NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name PAGE BELTING COMPANY MILLS

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 26 Commercial Street — N/A ☐ not for publication

city or town Concord — N/A ☐ vicinity

state New Hampshire code NH county Merrimack code 013 zip code 03301

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ■ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

James McConaha — 4/29/02
Signature of certifying official — Date

NEW HAMPSHIRE
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is
☑ entered in the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper — Date of Action

for Carson H. Beall — 6/14/02

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

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4		buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
5		Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0
Name of related multiple property listing N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/manufacturing facility

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling
COMMERCE/TRADE/business
RECREATION AND CULTURE

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/industrial

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation granite
walls brick
granite
roof rubber
slate
other N/A

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Page Belting Company Mills Historic District is located on Commercial Street in Concord, New Hampshire, approximately three-quarters-of-a-mile north of the central business district. The 4.4 acre site is bounded on the north by Commercial Street and Horseshoe Pond, a large tract of conservation land; on the east by a vacant commercial lot and an early twentieth century building in commercial use; on the south by a late nineteenth and two mid-twentieth century buildings in commercial use; and on the west by Commercial Street.

The nominated district consists of four brick industrial buildings erected between 1892 and 1906: a belt shop (1892), curry shop (1892 & 1906), office (1906) and boiler house (1906). The belt shop and curry shop are connected by a link built in 1906; and the office and belt shop are joined by a small link erected in 1906. Each of the four buildings contributes to the district's significance and retains a high level of architectural integrity. The overall district retains a high degree of integrity in terms of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

1. Belt Shop, 1892. Contributing building.

The belt shop is a three-story, 260 x 54-foot, nearly flat-roof building with solid brick walls. It has regularly spaced, over-sized window openings on all walls with segmentally arched heads, granite sills, and plain wooden panels within the arched section. Nearly all of the historic 12/12 window sash survives, supplemented by exterior aluminum storms. (Originally, the building had a double set of 12/12 sash, one interior and one exterior.) Small openings with segmentally arched heads are found in alternating bays at the basement level; originally fitted with four-light sash, they are now bricked in.

The focal point of the belt shop is a centrally located, four-story stair tower that projects from the west elevation. The tower also contains the historic main entrance to the building. Standard-size and smaller windows with 6/6 sash provide light into the tower. In the upper section of the tower, the north, south and west faces have a roundel with radiating muntins. The words "Page Belting Company" are painted above and below the roundel on the west face. A hipped slate roof caps the tower.

South of the tower, on the west elevation, is an entrance, created by dropping and widening a window opening sometime between 1915 and 1936, and which now serves as the primary entrance into the building. The north elevation has a wide, off-center, segmentally arched doorway with a fixed, paneled door, and a functioning entrance in the center bay. The south elevation of the belt shop has a three-story, centrally positioned tower (originally occupied by an elevator and currently by a stairwell). To its right is a segmentally arched, secondary entrance. At

the near center of the east elevation is a three-story, three-bay-deep, brick projection which served as the furnace room. Appended to its south end is a three-story, one-bay-deep, brick elevator and bathroom projection with a one-story brick attachment at the base. Near the south end of the elevation, a two-story, flat-roof, brick addition erected in 1906 has segmentally arched openings on the first story and flat-head openings on the second.

In the middle of the east elevation, a one-story, brick connector built in 1906 links the belt shop with the curry shop. The connector's north wall has five recessed brick panels with an upper band of stepped brickwork. Three flat-head window openings were added in 1999-2000 in alternating bays. The south wall is similarly paneled, but lacks the upper brickwork band. It is punctured by three small, six-light, segmentally arched windows and an arched entrance.

In 1999-2000, the belt shop underwent a successful certified rehabilitation to convert it into elderly housing with community support rooms on the ground floor. Exterior alterations stemming from the rehabilitation included removal of non-historic additions; new door hoods at each entrance; removal of the deteriorated outer set of window sash (retaining and restoring the inner set) and installation of aluminum storm windows; replication of missing window sash on the tower; new paneled, exterior doors; and new openings on the north wall of the connector. Throughout the interior, designed as open industrial space, historic architectural and structural features were retained and exposed where possible, including the primary staircase within the main (west) stair tower; arched window and door openings; and the double rows of square wooden posts that run the length of the building. In addition, several of the metal fire doors were retained, though are no longer functional.

