

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received OCT 30 1985

date entered

~~APR 15 1986~~  
DEC 12 1985

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

1. Name

historic Hillsborough Hosiery Mills

and/or common CONTOOCOOK MILLS INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT (preferred)

2. Location

street & number Mill Street N/A not for publication

city, town Hillsboro, N/A vicinity of

state New Hampshire code 33 county Hillsborough code 011

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Paul and Leslie Belliveau

street & number Mill Street Extension

city, town Hillsboro, N/A vicinity of state New Hampshire 03244

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hillsborough County Courthouse

Hillsborough County Registry of Deeds

street & number 19 Temple Street

city, town Nashua, state New Hampshire 03060

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

New England: An Inventory of Historic Engineering  
title and Industrial Sites the has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

Historic Engineering Record

date 1974  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service, US Department of Interior

city, town Washington, state DC 20240

## 7. Description

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

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Contoocook Mills Industrial District, herein nominated, is a distinct and visual entity. The property is bounded on the south by sloping woodland, on the east by an open area used for parking, on the north by the Contoocook River, and on the west by Bridge Street. The foundations of the main buildings no longer standing, are integral with the granite and brick retaining walls which define the river's southern bank. At the western end of the property, at the intersection of Bridge Street, Mill Street, and the Contoocook River, stands a large millstone, approximately four feet in diameter and set on a concrete base, which bears a bronze plaque with the following inscription:

"On this site:  
1806 George Little  
Wool Carding  
1828 Joshua Marcy  
Cotton Wadding and Batting  
1865 John Butler Smith  
Woolen Underwear  
1843 Dwight S. Williams  
Woolen Hosiery and Underwear  
Hillsboro Hosiery Mills"

#1 Main Mill (Frameworks) This building, one of two "main mills" or large manufacturing structures, stands directly adjacent to the above plaque on the north side of Mill Street, and was built in 1865.<sup>1</sup> The foundation of this building is river bedrock and granite walls reinforced in some places with concrete. This building is a product of two construction methods, reflecting the age of each. The taller structure measures 50'x60' with four full floors, a loft under the hipped roof, and a granite basement area which housed an old turbine. The building was begun in 1865 using post and beam construction. The first two floors feature massive hand hewn timbers with some measuring 18"x18". The floors above have lighter saw cut members, and the slate roof is a partial hip which is supported by wood trusses independent of a second set which support the fourth floor, thereby producing a clear span on the third floor. The floors are hardwood which has become saturated with grease from carding machinery over the years. Attached to this structure on the west elevation is a 40'x70' three story flat roof building. Originally separate, but now joined by a triangular addition, these two buildings appear to have been constructed independently of one another at different times. The construction of the second is also post and beam but seems to be of work indicating later construction. This building has many more windows and two unusual skylights in the roof which provides a very pleasing interior with an abundance of natural light. Incorporated in the southwest corner of the building is the stair tower, rising twenty feet above the flat roof and measuring fifteen feet square. Under the tower roof is a 10'x10' belfry which has identical arched openings on all four sides. In an 1884 map the main mill is shown as two attached buildings with a tower in the southeast corner and a flat roof where the hipped slate roof would later be added.<sup>2</sup> The main mill has an exterior sheathing of pine clapboards and a plain trim with 6/6 double hung windows.

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#2 Office Building The brick office building c. 1865 is 25'x53' set on a granite foundation.<sup>3</sup> There are two full floors with a crawl space under the building. The roof is slightly hipped, but gives the illusion of being flat. The 1884 map shows a clerestory in the roof which no longer exists. Under the roof is some nice corbeling, and the window openings have corbeled arches with plain wood trim and sills. The windows are wood double hung 6/6 with second floor window locations duplicating the first floor but with slightly shorter windows. The building's straight forward appearance seems to communicate its function as office.

