

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

468

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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Dexter Richards & Sons Woolen Mill

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 169 Sunapee Street

City or town: Newport State: NH County: Sullivan

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

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

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

<u>E.R. Murphy</u>	<u>11/1/16</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>SHPO / NH Division of Historical Resources</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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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:)

Jan Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

1-17-17
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY: manufacturing facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY: manufacturing facility
VACANT

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Romanesque Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Granite, Wood, Concrete, Metal

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The former Dexter Richards and Sons Mill complex is located on the south side of Sunapee Street (NH Routes 11 & 103), about a half mile east of downtown Newport, New Hampshire. The property is bounded on the north by the heavily traveled east-west route and on the south by the Sugar River. The industrial complex was built in 1905 on the site of, and largely replacing, an earlier mid 19th century textile mill. There is a small brick office (also built in 1905) near the road, which is connected by a tunnel to the main four-story brick mill with an impressive Romanesque-style tower at the southwest corner. The mill's various appendages include several small sections which were retained from the earlier mill including a picker building, boiler house and dye house. A dynamo building with radial brick chimney was added c. 1920 as was a room to hold an electrical generator (rebuilt in 1986). The concrete dam to the east was rebuilt in 1948. Other 20th century additions include a c.1980 metal silo constructed for the storage of wood chips. By the late 20th century the mill was in limited industrial use. In 2007 an extensive rehabilitation of the mill was begun. Today, the bulk of the building is vacant and awaiting new use although there are two industrial tenants on the lower level. Despite the loss of several modern detached buildings since 1980 and the redesign of the front driveway including the construction of a large retaining wall in 2009, the complex retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

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Narrative Description

Historically, the existence of this mill property has been intrinsically linked to the Sugar River which flows to the south of the building. A dam and mill pond have existed to the east of the mill since the 19th century. The mill was laid out between Sunapee Road and the river and owing to a curve in the road, both the northwest corner of the mill and the office are less than fifty feet from the road. Due to the topography of the site which descends down from the road to the river, much of the mill is set below the level of the road. The main vehicular entrance to the mill is a paved driveway that extends from Sunapee Street west of the mill, turning at the office in switchback fashion to descend to a lower unpaved parking area. In 2009 the original retaining wall and driveway (which previously ended at the office) were replaced by the current engineered wall of large "Redi-Rock" concrete blocks. A brick storage building was removed to make way for the new access.

The following description details the extant resources which are part of the former Dexter Richards & Sons Mill complex.

1. Main Mill Building, 1905. Contributing building.

Constructed in 1905 the Dexter Richards & Sons Woolen Mill is a large brick industrial structure with a distinctive five-story square corner tower rising from the front (west) corner of the mill, reminiscent of the bell tower of a Romanesque church. The mill's main entrance is located at the base of the tower and is fronted by a concrete walkway above a brick base with pipe metal rails. The base of the tower has walls that are battered slightly and the corners are emphasized by wide brick piers that project slightly. The segmental opening contains a recessed entrance consisting of three doors (one fixed), each of which has a large upper glass over two panels. Fixed transoms are located above each leaf and the opening is capped by a lintel consisting of four courses of header brick. Above the doorway, in each corner, are two slate roundels – inscribed "1848" and "1905". The dates refer to the date of the original mill on the site and the construction date of the present building. A hammered granite beltcourse wraps around the tower above the first floor, at the same level as the window lintels on the adjacent mill structure. Above the belt course the corner piers are supplemented by two more slender brick piers on each face that separate the narrow window openings on the upper levels and give rise to three round arched openings at the top of the tower. Contrasting with the red brick are granite accents including granite sills and two additional belt courses at the top of the tower. The three arches on each side have arched brick lintels and brick balusters with a granite top rail. Brick corbels topped by wooden brackets support the overhanging eaves of the tower's hip roof which is capped by a copper finial.

The bulk of the mill extends to the east of the tower and consists of a flat-roofed structure which rises three stories above a basement. Facing Sunapee Street, the north façade east of the tower consists of fifteen bays which are articulated by simple brick piers with posts at the top of each

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pier supporting the projecting roof eaves. The upper three stories of the façade have arched wooden windows fitted with triple sash consisting of a 5 x 3-light panel over a 5 x 2-light panel with a 5 x 2-light awning window above. The windows display rough-faced granite sills that extend the full width between the brick piers. Capping the windows are arched lintels consisting of three courses of header brick. On the lowest level of the façade, there are only eight windows, in the bays closest to the tower. These include three windows which are like those on the upper floors and a mix of other altered windows including single pane units with transoms.

The east elevation of the mill is ten bays wide and is also articulated by brick piers but has far fewer window openings. The north half of the elevation projects slightly from the south and is three stories tall; an interior staircase and loading areas account for the projection. The third bay from the north has a small arched opening on each floor containing a fixed glass pane above a granite sill. The fifth bay from the north has a set of metal double-doors set into an arched opening on each level. On the two upper floors the doors are blocked with boards; on the first floor the opening is filled with modern steel doors with upper glass panes. Small arched windows with fixed glass punctuate the narrow south projecting wall of the north half.

