

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received JUL 29 1985
date entered AUG 29 1985

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

1. Name

historic PLAINFIELD WOOLEN COMPANY MILL

and/or common Hale Manufacturing

2. Location

street & number Main Street N/A not for publication

city, town Plainfield X vicinity of Central Village

state Connecticut code 09 county Windham code 015

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Joseph Petrowsky et al.

street & number Route 12

city, town Central Village N/A vicinity of state Connecticut

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Plainfield Town Clerk

street & number Town Hall - 8 Community Avenue
P.O. Box 133

city, town Plainfield state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1985 federal state county local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission

city, town 59 South Prospect Street Hartford state Connecticut

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Plainfield Woolen Company Mill (Photographs 1-4) is a large brick building occupying an eight-acre lot between the Moosup River and Central Village's Main Street. The structure is four stories high (three stories plus full basement story) and consists of a monitor-roofed main mill with its long axis running parallel to Main Street; an ell, extending from the main mill's west side, with a shallow-pitched roof; a one-story shed-roofed boiler house attached to the ell; a tall circular-plan chimney; and a dyehouse (Photograph 6), one and one-half stories high, with its clapboard-covered attic story of wood-frame construction, attached to the north elevation of the ell and running parallel to the main mill (see sketch plan). All these components are original to the mill, dating from its construction in 1901, as is the small one-and-one-half story frame storehouse (Photograph 10) to the southeast. The storehouse exterior is covered with novelty siding.

The main entrance (Photograph 2) is located on the east elevation near the southeast corner of the mill. Recessed within a round-arched opening are double doors, each with ten small raised panels. Similar doors are found on the side entry on the south elevation of the ell. Windows openings are segmental-arched in shape. A transom bar separates the lower 25-pane wooden pivot window from two much smaller pivot windows above. Some of these original windows have been replaced by 15-over-15 double-hung sash, which appears to have been the original configuration in the dyehouse. There is a small amount of recently replaced 6-over-6 sash and some steel-sash windows on the north elevation. Diagonal-shaped beam anchor plates are visible on the exterior. Other than the datestone over the entry, there is no decorative detail. The cornice is open with exposed beam ends.

The interior framing (Photograph 8) consists of square wooden posts and beams with chamfered corners, simple cast-iron column caps, and slow-burn plank floors. The columns are round on the top floor. The monitor roof is carried on large king-post trusses with a tie-rod tension member (Photograph 9). All machinery has been removed.

Major alterations are limited to one enlarged east-elevation third-floor window opening, a large-diameter pipe (probably for dust collection) running along the east elevation, and a modern brick elevator/stair tower in the corner between the main mill and ell, replacing the original stairway just within the main entrance. Attached to the rear of the dyehouse is a frame loading dock, added in 1952. Joining the mill to a large cement-block storehouse at the rear are one-story frame shed-roofed infills (Photograph 5).

Like its predecessor on the site, the mill was powered in part by water, and there is a small pond to the southeast of the mill. The pond is fed by a long canal which runs from a point above the site of the dam (breached and in ruins) some half-mile upstream. The water ran through the ell part of the mill; the two turbines which originally powered the mill are no longer in place. The headrace structure, as well as a wastegate at the east end of the pond, are of concrete construction, but the two tailrace arches are formed of cut ring stones set within the rubble masonry of the ell's foundation (Photograph 7).

There formerly were several tenement houses associated with the mill's predecessor on the site, but along with a small office, these have disappeared or been altered beyond recognition. A row of eight tenements associated with Plainfield Woolen's occupancy is not contiguous with the nominated property but stands a quarter-mile to the southeast on Moosup Road.

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Existing Surveys (continued):

Connecticut: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites
Historic Engineering and Industrial Record

Federal - 1981

Records deposited with Connecticut Historical Commission
59 South Prospect Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Published volume also available

Historic and Architectural Resource Survey of Plainfield, Connecticut

State - 1980

Records deposited with Connecticut Historical Commission
59 South Prospect Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

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Significance (continued):

Milner and Bragg built their mill specifically for woolen manufacture. Its construction technique was not on the leading edge -- the uniform wall thickness (as opposed to brick piers), the use of beam anchors, and the exposed wooden cornice were out-of-date by 1901, a circumstance perhaps attributable to the age of the builder, Danielson mason Hiram Franklin, who had built the Grosvenordale mills in the 1870s. The monitor roof, however, was a distinctive design element well-suited to cloth production. The mill was organized according to the process flow of woolen manufacture: wool scouring, storage, and shipping on the basement and first floor levels and carding, winding and spinning on the second floor. The top floor was used for the critical stages of cloth production: dressing (winding yarn onto the loom beam), drawing in (threading the yarn through the loom's multiple harnesses) and weaving. Early views (Photograph 11) show two rows of looms directly under the top floor's monitor. The weaving of the cloth was perhaps the most important step, one in which abundant light from the monitor would help insure that no defects in the final product would escape notice.