#3 Picker House The brick picker house was begun in 1845 with a granite lintel dated 1846 in its south gable end.<sup>4</sup> The granite basement still houses one of the three turbines which was powered by water from the Contoocook. This building measures 40'x60' and features 40' long beams cut at a saw mill across the river. The construction is post and beam with some older interior posts which are round with decorative bases. The floors are pine with some hardwood on the first floor. The roof is a gable with asphalt shingles and dormers on the east pitch and one large shed roof dormer on the west side. Originally it was slate with several flat skylights. The gable ends meet a softly corbeled brick which is one of the buildings most pleasing details. Window openings have cut granite sills and lintels with wood double hung windows 6/6. The picker house was originally a grist mill. On the 1884 map it is listed as Denison Bros. Grist Mill Flour and Grain.<sup>5</sup> It also appears that the north side of the building served as a boiler house with a brick wall separating one third of the building from the rest and a chimney rising next to the wall. This building is one of the fine dated examples in northern New England.

#4 Boiler House The brick boiler house, dated 1888 on the brick stack, rests on river bedrock which forms its north foundation wall. The building is 30'x40' with a slate gable roof, and a square brick stack that rises 75' and is topped with a spectacular corbel which is also repeated at the gable ends and eaves. Window openings have corbelled arches with granite sills and wood double hung 6/6 windows. The floor of the building is concrete slab, and the original coal fired boilers have decorative cast iron doors marked "Hodge Boiler Works, East Boston, Massachusetts".

#5 Dye House The wood dye house c. 1865 is post and beam construction with mortise and tenon joints.<sup>6</sup> The barn like building measures 40'x52' and is 42' high at the ridge pole. The building has two full floors and a loft. The foundation is brick and granite, and the first floor is dirt, concrete, and in some places pine planking. The dye vats used to be in this space. The second floor used to house a large dryer which is now displayed at the Merrimack Valley Textile Museum in North

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Andover, Massachusetts. The gable roof has asphalt shingles. The exterior of the building is pine clapboard with plain wood trim and 6/6 double hung windows.

Buildings #1-5 are all located on the north side of Mill Street and were placed on the National Historic Register in 1975. Now we move to the south side of Mill Street to five mill buildings which were occupied by Millstone Spinners Inc. Until September 1984 Millstone Spinner had been spinning acrylic yarn. The buildings are now empty and awaiting new tenants.

#6 Small Storehouse One of two storehouses, this building is the smaller of the two. It measures 25'x50', is of post and beam construction and has two floors. Its posts sit on granite blocks, and the first floor is about one foot above ground as it has no foundation. The storehouse has only four windows; two on the second floor and one at each gable end. The roof is slate. The north side of the building, which is on Mill Street, has four large loading doors on the first floor and one central loading door on the second floor. The south side of the building has no doors or windows. The sheathing is pine boards, and the windows are 6/6 wood and double hung.

#7 Large Storehouse This second storehouse measures 51'x80' and has three full floors and a loft area. The construction is post and beam with the posts sitting on granite as there is no foundation, and the first floor is dirt or concrete slab. There are several large loading doors on all floors and more windows allowing more light in this building. The large gable roof is slate. The sheathing is pine boards, and windows are 6/6 wood double hung. The 1884 map does not show these two storehouses (#6-7), but local recollection says they were built before 1900.

#8 Marcy Mill The Marcy Mill was completed in 1828.<sup>7</sup> This mill building has three full floors and a granite basement through which the raceway passed. It measures 40'x48' and is post and beam construction with some impressive beams in the basement. This mill was one of three early textile mills in N.H. to use joisted floor construction (the others dated 1823 and 1832), and the only wooden mill in the state today to evidence this construction technique.<sup>8</sup> On the first floor the walls are plaster on wood lath with decorative window frames. The two floors above have plaster walls and all the floors are pine board. The gable roof is corrugated metal which went over asphalt shingles only a few years ago. The exterior is pine clapboard, and the windows are wood double hung 12/12. This mill is truly one of the state's classics.

#9 Garage Behind the mills to the south is a four stall garage which appears to have been erected in two separate stages. The two stalls

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on the east end measure 15'x25' and are slightly heavier construction. The two stalls to the west measure 12'x33' and appear to have been added after the other two. It has pine clapboard sheathing over the wood frame, an asphalt shingle shed roof, and four large solid doors. Since the garage does not appear until a 1943 Hillsboro Hosiery map it appears to have been built much later and in the twentieth century making it less significant than the mills themselves.