2. Curry Shop, 1892 & 1906. Contributing building.

The curry shop was built in two stages. The northern section (#2a) was built in 1892 and is a four-story, 84 x 50-foot, 5 x 8-bay building with thick brick walls and a nearly flat roof. Window and door openings have segmentally arched heads and granite sills. The primary entrance is located in the center of the north elevation; a secondary entrance is on each of the two side elevations. Doors are wood-paneled, with lights in the upper section. Window openings of the lower three stories contain historic, paired 9/9 sash. The top story has smaller window openings with paired 6/6 sash that replicates the original.

The southern (and larger) section of the curry shop (#2b) was built in 1906, employing the same brick, framing techniques, design and details as the earlier section. It is a three-story, 200 x 50-foot structure with a nearly flat roof. A three-story brick appendage that houses an elevator and staircase projects from the southern end of the west elevation. The primary entrances to the 1906 addition are in the south walls of the main building and elevator appendage. Five additional entrances, one of which is original, are spread along the east elevation.

In 1999-2000, the curry shop underwent a successful certified rehabilitation to convert it into elderly housing with offices on the ground floor. Exterior alterations stemming from the rehabilitation included removal of non-historic additions; new door hoods at two entrances; rehabilitation of the surviving set of window sash (like the belt shop, the building was constructed with a double set of sash, but most of the interior sash had been removed) and installation of aluminum storm windows; replication of missing window sash on the fourth story; new paneled, exterior doors; and new entrances on the east elevation. Throughout the interior, designed as open industrial space, historic architectural and structural features were retained and exposed where possible, including the primary staircase within the elevator/stair tower; arched openings; and the double rows of square wooden posts that run the length of the building.

3. Office, 1906. Contributing building.

The office is a 1-1/2 story, 104' x 40', 11 x 3 bay, flat-top gable roof, brick building that is sited parallel to and attached to the northern end of the west elevation of the belt shop with a one-story, one-bay-deep link. Window and door openings have segmentally arched heads and granite sills. The facade (north elevation) features a stepped parapet with granite coping, granite name plate with raised letters ("Page Belting Company") and granite date plates ("1871" and "1906"). The main entrance is centered on the facade and consists of a semi-elliptical arched opening with wood and glass paneled door flanked by partial sidelights. A pedimented portico is supported on round iron posts. (The posts replace wooden columns on plinths and a wooden railing with balusters.) Granite steps with sculpted side walls lead to the entrance. On either side of the entrance is a large, segmentally arched window opening. The lower section contains a large, 1/1-sash window flanked by narrower 1/1-sash windows; above each window is a single-light transom with a wood-paneled band in between. Above the entrance is another tripartite window set in a segmentally arched opening.

The two side elevations (east and west) have paneled window bays and elongated, segmentally arched openings which contain a 1/1-sash window and paired aluminum storms. Above each window is a wooden panel and paired, aluminum, louvered panels (where originally there was a single-light transom window). At the north end of the west elevation, there is a non-functional doorway with a flat, wooden hood supported on wooden brackets. (The doorway was created from a window opening circa 1951.) Basement windows with arched openings and four-light sash appear in alternating bays. The south elevation of the office has three windows that match those on the side elevations and an original doorway with historic, double wood and glass paneled doors, a gabled hood with chamfered cross pieces and brackets, and dressed granite steps.

The interior of the office reflects at least two discrete renovations, leaving minimal historic detailing. Originally one story inside, a second story was introduced in the early 1950s. Since

then, dropped acoustical tile ceilings and linoleum floors have been installed throughout the building, with the exception of two rooms with wood floors that are used for dance studios. Original beaded-board wainscot and wooden doors made of quartered Carolina pine survive only in a few areas, primarily in the south end of the building.

