughly parallel and perpendicular lines, but relate in no very orderly fashion to each other.

Building #10 appears to have been taller but has been altered to one story. About thirty bays long, it is articulated with pilasters, each framing a window with arched head. Granite foundations, sill and heavy watertable, which is used as a window sill, distinguish the building.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community. The Wakefield Rattan Co., and after its merger in 1897 the Heywood-Wakefield Co., were of great importance to the town of Wakefield as a primary employer, generator of residential development, and impetus for increased industrialization. Its owner, Cyrus Wakefield (1811-1873), for whom South Reading was named in 1868, made a gift of a new Town Hall to the town. The commercial buildings he erected in central Wakefield were also significant in shaping the business and industrial districts.

Before its merger with the Heywood Brothers Co. in 1897, the factory, which covered eleven acres, was the largest producer of reed and rattan products in the world. Its production made the word Wakefield famous for its elaborate and popular wicker furniture. It was also the largest manufacturer in town, employing 200 hands in 1863, and expanding to 1000 in 1873. The value of goods it produced in 1880 was nearly four times that of the next leading industry.

Cyrus Wakefield came to South Reading in 1851, and purchased the property which had been the site of the town's first grist and saw mill (1650). The property, which included two mill ponds used in producing power, grew on either side of Water Street. Before 1874 the course of that street was shifted south to skirt the yard. Fires in the 1880s and 1890s forced the erection of new buildings. A major

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Maps, 1857, 1874, 1889, 1906.
Greenwood, Richard. The Five Heywood Brothers, N.Y., 1951.
Greenfield, Levi. A Completed Century, 1826-1926. Boston 1926.
Wakefield Item, July 24, 1930.

134 Water Street Continuation: Architectural Significance

hammered granite sills, and a corbeled cornice.

Building #12, the largest and most elaborated, is four stories tall on high granite foundations. It is articulated with pilasters, and has corner pilasters whose heads are formed by a corbeled cornice. Shallow arched windows have granite sills, those of the first floor are long. A gable pediment is set in the middle of the south facade.

Building #13, the smallest, is two stories high, with low arched undecorated windows, and granite sills. It has been altered for entry on the second floor.

Continuation: Historical Significance

fire c. 1972 nearly razed the yard, leaving these buildings. In 1906, among the 20 structures on the site, Building 10 was attached to the dye house, now demolished; Building 12 may have been a store house and Building 13 was the paint and varnish shop.

The founder of the rattan and reed business in America, Wakefield's success in business was due to his inventing, with plant foreman William Houston, machinery capable of fully exploiting what had formerly been waste material used in ship dunnage, and the early capture of the markets for furniture and transportation upholstery. Large shavings were spun into mats, floor coverings and baling cloth. In 1870 a loom was introduced to weave cane for chair bottoms, which become standard covering for the fast growing street car industry.

The company also made elaborate, fanciful wicker furniture and baby carriages. Ornate, light, cheap and individualistic, the product sold nation wide, with retail stores, offices, factories and warehouses in Boston, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and Kankakee.

Wakefield was an originator and director of the Wakefield Savings Bank, the Wakefield Real Estate and Building Association, the Quannapowitt Water Co., the National Bank of South Reading, the Citizens' Light and Power Co., the South Reading Ice Co., the Boston and Maine Foundry Co. locally, as well as the Boston and Maine, Fitchburg, Nashua and Acton and Boston Railroads. He was active in developing a portion of the North End in Boston before his death in 1873.

His large and ornate Mansard style house on Main Street, demolished for the High School building, was inherited by his nephew, Cyrus 2nd, who took over the bankrupt firm, and died in 1888.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Wakefield MRA
State Middlesex County, MASSACHUSETTS

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

81. Wakefield Park *H.D.* Substantive Review *for* Keeper Beth L. Savage 3/2/90
Attest _____

82. Wakefield Rattan Company Substantive Review *for* Keeper Beth L. Savage 7/6/89
Attest _____

83. Wakefield Savings Bank Clock Substantive Review **DOE/OWNER OBJECTION** Keeper _____ R
Attest _____

84. Wakefield Trust Company Entered in the National Register *for* Keeper Arlene Byer 7/6/89
Attest _____

85. Wakefield Upper Depot Entered in the National Register *for* Keeper Arlene Byer 7/6/89
Attest _____

86. Warren, H.M., School Entered in the National Register *for* Keeper Arlene Byer 7/6/89
Attest _____

87. West Ward School Entered in the National Register *for* Keeper Arlene Byer 7/6/89
Attest _____

88. Winn Street Railroad Bridge Substantive Review Keeper _____ R
Attest _____

89. Winn, Suell, House Entered in the National Register *for* Keeper Arlene Byer 7/6/89
Attest _____

90. Winship, Charles, House *for* Keeper Beth L. Savage 7/6/89
Attest _____

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Wakefield Rattan Co.