#10 Albion Mill The Albion Mill appears to have been built c. 1870 as were John Butler Smith's other mills.<sup>9</sup> Today the building measures 40'x96' with a two story shed on the south elevation which measures 18'x96'. At the west elevation is a five story stair tower measuring 10'x10'5" which exits directly onto Bridge Street from the third floor. The first floor is below Bridge Street as Mill Street slopes down to the east elevation where there is direct access to the granite and brick basement which houses the third turbine. At the east end the basement has a door and many 6/6 double hung windows. The basement floor and the floor above have large floors due to the shed on the elevation. These two floors measure 58'x96'. The wood frame building is post and beam with the five story west elevation on Bridge Street appearing to have been constructed first. This 40'x48' section has an asphalt roof with a clerestory which provides an unusual fifth floor. The second section to the east is also 40'x48' with four stories, post and beam construction, and a flat tin roof. The exterior sheathing is pine clapboard with many 6/6 double hung windows which provide pleasant natural light. Two appendages were added to the building much later. In the 1950's the office on the third floor at the Bridge Street level was constructed, and in the 1970's a two story loading tower was constructed on the Mill Street elevation to expedite moving materials brought by truck.

The balance of the property consists of unpaved parking.

Note: There are nine contributing buildings and one noncontributing building.

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- 1 G. Waldo Browne, History of Hillsborough, New Hampshire 1735-1921; Volume 1, History and Description. (Manchester, New Hampshire; John B. Clark Co., Printers, 1921), p.17.
- 2 Ibid., 55-56.
- 3 Ibid., 474.
- 4 Ibid., 377.
- 5 Ibid., 377-378.
- 6 Ibid., 378.
- 7 Ibid., 378.
- 8 Ibid., 379.
- 9 Ibid., 379.
- 10 Ibid., 379.
- 11 Ibid., 379.
- 12 Ibid., 379.
- 13 Ibid., 380.
- 14 Ibid., 380.
- 15 Document found in building.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1828, 1865, 1888, 1972 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Contoocook Mills Industrial District was started in 1828 when Joshua Marcy built one of the first cotton mills in New England. John Butler Smith continued the development of the present complex and also went on to become governor of N.H. The Contoocook Mills are a unique group of buildings and are significant in the areas of architecture, commerce, and industry.

**Architecture:** The architectural diversity of the Contoocook Mills Industrial District has always been one of its principle attractions. The unaltered brick chimney dated 1888, the brick picker building with its granite lintel dated 1846, the old Marcy mill, and the beautiful slate roofs are just not seen in today's architecture. In the picker house the beams are 40' long, and beams on the first floor of the main mill measure 18"x18". The truss systems devised through the years to carry heavier loads of machinery are truly ingenious. In every building one finds beautiful details that served a function as well. The three brick mills have decorative corbeling which compliments the roof lines. Today the buildings are in good condition and are still an integral part of Hillsborough.

**Commerce:** Colonel John Hill and Gershom Keyes, both Boston traders, were the founders of Hillsborough, having been granted rights by a Massachusetts court on January 16, 1735.<sup>1</sup> The first settlement in 1738 occurred in the area of the falls<sup>2</sup> (and where the Contoocook Mills were later to be built). As early as 1769 a sawmill and grist mill were operating in the area.<sup>3</sup>

In 1805 Rev. William Sleigh smuggled carding machinery out of England to N.H.<sup>4</sup> He operated the machinery with horsepower in Deering, NH until 1806 when George Little of Hillsborough purchased it.<sup>5</sup> George Little brought the machinery to a small building on the site where the grist mill (now the picker house) was subsequently built.<sup>6</sup> The carding machines were run there by a small breast wheel fed through a canal which had been dug on the south side of the river in June 1805.<sup>7</sup>

The direct antecedent to the present mill complex was the Marcy mill (#8) which was built on the south bank of the Contoocook River just below the falls. Joshua Marcy began operating in the autumn of 1828 and produced cotton yarn, wadding and batting.<sup>8</sup> Later this mill produced candlewicking and the first twine ever made.<sup>9</sup> According to contemporary records, by 1841 Bridge Village (as this area of Hillsborough was called) had two cotton factories, two grist mills, and two sawmills.<sup>9</sup> In 1845-1846 Marcy acquired a sawmill and built a brick grist mill, which was noted at the time as the best mill of