4. Boiler House, 1906. Contributing building.

The boiler house is a high one-story, 61 x 51-foot, free-standing brick structure built in 1906 and located east of and close to the curry shop. The building is capped with a clapboard-sided monitor roof tucked behind a stepped parapet at the east and west ends. The north, south and west elevations have paneled bays; the east wall is plain, but has two segmentally arched entrances. (Sanborn maps show that coal was stored against the east side of the building, explaining the lack of decorative treatment on the wall.) The north and south elevations have segmentally arched openings with single and paired 12/12-sash windows on the north elevation and a variety of doors and one blocked-in opening on the south elevation. Some surviving 12-light sash is found in the monitor roof.

The boiler house replaced an earlier boiler house on the site.

5. Chimney, ca. 1855. Contributing structure.

A square, 96-foot, tapering brick chimney is attached to the northeast corner of the boiler house. It was built in 1855 and is all that survives of pre-Page Belting Company activity on the site.

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 significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory 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 a grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)
industry
architecture

Period of Significance
Criterion A: 1892-1952
Criterion C: 1892 and 1906

Significant Dates
1892 and 1906

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
n/a

Cultural Affiliation
n/a

Architect/Builder
Albion H. Knight

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: Page Belting Company, Concord, NH

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 4.4 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	19	293660	4787885	3	19	293850	4787785
2	19	293800	4787920	4	19	293700	4787720

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, Preservation Consultant, with Dennis Howe, Industrial Historian

organization for Concord Historic Associates date January 18, 2002

street & number 25 Ridge Road telephone 603-225-7977

city or town Concord state NH zip code 03301

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name see attached

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Page Belting Company Mills are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of industry as the headquarters of the Page Belting Company, major manufacturer of leather transmission belting and a prominent local industry. From 1873 until 1994, when it relocated to a new building on the outskirts of Concord, the company produced leather transmission belting on this site, which was used to power the machinery in factories throughout the country. Between 1892 and 1906, the company replaced its buildings with the existing brick mill complex that includes a belt shop, curry shop, office, and boiler house. The district is one of only three surviving historic industrial complexes in Concord, New Hampshire, a city known for its diversified manufacturing base throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The former Boston & Maine rail yards in the southern section of the city is the only other area to match Page Belting Company Mills in terms of the range of building types and number that are extant. Penacook Mill, a textile factory erected in 1846 and still standing in the northern section of the city, retains several historic secondary buildings on its site, including an office and various storage sheds.

The district is also eligible under Criterion C in the area of architecture as an excellent representation of an industrial complex erected at the turn of the twentieth century. The four buildings within the district possess architectural uniformity and retain the physical characteristics typical of mill buildings of this era, including plain masonry walls and granite trim, multi-light wooden sash set in segmentally arched window openings, and a dominant entry/stair tower. While the fifth resource pre-dates the other resources by several decades, it contributes to the district under Criterion C, since the physical character of chimneys changed little over the course of the nineteenth century. Within the city of Concord, there are no other mill buildings, either individual resources or components of a district, that retain the same degree of integrity.

The district retains a high level of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The period of significance for the district under Criterion A is 1892-1952; the earlier date reflects the initial construction date for the primary buildings in the existing complex, and the later date reflects the National Register's fifty-year cut-off. The period of significance under Criterion C is 1892 and 1906, reflecting the years the buildings were constructed or added onto. Under both criteria, the significant dates are 1892 and 1906, reflecting the years in which the buildings were constructed or substantially enlarged.

Industry

Page Belting Company Mills are significant in the area of industry for their association with the production of leather belting. The production of flat leather belting that was strong, yet flexible, was a vital part of American industry throughout the nineteenth and for much of the twentieth

centuries, and Page Belting Company's innovations and leather power transmission products played an important role in this area.

As the Industrial Revolution began at the close of the eighteenth century, American mills were fitted with wooden power transmission systems. Their machinery, typically grinding stones and saws, were connected directly to the power system with wooden gears that provided the means to change shaft speed and axel rotation.[1] Smaller machines, such as lathes and drills, were driven by hand cranks or treadles, rather than waterpower. Some entrepreneurs found ways to drive their small machines from their spinning shafts with belts or rope, but there was no standardized design or system. The belting they used was supplied by a local tanner and consisted of simple strips of leather laced together at the ends to form a continuous loop.