The south half of the east end has a loading bay with modern overhead door, sheltered by a modern metal covered shed roof on simple wooden posts. Above this, there are three rectangular former window openings on the second floor that were cut in sometime in the 20th century and have concrete sills. They were later filled with brick. Stepping down at the south end of the east elevation is a small flat-roofed bump-out on a concrete foundation. This small projection is the generator house and was rebuilt on the existing foundation in 1986. It has brick-faced concrete block walls. The east wall has a set of vertical board double doors with 3 x 2-windows and an adjacent door with 3 x 3-panes over a lower panel filled with diagonal boards. Inside, there is a 125 kw direct current synchronous generator and a 150 kw alternating current generator manufactured by General Electric in 1928. Sanborn insurance maps indicate that there were originally additional secondary buildings extending from the east half of the north elevation. These were the power house and buildings of the Newport Electric Light Company, but were removed between 1921 and 1928.

The south elevation, like the north, is punctuated by four levels of window openings set between brick piers. The west elevation of the main mill, like the east, is ordered by brick piers but has minimal window openings. A single-story loading dock is located below the tower and to the south of the tunnel connecting the office to the west with the mill. The various appendages extending to the west of the four-story main mill include some of the oldest sections of the building which date to the earlier 19th century mill and were retained when the new building was constructed in 1905. Just to the west of the tower is a three-story brick section which is topped by a parapet on its north façade and displays distinctive brick dentils. There is a door on upper level and various windows have been filled in over the years. Historic photographs and Sanborn insurance maps indicate that this building dates to the 19th century and originally contained a carpenter shop and pickers. Attached to the west wall of the picker building is a single-story, flat-roofed brick addition constructed between 1912 and 1921 for the dynamo and engines. The building is set on a concrete pad. There are two segmentally arched openings on the north elevation and four on the west side. Only two of the openings retain complete triple-hung

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windows on the façade with 4 x 2-light and 4 x 3-light sash. In two cases only the upper sash survives and the remainder has been filled with brick. Two of the openings have been completely bricked-in. Emerging from the roof is a radial brick chimney manufactured by the Alphons Custodis Chimney Company of New York.

Attached to the south of the dynamo of the building are the boiler room and dye house, both of which pre-date the construction of the present mill building in 1905. The two-story flat-roofed brick building facing the parking lot has a parapet end with a pointed arch opening that is filled with diagonal board double-doors that have been overlaid with horizontal boards. Two 3 x 2-light windows punctuate the wall above. A wooden bracketed cornice is visible on the south side. A single-story connector links the dye house to a flat-roofed fireproof storage building to the west, which has a concrete frame and curtain walls constructed of structural clay tile covered in concrete. Sanborn maps indicate that this addition was constructed between 1942 and 1964. About 1980 a Laidig steel silo for the storage of wood chips was erected adjacent to the store house. The silo still stands but is not in use; the four wood-burning boilers that were installed at the same time have all been removed.

Sanborn maps show that previously a spur line with a wooden bridge crossing the river and coal trestle entered the property at this location, next to a 1 ½-story carpenter/machine shop which is also no longer extant. A large (30' x 60') brick storehouse was also located to the west. It was razed in 2009 when the driveway with concrete block retaining wall was constructed.

Inside, the structural elements of the mill construction remain clearly visible in the main building. On the lower level there are chamfered posts. On the upper floors there are four rows of columns with cast iron connectors and bases resting on iron plates. Wooden beams remain intact and exposed on all stories. The wooden floors have been restored on all but the top floor. The wooden windows, carefully restored, retain the wheels and rod mechanism to open the series of transoms. Sliding steel fire doors are intact throughout the building. Historic wooden staircases with beadboard enclosures remain in the main stairtower and along the east wall. A wooden ladder with pipe metal railing extends from the top floor of the stairtower up to the roof hatch accessing the top of the tower. An elevator was added to the building in 1993.

2. Office, 1905. Contributing building.

Located between the main mill building and the road, the office is a brick building capped by a slate hip roof with eaves that flare slightly. There is decorative copper flashing at the ridge and the overhanging eaves have beadboard on the underside and decorative jigsawed rafters. From the road, the 45' x 30' building appears to be a single-story in height; an additional lower level on the south side is visible from the lower parking lot. A granite belt course wraps around the building below the windows on the main level while there is a projecting course of header brick above the windows. The main entry is centered on the north façade and is sheltered by a copper hip roof supported by two pairs of curved braces. Projecting out from either side of the front door there is a projecting brick wall with granite cap aligned with the adjacent beltcourse. The

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wide oak front door has an upper glass over a lower raised panel with corner blocks. It is set above a granite sill and fitted with an exterior wooden storm door. The doorway is topped by a flat arch brick lintel. The entrance is flanked on either side by a single arched window opening containing a double-hung wooden 6/2 window, topped by an arched brick lintel consisting of three rows of header brick. A historic postcard shows that originally the office windows were shaded by striped fabric awnings.

A secondary entrance is centered on the east elevation and consists of a similar but more narrow glass-and-wood panel door topped by a transom. There are three smaller arched 6/1 windows to the south with brick lintels and granite sills. The west elevation is two bays wide with 6/1 windows. The south (rear) elevation has five window openings on either level; those on the lower level are rectangular with 3/3 sash, flat arch brick lintels and granite sills.

The interior of the office retains varnished oak doors with five horizontal panels, simple molded door and window surrounds, chair rails and baseboards as well as a front counter with doors and drawers on the inner face. The plaster walls have uncased arched openings and there is a safe on both the main and lower level. The floors are covered with linoleum and there are simple ceiling fixtures. On the lower level, a brick tunnel (running underneath the front entrance concrete walkway – see #1) leads to the loading dock and main mill complex. The tunnel and the lower level spaces have ceilings constructed of brick arches between I-beams.