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Browne, G. Waldo, History of Hillsborough, NH 1735-1921; Vol.1 History, Published by the town, Manchester, NH; John B. Clark Co., Printers, 1921.  
 Chermayett, Ivan and Er Witt, Elliot, Observations on American Architecture, New York; The Viking Press, 1972. Zimiles, Martha and Murray, Early American Mills, New York; Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1973

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3.9 acres

Quadrangle name Hillsboro, NH

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

### UTM References

A 

1	9	2	6	4	5	5	0	4	7	7	7	2	5	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** The nominated property is parcels 30,31,33 of the Town of Hillsborough Assessor's map #26. It borders on the north by the Contoocook River, on the east by a parking area, on the south by sloping woodland and on the west by Bridge St. Boundaries of the nominated property have been highlighted in yellow on the attached sketch map. Boundaries of the nominated property encompass all the area historically associated with the mill buildings.

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

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

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

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Leslie F. Belliveau

organization Bean Mountain Corp.

date June 12, 1985

street & number Mill Street

telephone (603) 464-3686

city or town Hillsboro,

state New Hampshire 03244

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title New Hampshire State Historic Preservation Officer

date 10/27/85

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

Patrick Andrews

date 12-12-85

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Patrick Andrews

date 12-12-85

Chief of Registration

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its kind in the state.<sup>10</sup> Although the grist mill would later become the present picker house, it remained a grist mill until 1884.<sup>11</sup> Joshua Marcy died in 1848; his heirs continued his business, successfully.<sup>12</sup>

Industrial: John Butler Smith (Republican governor of New Hampshire 1893-1895) bought out the Marcy heirs in 1865. Shortly thereafter he built the wooden main mills, the brick office building, the wooden dye house, and repaired the two "Marcy mills".<sup>13</sup> As the "Smith Mills" the enterprise was a successful manufacturer of woolen goods. In 1882 Smith incorporated his business as the Contoocook Mills Corporation,<sup>14</sup> which it remained until 1943 when it was purchased by the Williams family. Smith continued the complex and added the brick boiler house in 1888 and two large storage barns. A four stall structure was added in the early 1900's and served as a blacksmith shop and later as a garage.

Employing a major portion of the town's population, for decades the Contoocook Mills produced woolen underwear. The US War Department, Washington D.C., in recognition of the mills services to the World War I effort awarded a certificate of merit in November 1919.<sup>15</sup> The Williams family ran the complex as the Hillsboro Hosiery Mills and manufactured both woolen underwear and hosiery in 1943. In the early 1960's the buildings on the north side of Mill Street ceased making hosiery and were sold for demolition. Hillsborough's Historical Society became involved, and those mill buildings were purchased by Paul and Leslie Belliveau from Boston. The Belliveaus began rehabilitation of the buildings in 1972. Today the main mill is occupied by Frameworks Inc. which manufactures miniature lighting for GTE and employs almost two hundred people. The picker house and office building contain apartments. These five buildings on the north side of Mill Street were placed on the National Historic Register in 1975. On the south side of Mill Street Duane Williams continued to operate Hillsboro Hosiery under the name of Millstone Spinners Inc. His business continued to spin acrylic yarn until September 1984 when Duane Williams elected to retire and sell his mills to Paul Belliveau.

In all these areas: historical, architectural, commercial, and industrial, we believe the Contoocook Mills are significant. The Contoocook Mills Industrial Complex is an outstanding group of buildings, remarkably well preserved, and certainly worthy of National Register status.

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- 1 G. Waldo Browne, History of Hillsborough, New Hampshire 1735-1921; Volume 1, History and Description (Manchester, New Hampshire: John B. Clark co., Printers, 1921 p. 380.
- 2 "Map of Hillsborough Bridge, New Hampshire" (Brockton, Massachusetts; Norris and Wellge Publishers, 1884). Map on file in office of Donald E. Knapton, Town Clerk, Hillsborough, New Hampshire.
- 3 Browne, op.cit., 380.
- 4 Ibid., 379.
- 5 Map, op.cit.
- 6 Browne, op.cit., 380.
- 7 Ibid., 379.
- 8 Candee, Richard, "Report on the Hillsboro Historic Area". (Report for Hillsboro Historical Society, 1972).
- 9 Browne, op.cit., 380.