¹According to the social outlook common at the turn of the century, women were thought to be unsuited for heavy or mechanically complicated work, regardless of an individual woman's aptitudes. Another factor limiting female access to the wool weaver's craft was the fact that the skills were learned from other weavers, tending to perpetuate the occupation as an all-male fraternity.

8. Significance

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

Criterion A

Specific dates 1901 - built **Builder/Architect** Hiram Franklin, mason

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Plainfield Woolen Company mill is significant because of the important role it played in the historical development of Central Village as a textile manufacturing community (Criterion A). Built in 1901 at a time when Central Village's industrial base had atrophied, the mill revitalized the local economy by providing hundreds of jobs. For decades thereafter, the mill's several successive textile-firm owners were Central Village's largest employer; not until 1984 did the last occupant, a manufacturer of synthetic fabrics, cease operating the building for its original purpose. Despite more than eighty years of continuous use for textile production, the building retains most of its original historic fabric; alterations and additions are few, and in no way detract from its characteristic appearance. Architecturally, the mill is of interest primarily because of the use of the monitor roof to meet the special demands of woolen manufacture. The building's large size, brick construction, highly visible location, and unusual monitor-roof form make the Plainfield Woolen Company Mill a landmark in Central Village.

Textile manufacture in Central Village dated from 1827, but by the 1880s floods and competition from larger mills had caused an earlier factory on the site to flounder. Despite all attempts to make it profitable, such as scrapping the looms and concentrating on spinning, the mill rarely stayed in full production for more than a few months.

Thus when Plainfield Woolen Company bought the property in 1901 and began building a new mill, it was front-page news in the local paper, the Moosup Journal, which correctly predicted "Central Village seems bound to regain its prestige of former years (June 17, 1901)." Woolens and worsteds were high-value, labor-intensive products (going into men's suits and coats and other expensive garments) mostly made in small or medium-sized mills. Because of the heaviness and width (6 or 7') of the cloth and the greater complexity of the pattern looms on which it was woven, Plainfield Woolen employed mostly male operatives.¹ They paid higher wages than was typical in the area's cotton mills, which depended on lower-paid female labor. Plainfield Woolen Company prospered and typically employed about 175 workers. In the boom years of the World War I period employment reached 300, making Plainfield Woolen one of about a half-dozen large woolen mills in the state.

Plainfield Woolen Company was formed by Plainfield manufacturers Edwin Milner and Charles Bragg in response to their ouster by the American Woolen Company, which had acquired the woolen mills in the nearby Moosup section of Plainfield as part of its attempt to consolidate the entire woolen industry. Plainfield Woolen remained in local hands for only a few years, however, and was subsequently owned by a series of regional textile interests. Most recently, the mill was owned by Hale Manufacturing, a maker of synthetics based in nearby Putnam.

(continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bragg, Charles E. "Beginnings of the Woolen Industry in the Town of Plainfield," in Allen B. Lincoln, A Modern History of Windham County, Connecticut. Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1920.

Davison's Textile Bluebook, 1922-1923.

(continued)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 8

Quadrangle name Plainfield

Quadrangle scale 1:24 000

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated proerty consists of the mill and surrounding lot, including the small pond, shown as Lot 1, Block 86 Map 1CV in the Plainfield Assessor records. A large shopping plaza separates the mill from the non-contiguous associated worker houses, so they were not included. (continued)

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

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bruce Clouette & Matthew Roth, partners Edited by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

organization Historic Resource Consultants date January 5, 1984
The Colt Armory

street & number 55 Van Dyke Avenue telephone (203) 547-0268

city or town Hartford state Connecticut

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 

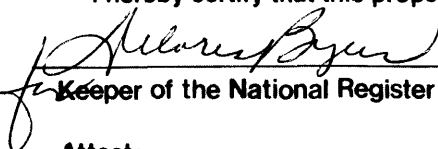
title Director: Connecticut Historical Commission date 7/3/85

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 8/29/85


for Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Bibliography (continued):

Connecticut Military Census, 1918. RG 29, Box 66, Connecticut State Library.

Fraser, E. Everton (ed.). Lamb's Textile Industries of the United States.
2 vols. Boston: James H. Lamb, 1916.

Moosup Journal, May 16, 1901.

Maps, Views and Photos:

Associated Mutual Insurance Company. Survey No. 4070. January 17, 1903.