3. Dam, rebuilt 1948. Contributing structure.

Located to the east of the mill, this concrete hydroelectric dam was rebuilt in 1948 on the site of an earlier stone dam. Beside the concrete abutments, the stonework from the earlier 19th century dam is still visible. Large granite blocks are also evident on the adjacent spillway. The dam is about 80 feet long and 14 feet high with a 7-foot diameter, 123-foot long steel penstock. It includes a 4.8-acre impoundment which is about 1,002 feet long by 214 feet wide with an average depth of five feet. The dam began generating power commercially in 1986. It is operated as a run-of-river facility where outflows from the project equal inflows on an instantaneous basis and water levels are not drawn down for the purposes of generating power. The former wooden penstock was replaced with steel in 2008.

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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.

Criteria Considerations

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

- 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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Industry
Architecture

Period of Significance

1905-1950 (Criterion A)
1905 (Criterion C)

Significant Dates

1905

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Edward A. Buss (civil engineer)
George H. Cutting & Co. (contractors)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Dexter Richards and Sons Woolen Mill is locally significant under Criterion A, Industry, for its associations with one of Newport's largest and most successful industries and employers. Located on the Sugar River, the property reflects the evolution of a water-powered mill from the mid 19th century to the early 20th century. The present brick mill building was constructed in 1905 on the site of an earlier gable-roofed factory. The locally-prominent Richards family were associated with the factory from 1854 to 1926 and the present building incorporates small parts of the original mill. The company was one of the town's largest taxpayers and at its height, provided employment to over 200 workers. The Richards family was also instrumental in the establishment of the Newport Electric Company which operated on the site from the 1890s to the 1920s. The property's period of significance under Criterion A is 1905-1950. The first date corresponds to the present mill's original date of construction; the latter reflects the sale of the mill by the Gordon Woolen Mill, Inc. and the last time the entire mill was utilized for woolen production by one entity.

The complex is also significant locally under Criterion C, Architecture, as a well-preserved and distinctive example of industrial architecture of the early 20th century. The brick mill with its Romanesque-style tower and the accompanying office are of interest as the work of Boston civil engineer Edward Buss. The mill is also significant as the town's last surviving textile mill. Despite the loss of some accessory industrial buildings, the complex retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The period of significance under Criterion C is 1905, corresponding to the mill's date of construction.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Industry

The growth of Newport over the past two and a half centuries owes much to its industrial development. The story of the Dexter Richards and Sons Woolen Mill, one of Newport's largest industries, is an important reflection of changing times. The water power offered by the Sugar River sparked industrial activity as early as 1768. In 1820 mill owners from Claremont, Sunapee, and Newport united to form the Sunapee Dam Corporation and the construction of a dam at Sunapee to regulate the flow of the Sugar River, allowing the running of mill machinery downstream even during times of drought. In total over 120 water wheels ran along the course of the river. During the Civil War the textile products from local mills were in great demand. Over the years, Newport's textile mills provided a solid economic base for the local economy and in turn stimulated other types of manufacturing and progress. The Concord & Claremont Railroad, which had been built as far as Bradford in 1853 was finally extended through to

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Newport and Claremont in 1871-2, largely through the efforts of Newport business men. Mill owners such as Dexter Richards and Seth Richards were also instrumental in bringing advances to the community including Western Union Telegraph service and electricity.

A sawmill was originally constructed on this site in 1836 followed by the construction of a mill to produce flannel in 1848. In 1854 the Richards family purchased a partial interest, assuming full control in 1867. Of all the mills that operated on the Sugar River in Newport, none was as important as the Richards Mill. A 1900 observer described the Richards mill as follows: "One of most notable of these industries – notable alike from its long uninterrupted operation, the measure of its contribution to the prosperity of the community in which it is located, and the financial success with which it has been conducted, is the establishment in Newport, long familiarly known as the Richards Woolen mill".¹ The mill was known for its gray mixed flannels; their particular product was known as the "D.R.P." flannel, the trademark being the abbreviation of "Dexter Richards, Proprietor". Later ladies' suitings were added to the product line.² Many employees worked here thirty years or more.

Despite the fluctuations and depressions of the period, the Richards mill never ceased work in the 19th century except for the purpose of repair or enlargement. This was also the case when the historic mill was replaced in 1905 by a new, modern mill on the same site. Only minimal interruptions in production occurred as construction took place. The reconstruction of a new larger Richards mill on the site in 1905 reflects the prosperity of the mill and the optimism of the period. It is also an interesting example of an early 20th century public-partnership as the mill owners requested and received a ten-year tax exemption for their new building. By the 1920s family members had died and the mill was sold by the Richards family to the Gordon Woolen Mill.

This was also a period of changing trade conditions for New England's textile mills. Newport had other textile mills such as Brampton Woolen and Peerless Manufacturing (makers of ladies underwear) but in the 20th century textile manufacturing declined somewhat in importance to the local economy as a number of new industries including Newport Shoe and the W.H. McElwain Shoe Factory established themselves near the river and railroads. In a scenario repeated across the region, the Gordon Mill was no longer able to compete with southern mills after World War II and closed in 1950. Other smaller industries used the space in the years that followed but none compared to the prosperity of the Richards and Gordon Mills.

The Dexter Richards & Sons Woolen Mill is the last of several important 19th and early 20th century textile mills to survive in the town of Newport. The other large woolen mill, Dorr Woolen Co. in the Guild section of town closed in 2002 and was demolished in 2009. A mill was first built on that site for the manufacture of woolen cloth in 1867 and was known as the Granite State Mills, Granite State Woolen (1896-1899) and Fairbanks & Dorr (1899-1918). The complex was continually expanded over the years and lacked the architectural distinction of the Richards mill. The historic Brampton and Peerless mills are also no longer extant.