About 1820, British power transmission technology in the form of cast-iron gearing and shafting was introduced to New England's textile industry. Though effective, these iron systems were loud and produced severe vibrations causing the entire building to shake and the shafts to bend and break.[2] Over the course of that decade, new machines designed to be powered by a belt and pulley system began to appear, and millwrights started to demand thicker and stronger leather from tanneries. The first use in the United States of a main-drive system using a leather belt and pulley system occurred in Lowell in 1828, and the first use in New Hampshire about 1837, when Ithamar Beard installed a multiple-belted main drive system to replace gearing in a mill in Pittsfield.[3] As turbines started to replace waterwheels in the 1840s, the use of flat, leather belting and pulleys proliferated, since leather belts proved the perfect match for the higher speeds of turbines. The years following the Civil War, when Page Belting Company was formed, saw a great demand for reliable power transmission belting as American manufacturers sought greater productivity. Page Belting's primary contribution to the industry was standardizing industrial belting. Electrically-driven machinery gradually reduced the widespread need for belting during the twentieth century, but to this day, many mills continue to rely on belting. Though no longer operating out of its original factory, Page Belting Company today is the largest and one of the oldest manufacturers of leather belting in the country and one of only two that continues to curry its own leather.[4]

Over the years, Page Belting Company also became particularly known for its innovative types of leather belting, as well as for its inventions of various tools and machinery for manufacturing and testing its belts. Its first venture beyond flat leather belting was the development of "Acme" link belting, patented in 1889 and suitable for heavy-duty, main-drive installations because of its waterproof qualities and easily adjustable lengths. Link belting, introduced in 1889, used leather

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[1] Gordon and Malone, 1994: 308-310.
[2] Penn, 1981: 3.
[3] Penn: 7.
[4] Interview with Mark Coen, Page Belting Company president, 1999.

links connected by steel pins rather than glue. Not only was it highly useful, but it made use of scraps or flawed pieces that would otherwise go to waste. The company also patented perforated belting, chosen when greater speed and larger loads were required, and waterproof belting using cellulose cement. In 1898 it entered the growing garment trade by manufacturing round leather belting used in treadle sewing machines. The company produced up to five million feet of round belting annually, much of it for Singer Sewing Machine.[5]

Architecture

Page Belting Company Mills are significant in the area of architecture as an excellent representation of a late nineteenth/early twentieth century industrial complex that illustrates the type and method of construction typical of, even innovative for, late-nineteenth century industrial structures in northern New England. All five of the resources within the district are contributing and retain a high degree of architectural integrity, including original wooden sash for each of the four buildings.

The two mill buildings, the belt and curry shops, were exceptionally well built, with solid brick walls, heavy load-bearing timbers, fireproof construction, up-to-date sprinkler systems, electric lights and motors, and central heat. The substantial foundation of bedrock and concrete on which their heavy brick walls were placed withstood some of the worst floods experienced on the Merrimack River. The company turned to Albion H. Knight, an employee in the shipping department, to draw up plans and specifications, and William Pack, an employee in charge of repair work, to oversee construction. According to notes written by Knight, the belt shop and older section of the curry shop were the first mill buildings to employ double windows, effectively eliminating the need to seasonally install and remove storm sash. Knight repeated this approach when he designed the large addition to the curry shop more than ten years later.[6]

The two other buildings on the site, the office and boiler house, relate visually to the other buildings, yet each reflects its specific function. The office features a distinctive entry facade with broad window openings, a stepped parapet with granite coping and granite name/date plates, side-lit entrance, and sculpted granite stair walls. Its transom windows reflect the high, open interior of the building's original design. The boiler house has paneled window bays, a monitor roof, parapeted end walls and an attached chimney stack.

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[5] Many of Page Belting's early innovations were tied to the currying process, considered a trade secret and therefore not easily documented. Some of Page Belting's products are exhibited in Machinery Hall at the Smithsonian Museum.