MULTIPLE NAME: Wakefield MRA

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 5/23/89 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/06/89
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/22/89 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/07/89
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 89000692

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: Y

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 7/6/89 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Locally significant remains of once larger complex. At its peak, the Wakefield Rattan Company was the world's largest producer of reed and rattan products in the world. Not enough context provided to assess the property's potential national significance; however, it appears unlikely to retain sufficient integrity to qualify as an NHL.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A+C
REVIEWER Savage
DISCIPLINE Architectural History
DATE 7/6/89

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

CLASSIFICATION

count resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

historic current

DESCRIPTION

architectural classification
 materials
 descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

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

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

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

acreage verbal boundary description
 UTMs boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

sketch maps USGS maps photographs presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

_____ Phone _____

Signed _____ Date _____



**BUILDERS KITCHEN
CABINET COMPANY**

**SPACE
AVAILABLE**
104 262-4951

**BUILDERS KITCHEN
CABINET COMPANY**

104 262-4951

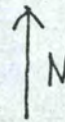
A 118

134 Water St.

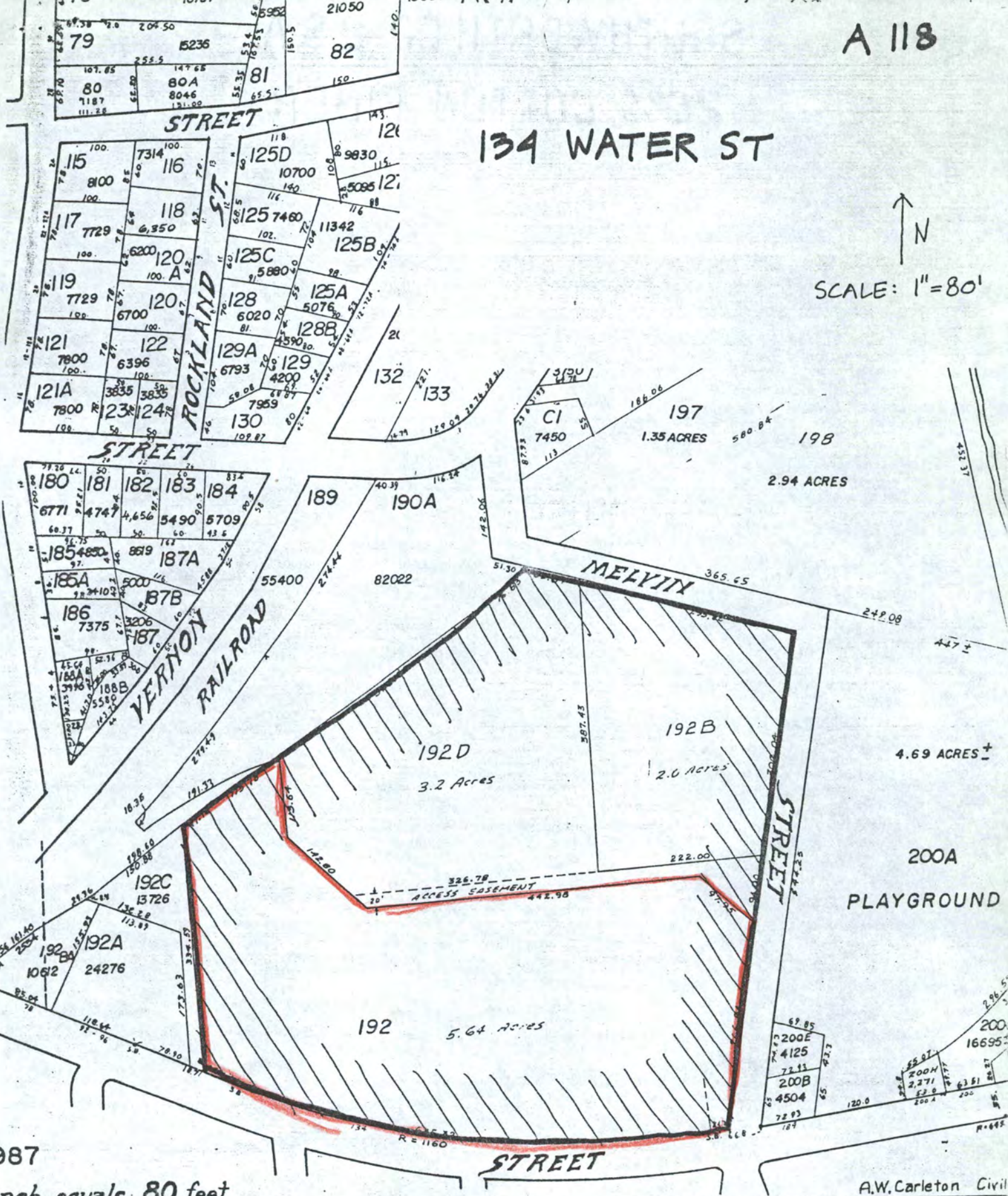
Walden Center in
Walden, N.H., N.H.

A 118

134 WATER ST



SCALE: 1" = 80'



inch equals 80 feet

A.W. Carleton Civil

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

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000300