¹ H.H Metcalf. "A Prosperous Industry and Its Manager", *Granite Monthly*, vol. 28, May 1900: 309.

² Ibid.

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Architecture

Constructed in 1905, the Dexter Richards & Sons Mill is an excellent example of early 20th century brick mill architecture. It is notable for its Romanesque Revival-styled tower and office and was designed by Boston civil engineer Edward A. Buss.

The designer of the building, Edward A. Buss (1856-1918), was born in Peterborough, New Hampshire and moved to Boston when he was young. He graduated from the Boston English High School in 1872 and later studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he was a member of the Class of 1876 for two years. Buss established an office of his own as a consulting engineer at 85 Water Street in Boston in 1883. For many years he was the consulting engineer for the Great Falls Manufacturing Company in Somersworth and also did a large amount of work for the Harmony Mills in Cohoes, New York; the Hollingsworth & Whitney Company in Winslow, Maine; the Cranes Paper Mills of Pittsfield, Massachusetts; Dwinell and Wright Companies in Boston; the Boston Rubber Shoe Company in Melrose and Malden, Massachusetts; the Chicopee (Massachusetts) Water Works and other large companies.³ Edward Buss died at the Homeopathic Hospital in Boston in 1918 at the age of 62, following an operation.

It is not known exactly how Dexter Richards & Sons Company learned of Buss' work although Buss was well known for the construction of large manufacturing establishments. The president of the Richards Mill in 1904, Seth Richards, was no stranger to the work of accomplished architects. In 1897 Richards had hired Boston architect James T. Kelley to design his Colonial Revival residence at 58 North Main Street. According to the *Granite Monthly* of 1900, the Richards House was "one of the most elegant and costly homes in the state".⁴

Historical Background

Blessed with water power from the Sugar River, Newport's industrial history dates back to 1768 when Benjamin Giles established a corn and saw mill at what is now the Guild section of Newport. In 1812 William Cheney and James Walcott constructed a canal that furnished water power to four different sites near the present Canal Street including a tannery, carding machines and the Eagle Mills Flannel Mill.

The earliest known industrial activity on this site dates back to 1836 when Johnathan Cutting purchased 24 acres of land from James Walcott and constructed a sawmill. Cutting also manufactured bedsteads until the sawmill burned in 1847. After the fire, Perley Coffin and John

³ *Boston Society of Civil Engineers*, Vol. VII, No. 5, May 1920, p. 174.

⁴ H.H Metcalf. "A Prosperous Industry and Its Manager", *Granite Monthly*, vol. 28, May 1900: 311. The house was given to the Town of Newport in 1962 by Louise Richards Rollins and still serves at the Richards Free Library today. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.

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Puffer bought the mill site and twenty acres to the north and south from Cutting and constructed a four-story, gable-roofed building for the production of flannel. Typical of its period, the mill had an end cupola and gable dormers to let in light. Known as the Sugar River Mill, the complex employed nine men and six women at the time of the 1850 Industrial Census. It produced 90,000 yards of flannel that year, using water power from the Sugar River.

Soon after the construction of the mill John Puffer sold his interest to David Goodrich who sold it to Seth Richards and his sons Dexter and Abiathar in 1854. Seth Richards was a prominent local merchant. In 1860 the Sugar River Mill employed 24 and produced 190,000 yards of flannel.

In 1867 Dexter Richards bought Perley Coffin's interest in the mill and became the sole owner of the Sugar River Mill. He later took his son, Col. Seth M. Richards into partnership in 1872 under the name of Dexter Richards and Son. In 1894 youngest son, William F. Richards, was given an interest and the name of the business became Dexter Richards and Sons. Dexter Richards (1818-1898) was one of Newport's most prominent, accomplished and generous 19th century citizens. A self-made man with no advanced education, he became the wealthiest citizen of the town. He was a charter member of the Newport Savings Bank in 1868, served as president of First National Bank of Newport, was instrumental in bringing Western Union service to town in 1866 as well as the Concord & Claremont Railroad in 1871. In terms of politics Dexter Richards served as town clerk, selectman, town treasurer, represented the town in the General Court, was a delegate to the National Republican Convention in 1872, was a trustee of the New Hampshire Asylum for the Insane and the Orphan's Home, he was a member of the Executive Council in 1871-2, a delegate for revising the State Constitution in 1876 and was mentioned as a candidate for governor. He erected a number of important buildings in town including the Cheney Block, the Richards Block, and the Richards Free Library.

In the years that followed production at the mill continued to grow under Dexter Richards' leadership. In 1870 the mill employed 28 men, 22 women and 8 children. It utilized 150,000 lbs of wool and 100,000 lbs. of cotton, 500 cords of wood. There were 7 carding machines, 2,600 spindles, and 34 looms. Production stood at 600,000 yards of flannel and there was an 88 horse power water wheel. The Concord & Claremont Railroad was extended from Bradford to Claremont in 1871-2, greatly aiding the movement of raw materials and finished products. In 1878 the Sugar River Mills employed 85 operatives working an 11-hour day. The mill produced 900,000 yards of gray twilled flannels annually.⁵ In 1896 the mill employed 100 workers producing 1.2 million yards of flannel. Many of the workers had been employed by the mill for thirty or forty years. Operatives included native Americans, Irish, French Canadians and Finlanders.⁶

⁵ Edmund Wheeler, *History of Newport, NH from 1766 to 1878*, p. 92.

⁶ H.H. Metcalf, "A Prosperous Industry", May 1900, p. 313.