[6] That Page Belting turned to two employees with no formal training to design and oversee construction of such a major building project is odd. Knight came to the company in the mid 1880s and worked various as a traveling salesman, shipper, inspector, draughtsman (in 1906) and, for the last thirty or so years, foreman. His claim of pioneering double window sash may have been fanciful.

All four of the buildings have brick walls, segmentally arched window openings and granite trim, character-defining features of mill-related buildings of this period. The belt shop's entry/stair tower, with its distinctive roundels and hipped, slate roof, is a focal point of the complex.

Historical Background

Page Belting Company was organized in 1871 by brothers George F. and Charles T. Page. Their father, Moses Page, was a New Hampshire tanner, who took advantage of the expanded market brought by New England's growing shoe industry. In 1866 he patented a chemical process that added strength and elasticity to leather lacing and licensed use of this process to tanners in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. It was not long before Page realized that this process also produced stronger, more flexible leather for belting, and in 1867, he began producing belting in Manchester, New Hampshire. A year later, his two sons bought the business and relocated it to a renovated barn in Franklin, New Hampshire. They procured partially tanned hides from tanneries in Maine and New Hampshire and brought them to their factory for completion and production into belting.

On August 3, 1871, Page Belting Company was organized, and the following year, incorporated. Two years later, the Page brothers purchased the E.G. and E. Wallace tannery and curry shop in Concord, relocated their business to the site and began a 121-year period of manufacturing power transmission belting there, gradually replacing the Wallace buildings with more modern structures. The tannery site included twelve acres on the south side of Horseshoe Pond, less than a mile north of the state capitol and conveniently situated between major rail corridors.[7]

As mills and their machinery became more and more complex, and the dangers posed from improper fitting of belting increased, the company paid close attention to providing technical information on the correct fit, use and installation of its products, offering such advice in its product catalog. In 1887 it developed a "belt testing and stretching machine" which it employed to fully test the belts before shipping them.

Under the direction of President George Page and Treasurer Charles T. Page, the company advertised aggressively and opened sales offices in Boston, New York and Chicago. It later added Chattanooga, San Francisco and Portland, Oregon to the roster, exposing the company's products and services to purchasing agents across the country. The company exhibited to great crowds at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia – no small expense for a fledgling firm, but the exposure and connections paid off. During the 1880s, the company expanded into the

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[7] A portion of the site had been allotted to ancestor Thomas Page in the original distribution of lots in 1726. Before the tannery was built, a steam saw mill which used adjacent Horseshoe Pond to store logs was on the property.

international market and began to import hides from India. It adopted use of telegraph service early on, receiving orders as much as a week ahead of its competition. In 1893, the company appeared at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, where it received the highest award for belting. In preparation for the event, the company made the largest belt ever produced: 8-1/2 feet wide, 203 feet long, weighing 5,176 pounds and requiring 569 cattle hides. At the exposition, the Page brothers also learned about newly developed (and controversial) alternating current (A.C.) electricity. Quickly recognizing its potential, they decided to install it in their new hydro-plant on the Merrimack River in Concord. When the Sewall's Falls Land and Water Power Company went on line in February 1894, it was the first three-phase power system in the country. With the electricity produced at Sewall's Falls, the company used General Electric three-phase induction motors to drive its central shafting in the mill.[8]

Until 1892, the Page Belting Company mill site consisted of a dozen or so wooden buildings: a tannery, a two-story curry and belt shop (both already standing when the Pages bought the property in 1872 and subsequently added onto), a series of one-story connected buildings, several sheds, a boiler-engine house and accompanying chimney (built in 1882 and 1855 respectively and the only brick structures on the site), an office building (converted from a two-family dwelling already on the site), three tenement houses, and a barn where the company stabled its horses. Belting production, however, required diverse operations throughout the manufacturing process, and conditions at Page Belting were both crowded and out-dated. The company's growth challenged its ability to meet market demands in its existing buildings, and George Page decided to provide a larger, more modern manufacturing plant for his workers and expanding business.