Pike, William L. Plan of Land Owned by Plainfield Woolen Company. 1901.
Plainfield Town Clerk Map File.

People at Work Photograph Collection, Quinebaug Valley Community College,
Danielson, Connecticut.

Schofield, Mark W. Plat of Plainfield Woolen Company's Estate. November,
1906. Plainfield Assessor Records.

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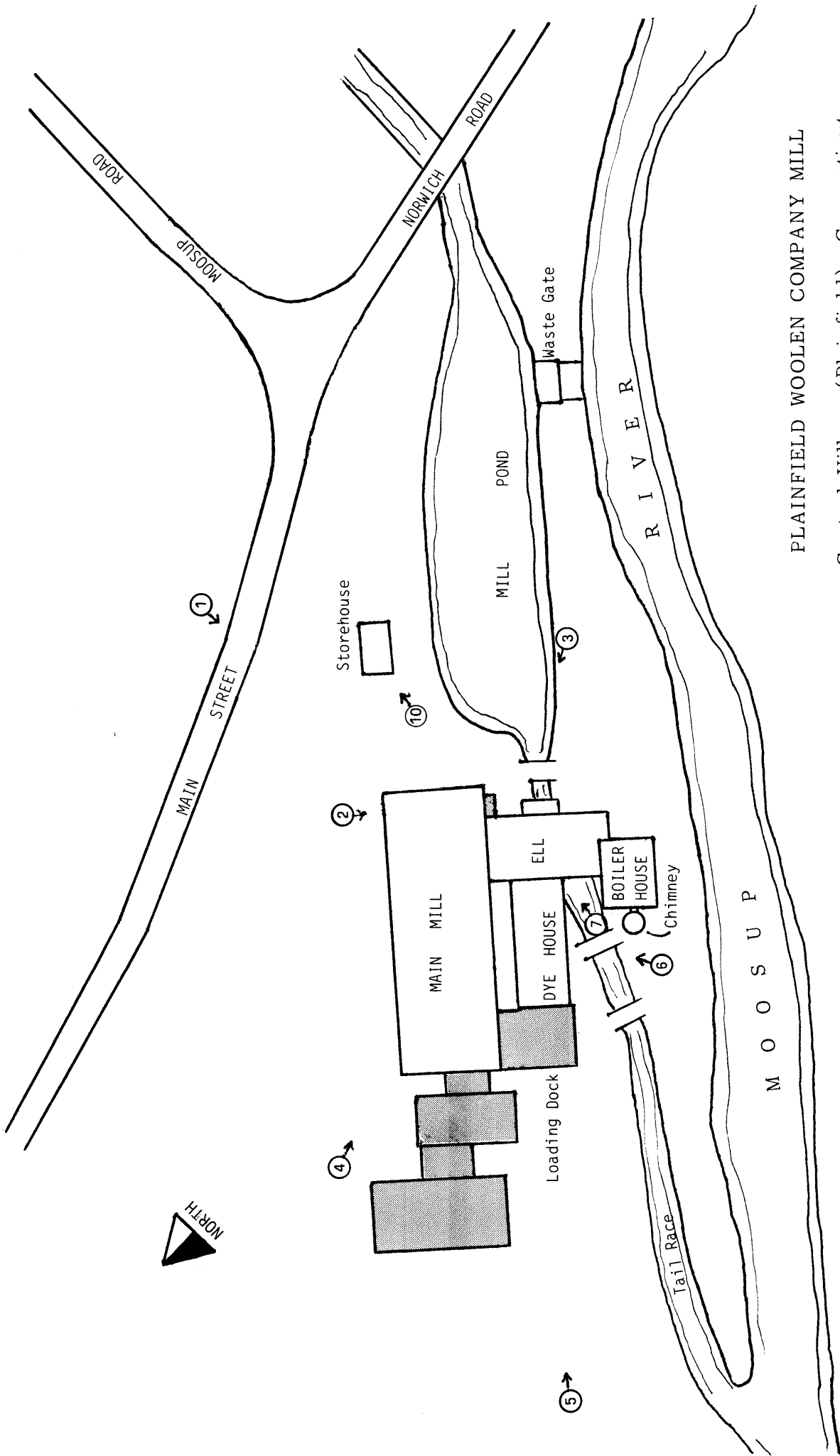
date entered

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Verbal Boundary Description and Justification (continued):


The dam, now breached and in ruins, is also located some distance upstream. Its lack of integrity and its distance from the mill were the reasons for excluding the dam and canal from the nominated property.



PLAINFIELD WOOLEN COMPANY MILL
 Central Village (Plainfield), Connecticut

SKETCH MAP

LATER ADDITIONS 

PHOTO POSITIONS 

SCALE: 1" = 100'