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The Richards Mill was also heavily involved in early electricity in Newport. On May 27, 1892 the Newport Electric Light Company was incorporated with Seth Richards as president and William Richards as treasurer (both were sons of Dexter Richards). The first generator of electricity in the town was run by water power and was located at the east end of the Richards Mill. The first test of street lighting occurred on June 3, 1892 and soon thereafter factories, churches, business and fraternal organizations were hooked up; by 1900 some homes had been electrified. A coal-fired steam plant was built near the Richards Mill prior to January 1902 to generate additional electricity.⁷

In 1904 Dexter Richards & Sons Company announced plans to build a new brick mill on the site of the former mill. The project was overseen by Seth Mason Richards (1850-1910), son of Dexter Richards. Like his father, Col. Richards was prominent in state politics, serving as a state representative and senator for Newport as well as a member of the Governor's Council. As described in a local newspaper, "The old mill has passed its usefulness, and a demand for a larger, more substantial and more modern structure is created. The proposed new building is to be built of brick upon the site of the present mill and extending further north. It is to be an up-to-date mill in every particular, and will not only be a great improvement to the Richards plant from a manufacturer's standpoint, but will be a handsome structure to look upon...The manufacturing will not be interrupted by the change, as the old mill is to be torn down only as fast as is necessary for the building of the new, and as fast as the new mill is completed, the machinery will be put in operation therein".⁸ The older mill was a 100' x 30' building; the new structure was to be three stories above a basement and measure 142' x 116'. Construction of the new building was dependent on favorable results at a special town meeting held in April which would exempt the company from taxation on their new mill above \$25,000 for ten years. Once this vote was secured, construction rushed forward with a work force between 55 and 120.

The new mill was designed by Edward A. Buss, a Boston civil engineer. An industry publication offers additional information about the design of the building which was to be entirely new with the exception of the dye and boiler houses which were to remain for the time being. "The new mill will be built of brick, fitted with all modern improvements, electric lights, steam heat and sprinkler system, with many large windows for light, the two upper stories being driven by motors; the others by water. They will add six sets of Davis & Furber cards, 48 x 48, and 12 pin Davis & Furber mules, 240 spindles, making a 17-set mill, and when completed will increase their production 40 per cent as well as materially improve the quality of their output."⁹ In March the George H. Cutting & Co. of Milford and Worcester, Massachusetts was awarded the contract to build the new building which was estimated to cost \$80,000.¹⁰

⁷ Newport Historical Society. *Mill Town Messenger*, Vol. 9, Issue 1, January 2015. In 1924 the Newport Electric Light Co. was incorporated into the New Hampshire Power Co., and in 1936 this was purchased by the Public Service Company of New Hampshire.

⁸ *Republican Champion*, Dec. 8, 1904.

⁹ *American Wool and Cotton Reporter*, Vol. XIX, No. 3, January 19, 1905, p. 17.

¹⁰ *American Machinist*, March 30, 1905, p. 437.

Dexter Richards & Sons Woolen Mill
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Sullivan County, NH
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By the end of July 1905 the brick work on the new main building was half completed and the work of razing the old mill was expected to begin by mid-August. Work on the new 45' x 30' office was also about to start. A new boiler was being installed in a pre-existing boiler house and would augment the existing power by about 200 horse power.¹¹ The ornamental copper cap was placed atop the mill tower in September.¹²

In the years that followed, Dexter Richards and Sons Company was consistently one of the highest taxpayers in town. After the untimely death of Seth Richards in 1910 the company was led by various family members including D. Sidney Rollins, who had married Seth's daughter Louise in 1909. Seth Richards' widow, Lizzie Richards, also appears to have played an active role in the company. In a 1919 letter, Rollins reported the nationalities then employed at the mill to Mrs. Richards. The list notes that there were 92 Americans, 12 Irish ("all born on this side except one"), 44 Finns, 48 French (French Canadians?), 18 Polish, 10 Greeks, 3 Italians, 3 Austrians and 1 German. Of these approximately 75 were not naturalized.¹³

Mrs. Lizzie Richards died in 1926 and that year Richards and Sons, Inc. dissolved. Harry W. Brown and associates bought the industry and changed the name to the Gordon Woolen Mill. That company also operated the Homestead Woolen Mill in West Swanzey, New Hampshire and the Dartmouth Woolen Mill in Claremont.¹⁴ In 1931 the mill was operating two shifts with 275 persons employed.¹⁵ During World War II the mill received several government orders for wool linings for army clothing.¹⁶ The mill dam was reconstructed in 1948 and the following year employment stood at 235. In October 1949 sporadic openings and closings began to occur with a three-day work week. Soon employment was down to 112. In January 1950 the directors of the Gordon Woolen Mill, Inc. voted to sell the mill.¹⁷

In May 1950 the mill property was purchased at auction by Abe Caplan who paid approximately \$53,000. Caplan owned a dusting mill in Enfield where old or discarded woolen fibers were reclaimed to be used in the manufacture of a lower grade of cloth. Caplan used only a portion of the former Gordon Woolen building with two floors to be rented out to other industries needing space.¹⁸ In July 1950 Caplan announced that he was moving his operations from Enfield to Newport.¹⁹

¹¹ *Republican Champion*, July 27, 1905, p. 4.

¹² *NH Argus and Spectator*, September 15, 1905.

¹³ Parker, "A Study of Newport's Waterpowered Mills", 1995, p.37.

¹⁴ *Argus Champion*, January 13, 1950.

¹⁵ *Argus*, August 13, 1931.

¹⁶ *Argus*, Oct. 22, 1941.