Beginning in 1892, the company embarked upon the first of two major construction projects which eventually replaced all of the earlier buildings and defined the brick industrial complex that stands today. The company employed Albion H. Knight, an eight-year employee in the shipping department, to draw up plans and specifications, and William Pack, an employee in charge of repair work, to oversee construction. In the first phase, between 1892 and 1893, Page Belting Company erected the three-story belt shop (#1) and the four-story section (north portion) of the curry shop (#2), for floor area totaling over 173,000 square feet. The curry shop was placed on the site of the former office building. In anticipation of this major building campaign, the company erected a wood-frame carpenter-machine-blacksmith shop immediately south of the construction site and fitted it up with woodworking machinery.

In 1906, the company embarked upon its second period of construction activity that was even more frenzied that the first. It again commissioned Knight to prepare plans and specifications.

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[8] Concord Electric bought the hydro plant from the Pages in 1901 and continued to produce electricity there until 1968. The General Electric Museum in Schenectady, New York has at least one of Page Belting Company's induction motors in its collection

Over the course of about a year, the company placed a 200' addition onto the 1892 curry shop, built a new office (#3), a new boiler house (#4), and a storehouse.[9]

In 1900, Page Belting Company employed about 200 workers and produced 1,000,000 pounds of belting annually. It was a major local employer in the first half of the twentieth century, and the company's directors were leading Concord citizens. It housed some of its employees in three residential buildings (two duplexes and one single-family) which stood east of the mill buildings.

In 1908, the company entered a new market area with the purchase of Concord's J. R. Hill Harness Company, one of the most reputable makers of harnesses in the country. More acquisitions followed, particularly after 1950, as the company continued to branch into other areas related to transmission belting. It began to produce nylon core belting (especially useful in the lumber, paper and textile industry where many applications were unsuitable for leather belting), urethane belting, molded urethane products, and conveyor belting. Many of its products met the needs of textile mills, including textile strapping and checking devices for automatic looms. By 1978 it was the largest manufacturer of leather belting in the country and a world leader in the production of leather specialty products. It had produced enough belting to encircle the world fifteen times and made the largest flat belt ever manufactured, over eighty years earlier. One of the company's few non-belt related products was leather packing for industrial and recreational use (such as fire hydrants, camping stoves, milking machines and gasoline pumps). In more recent years, the company began producing polyurethane belts and pulleys and expanding its line of specialty leather goods.[10]

Beginning in the 1890s, Page Belting Company gradually reduced its acreage and sold some of its more peripheral buildings. By 1899, C. H. Stevens & Company was producing lumber immediately behind the curry shop, and by 1906, Concord Lumber Company had established itself just to the east, where it remained until ca. 1990. Within a few years, that company had a planing mill, dry kiln and an extensive number of sheds. Circa 1921, Page Belting sold a large tract of land east of the mill buildings and on which its tenement houses were located to Concord Lumber Company. In place of the tenements, Concord Lumber erected various sheds. In 1931

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[9] The company's tannery building burned in 1894. President George Page, who advocated for and initiated the 1892 construction campaign, was not supported by his board in his efforts to rebuild it and bitterly resigned in 1895. After a decade of shaky times, the company again found itself on solid ground and embarked on the second building campaign in 1906. The old wooden curry shop on the site of the new addition was dismantled, reassembled just east of its former site, and renamed the heel shop. Over the years the Heel Shop served a variety of functions, initially the production of leather heels and later shoe finishing, the James R. Hill harness business, and various belting departments. Its use by Page Belting was discontinued ca. 1930.

[10] Page Belting supplied the packing used on fire control systems at Cape Canaveral and also for the first nuclear submarine.