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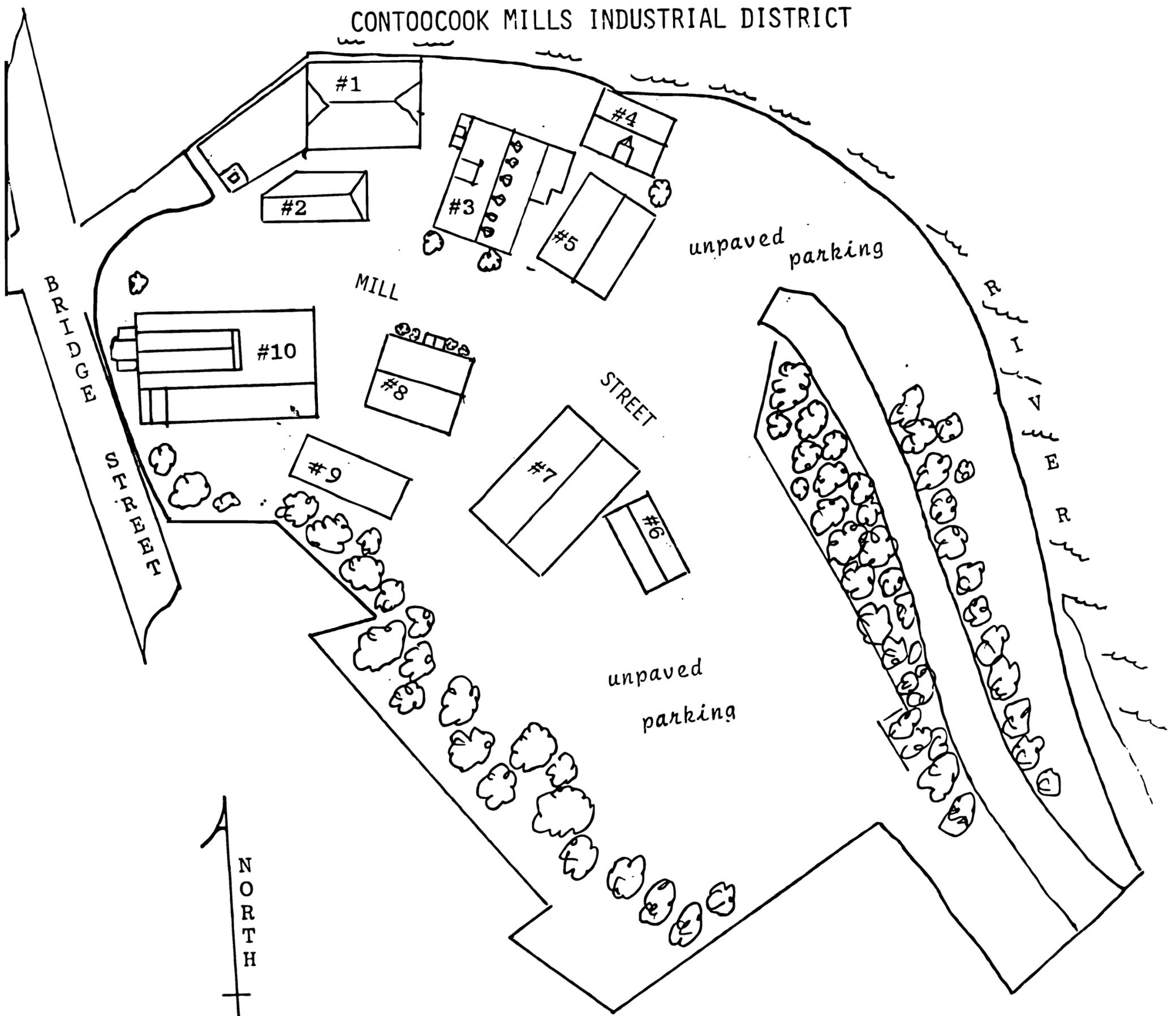
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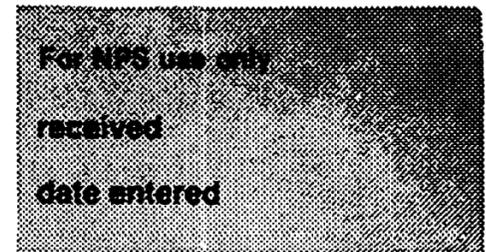
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This certifies that the appearance has not changed since the photographs were taken.