¹⁷ *Argus Champion*, January 13, 1950.

¹⁸ *Argus Champion*, May 12, 1950.

¹⁹ *Argus Champion*, July 18, 1950.

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Below the mill the course of the river was moved east to make way for a parking area for workers. The historic Walcott-Cheney canal built in 1812 was largely filled in to provide an entrance road to the parking lot from Canal and Cross Streets.²⁰ From 1957 to 1961 Sportwelt Shoe Co., who specialized in government footwear, leased space from Caplan and employed 250 workers. Three phase power was installed in 1957.²¹ In 1975 Erwin Caplan, son of Abe Caplan (1884-1972), contacted the Water Resources Board for approval to again change the course of the river in order to expand the parking lot.²²

The mill was purchased by William Ruger, Jr. in 1980. In 1981 a 30' x 60' concrete block garage and a 60' x 100' steel storage building were demolished. A wood-burning energy plant was installed including the erection of a metal storage silo and four boilers. In 1983 the dam was repaired in order to provide hydroelectric power. In 1986 Ruger purchased the adjacent commercial building at 199 Sunapee Street adjacent to the dam. Energy was first sold commercially in 1986. An elevator was added inside the main mill in 1993. For many years space in the mill was rented to light manufacturing concerns making products including combat boots, miniature light bulbs, etc. In 2007 Ruger began rehabilitating the mill at a cost of more than \$5 million. Part of the mill stored his extensive vintage car collection including Rolls Royces, a Duesenberg and two 1920s fire trucks. In 2009 the third floor was the site of an art exhibit entitled "H₂O: Film on Water". Also in 2009, a new "Redi Rock" retaining wall was built at the front driveway and a brick storage building adjacent to the driveway was removed. Today the upper floors of the mill remain vacant; a machine shop and sheet metal business rent space on the lower level. The property was purchased by 169 Sunapee Street LLC in August 2016.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

American Machinist, March 30, 1905, p. 437.

American Wool & Cotton Reporter, Vol. XIX, No. 2, Jan. 19, 1905.

Argus Champion, various dates.

²⁰ Richard D. Parker. "A Study of Newport's Waterpowered Mills", 1995, p. 28. A small portion of stonework from the canal is reportedly visible at the western dam.

²¹ *Argus Champion*, January 31, 1957.

²² *Ibid.*

Dexter Richards & Sons Woolen Mill
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Boston Society of Civil Engineers, Vol. VII, No. 5, May 1920 [Memoir of Edward Buss]

Christie, Sharon. "Newport Benefactors 1761-1996", 1996. [Richards Free Library, Newport]

Dorr, George A., Jr. "History of Dorr Woolen Co.", c.1995. [Richards Free Library, Newport]

Mausolf, Lisa. National Register Nomination for Richards Free Library (Seth Mason Richards House), Newport, NH, 1984.

Metcalf, H.H. "A Prosperous Industry, and Its Manager", *Granite Monthly*, May 1900 [Dexter Richards & Sons Woolen Mill]

Metcalf, H.H. "Newport: A Model New England Town", *Granite Monthly*, Jan. 1896.

New Hampshire Argus and Spectator, Newport, NH, various dates.

"Newport Anniversary", *Granite Monthly*, 1911.

Newport Directories, various dates.

"Newport Today", *Granite Monthly*, August 1907.

Parker, Richard D. "A Study of Newport's Waterpowered Mills", 1995. [Richards Free Library, Newport]

Republican Champion, Newport, NH, various dates.

Sanborn Insurance Maps, Newport, NH, 1884, 1889, 1894, 1899, 1904, 1905, 1912, 1921, 1928, 1942, 1964.

Sullivan County Registry of Deeds, Newport, NH.

Technology Review, Vol.. XX, 1918 [obituary of Edward Buss].

Tolles, Bryant F. Jr. and Carolyn K. Tolles. *New Hampshire Architecture: An Illustrated Guide*. Hanover, NH: University Press, 1979.

Town of Newport, Assessors and Building Department Records.

Wheeler, Edmund. *History of Newport, NH, from 1766 to 1878*. Concord: Republican Press, 1879.

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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

Acreeage of Property approximately 3 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude:

Longitude:

Dexter Richards & Sons Woolen Mill
Name of Property

Sullivan County, NH
County and State

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or
UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 18 | Easting: 729800 | Northing: 4805370 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

The nominated property, indicated on the attached sketch map, is a portion of Tax Map 112, Parcel 32 in the local assessor's records. It reflects the historic boundary of the Dexter Richards & Sons Mill and dam property prior to the merger of all of the lots owned by William Ruger, Jr. that occurred in 1996.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary has been drawn to include the surviving elements of the 1905 mill complex. The nominated property excludes the 44 foot long, 10 foot high concrete dam to the west of the mill near Canal Street which was built c.2000 as part of a new hydroelectric project and also excludes the commercial building to the north (199 Sunapee Street) which was constructed c.1970. In the late 20th century this property was in separate ownership from the mill and the present building was never associated with the mill. (It was purchased by the former owner of the mill, William Ruger, Jr., in 1986).