Page Belting sold or leased the vacant heel shop to Concord Silversmiths, Inc., a group of former employees of the Durgin Silver Company. The building was later used to store hubbard squash. After it burned, Page Belting sold the land to Concord Lumber in 1964.[11]

The carpenter-machine-blacksmith shop became the building department as early as 1906. That department ran independently of, but was associated with Page Belting Company for a number of years. In 1937 Greenlands, a dealer in lawnmowers, snow blowers and other small machinery, took over the building, purchasing it in 1941. The storehouse remained in Page Belting ownership until 1969 when it, too, was sold. In the late 1970s, the current occupant, Goulet Supply Company, a plumbing supply house, moved in. Page Belting Company leased the upper floor of its office to an accounting firm in the early 1950s. Land west and south of the mill property was subdivided in the mid-1950s. Two commercial buildings erected after 1960 now stand in that area. From 1960 until 1988, the company leased part of the belt shop to Yankee Typesetters, the last hot-lead typesetting firm to operate in Concord, long a printing center.[12]

After Page Belting Company left the site in 1994, the buildings lay vacant until New DCAB purchased the property in late 1995 and renovated the office and part of the belt shop for a dance studio. In late 1998 the property was purchased by a local developer, Concord Historic Associates, LP, which converted the belt shop and curry shop into affordable elderly housing, with community service rooms on the ground floor of the belt shop and offices on the ground floor of the curry shop. The office and a small portion of the belt shop continue in use as a dance studio. The boiler house is vacant. The property was made into five condominium units in 1999, reflecting the different owners and uses.

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[11] An oil burner installed to keep the squash from freezing exploded, and the building burned to the ground.
[12] Howe, 1987.

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GEOGRAPHIC DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for Page Belting Company Mills coincides with the lot lines for Tax Map 58, Block 2, Lots 2, 7, 8, 9 and 10. (The five lots were created from a single lot in 1999 when the property was divided into condominiums.) The nominated district includes 4.4 acres. Boundaries are indicated on the attached sketch map.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundary of the nominated district includes the core of the Page Belting Company complex, the primary structures erected by Page Belting Company to support its manufacture of power transmission belting and other products from 1892 until the company moved to a new facility in 1994. The company's primary functions – currying, shaping, scarfing, gluing, sewing, sanding and trimming – all occurred within the belt shop and the curry shop. All of the company's business was conducted from the office, and the boiler house supplied the heat and power for the machinery. When Page Belting Company began to divest itself of surplus buildings beginning in the 1920s, the tenement houses, heel shop, carpenter-machine-blacksmith shop, and storehouse were the buildings it sold or leased.

Of those surplus buildings, only the storehouse and the carpenter-machine-blacksmith shop are extant, but neither is included in the nominated district. While historically associated with Page Belting Company and erected within the period of significance, neither was ever an integral part of the actual manufacturing process. The storehouse was designed to store goods, particularly those that arrived or departed by rail. The shop was designed for the machinery and operations associated with the construction of the brick buildings. Once those construction projects were completed, it served as a peripheral building department. Both its wood-frame construction and distance from the core complex underscore this building's peripheral nature. Furthermore, views of the mill complex published by the company for advertising purposes never included this building. Both of these buildings have been in separate ownership for over thirty years and have undergone alterations and additions by their subsequent owners which have compromised their ability to convey their historical associations.

Property Owners

Units 1 & 2
Concord Historic Associates
26 Commercial Street
Concord, NH 03301
603-228-6160

Unit 3
Serafin Inc.
26 Commercial Street
Concord, NH 03301
603-226-0200

Units 4 & 5
C & M Management
26 Commercial Street
Concord, NH 03301
603-228-6160

NPS Form 10-900-a
1024-0018
(8-86)

OMB No.

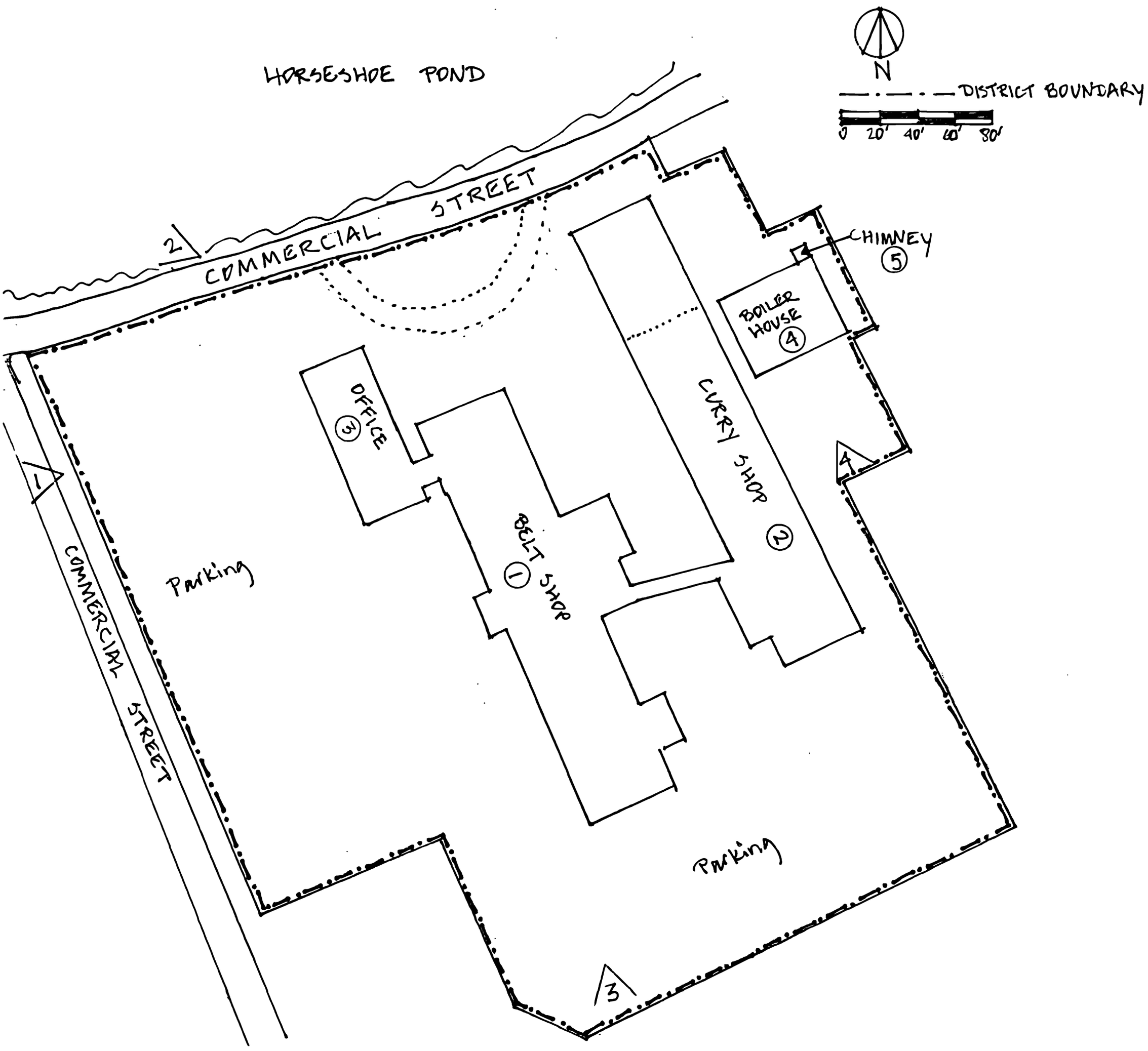
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

Page Belting Co. Mills
Concord (Merrimack County)
New Hampshire

Section 11 **Page** 1

DISTRICT SKETCH MAP & PHOTOGRAPH KEY



PHOTOGRAPH LIST

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Name of district: Page Belting Company Mills
Town/state: Concord, New Hampshire
Location of negative: 25 Ridge Road, Concord, NH

Photo #1

Photographer: Elizabeth Durfee Hengen
Date of Photograph: October 2001
View: Looking northeast at office (left, foreground), belt shop (mid-ground), curry shop (left, background) and chimney.

Photo #2

Photographer: Elizabeth Durfee Hengen
Date of Photograph: October 2001
View: Looking southeast at north and east elevations of curry shop (left) and office (right)

Photo #3

Photographer: Elizabeth Durfee Hengen
Date of Photograph: October 2001
View: Looking north at south elevation of office (far left), west and south elevations of belt shop (center) and south elevation of curry shop (right)

Photo #4

Photographer: Elizabeth Durfee Hengen
Date of Photograph: October 2001
View: Looking north at south elevation of boiler house