Dexter Richards & Sons Woolen Mill
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Lisa Mausolf, Preservation Consultant
organization: _____
street & number: 6 Field Pond Drive
city or town: Reading state: MA zip code: 01867
e-mail lmausolf@att.net
telephone: 781-944-5958
date: September 2016

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to

Dexter Richards & Sons Woolen Mill

Sullivan County, NH

Name of Property

County and State

the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Dexter Richards & Sons Woolen Mill

City or Vicinity: Newport

County: Sullivan State: NH

Photographer: Lisa Mausolf

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- Photo 1 Looking east at mill complex from main driveway (August 2016)
- Photo 2 Looking south at mill complex from Sunapee Street (September 2016)
- Photo 3 View looking southeast at tower with main entrance to mill at base of tower (August 2016)
- Photo 4 View looking east toward appendages on south side of mill and c. 1980 metal silo (August 2016)
- Photo 5 View looking northeast on first floor of mill (August 2016)
- Photo 6 View looking southwest on first floor of mill toward front entrance. Note surviving metal fire doors and original windows with transom-opening mechanism (August 2016)
- Photo 7 View looking south at front staircase (August 2016)
- Photo 8 View looking east at office with mill tower rising behind (August 2016)
- Photo 9 Interior of office, looking northwest toward main entrance (August 2016)
- Photo 10 View looking east at dam (September 2016).

Dexter Richards & Sons Woolen Mill
Name of Property

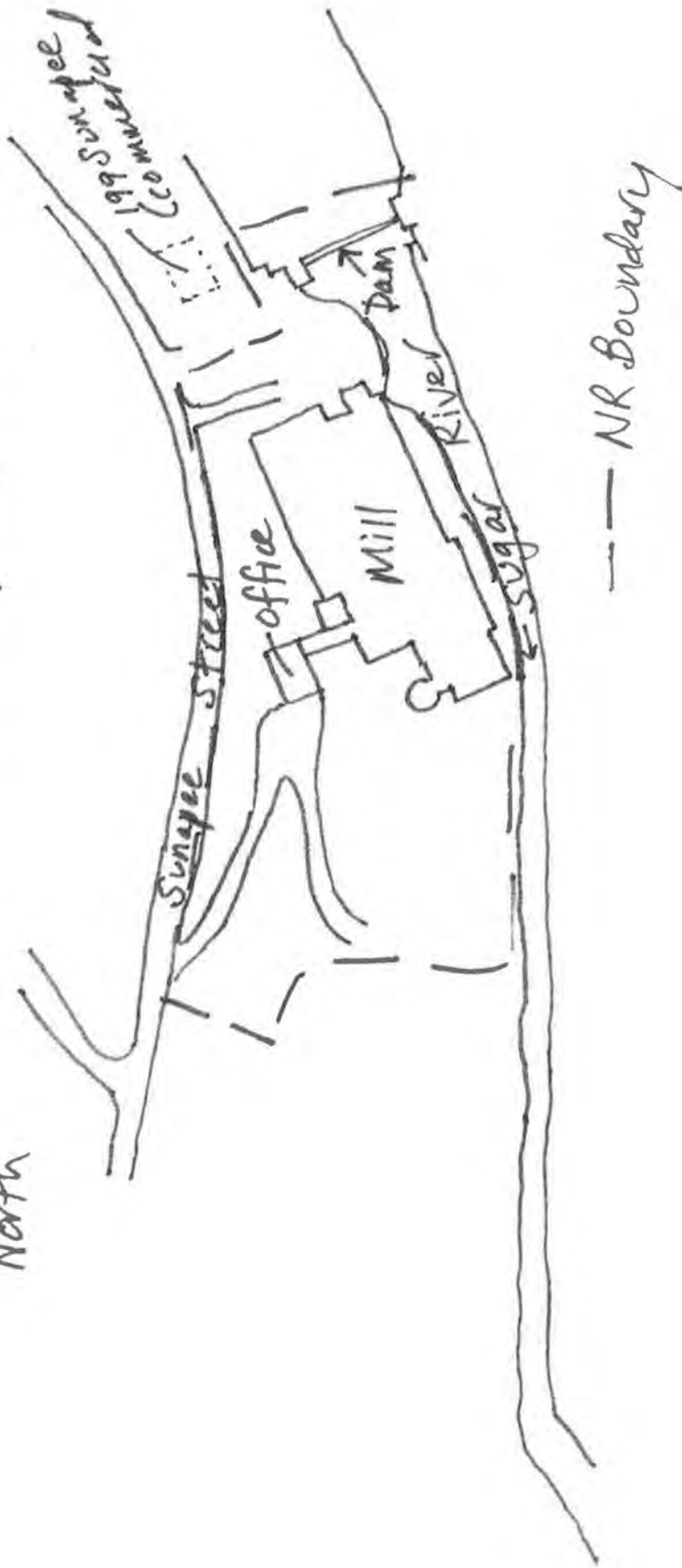
Sullivan County, NH
County and State

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 100 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.

Dexter Richards + Sons Wooten Mill
169 Sunapee St. Newport
Sullivan Co., NH

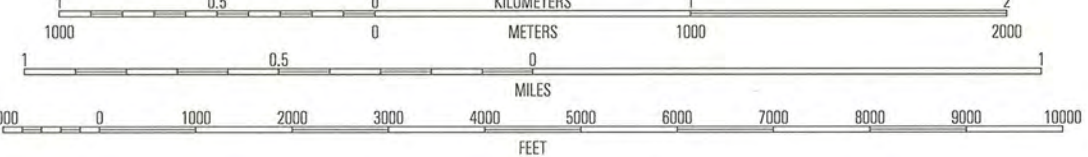
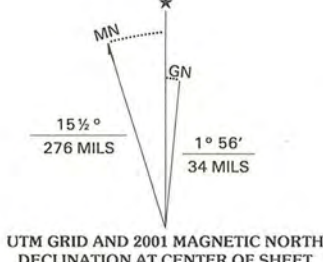
↑
North



Dexler Richards + Sons Woolen Mill
Newport, Sullivan Co., NH
Z18 E 729800 N4805370



Produced by the United States Geological Survey
Topography compiled 1998. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1996 and other sources. Survey control current as of 1980. Boundaries current as of 2001.
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and 1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 18. 10 000-foot ticks: New Hampshire Coordinate System of 1983 North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software.
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map.
Houses of worship, schools, and other labeled buildings verified 1980.



CONTOUR INTERVAL 6 METERS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
TO CONVERT FROM METERS TO FEET, MULTIPLY BY 3.2808



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
	State Route

1	2	3	1 Claremont North
			2 Grantham
			3 Sunapee Lake North
			4 Claremont South
			5 Sunapee Lake South
			6 Alstead
			7 East Lempster
			8 Washington

NEWPORT, NH
1998
NIMA 6570 1 SW-SERIES V812

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST







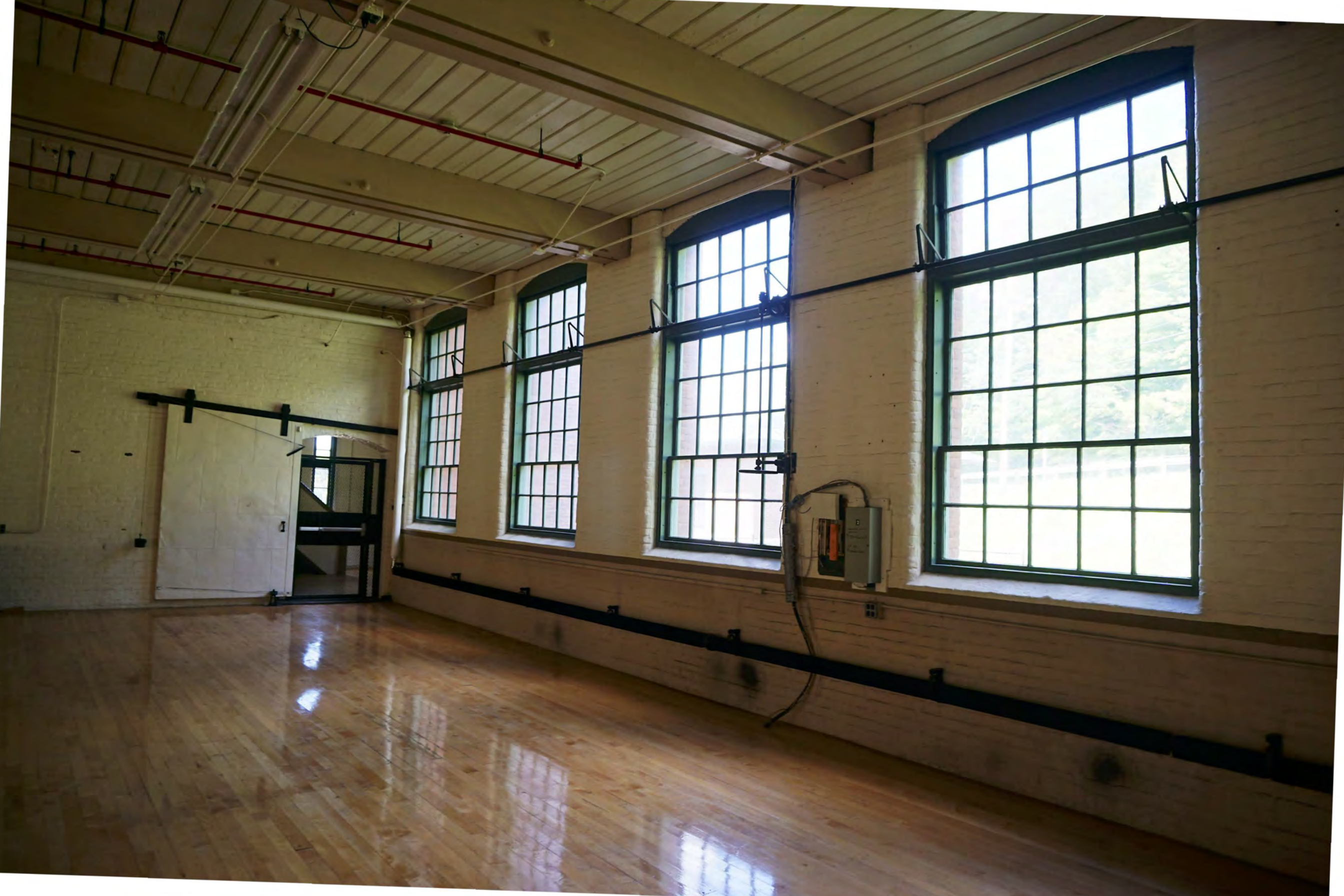


1848

1905















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 12/2/2016 Date of Pending List: 12/27/2016 Date of 16th Day: 1/11/2017 Date of 45th Day: 1/17/2017 Date of Weekly List: 1/25/2017

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 1/17/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Edson Beall Discipline Historian

Telephone _____ Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



NEW HAMPSHIRE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

MEMORANDUM

To: Lisa Deline
From: Peter Michaud
Subject: National Register Nomination
Date: November 17, 2016

Dear Lisa,

Enclosed is the NRN for the Dexter Richards & Sons Woolen Mill in Newport, NH.

Peter Michaud
National Register, Preservation Tax Incentives,
& Easements Coordinator
19 Pillsbury Street
Concord, NH 03301
(603) 271 3583 fax (603) 271 3433
Peter.michaud@dcr.nh.gov