

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received FEB 2 1987

date entered MAR 9 1987

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

1. Name

historic N.A.

and/or common Georgetown Historic District

2. Location

street & number See continuation sheet N.A. not for publication

city, town Redding, Wilton N.A. vicinity of

state Connecticut code 09 county Fairfield code 011

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N.A.	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple public and private

street & number See continuation sheet

city, town Redding and Wilton N.A. vicinity of state Connecticut

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Redding Town Hall; Wilton Town Hall (Town Clerks' Offices)

street & number Redding Center (Redding); Route 7 (Wilton)

city, town Redding and Wilton state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

See continuation sheet.

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

date 1986 federal state county local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street

city, town Hartford state Connecticut

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Georgetown Historic District is a residential/industrial village in a valley of the Norwalk River in the southwestern corner of Connecticut. Apparently only a geographical designation and never a political entity, the village encompasses part of Wilton, Redding, Weston, and Ridgefield. The district itself includes only sections of Redding and Wilton. It is roughly bounded by Route 7 on the west, Route 107 on the east, and the Ridgefield town line on the north; it extends to the south across Route 107 for a short distance. It contains 144 buildings and sites; 123 contributing and 21 non-contributing. The residential component was built primarily in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with a high concentration of contributing historic buildings (84%). Of the contributing residential buildings, 40% were built in the nineteenth century and 60% in the twentieth century (before 1936). The industrial component is a large factory complex owned by the Gilbert and Bennett Manufacturing Company, which contains more than 30 industrial buildings constructed on more than 30 acres of land with a 12-acre mill pond. Sixty % of these buildings were built between 1874 and 1927. Of the 11 major buildings constructed after 1936 at Gilbert and Bennett, at least five are long, low warehouses constructed of aluminum on a steel frame: some are in the typical "Quonset hut" configuration, others have an extended gable roof.

With the exception of Portland Avenue, which circles around the Gilbert and Bennett factory complex and its mill pond to the east and north, most of the residential streets in the district are concentrated to the south and west of the factory complex. They include North Main, Church, Smith, South Church, and New Streets. The railroad of the Danbury-Norwalk Line runs through the center of the district roughly following the path of the Norwalk River. Church and Smith streets were bisected by Route 107 (from west to east) in the twentieth century, so portions of these streets are located to the south of the highway. Apparently a road in this location in 1897 only extended to Church Street.

Prior to 1889 some of the Gilbert and Bennett factory buildings were located further to the south on the Norwalk River, on what was known as the lower Mill Pond. Today the entire complex is located within the district. Many of the historic factories built of brick are long, low buildings ranging in length from 100 to 300 feet, with an average width of 40 feet. They include buildings utilized for such specialized purposes as wire weaving, twisting, galvanizing, and annealing. The earliest surviving building is a two-story, brick pier loom building (50' x 300') with a monitor built in 1874, with segmental-arch lintels and stone sills (Inventory #47). A disastrous fire of that year destroyed most of the rest of the factory. A few of the early twentieth-century buildings, namely the high and low pressure boiler houses, are constructed of concrete (Inventory #48, 50). Although the factory has relied entirely on steam power for most of its history, a functioning water wheel with an open headrace supplies water as a coolant for the machinery. The complex also includes two concrete dams about 80 feet long with spillways and gates (one rebuilt in 1874); 2000 feet of railroad siding, a spur dating back to 1874; five bridges, two of concrete and two of steel, and one timber railroad bridge; sixteen storage tanks; and assorted wood frame garages to the south across North Main Street from the factory. A large water storage tank completes the complex. A 1909 office building built of small cobblestone with an overhanging eave supported by shaped rafters continues to be used for this purpose. It has been extended to the rear with a large modern brick addition (Inventory #39; Photograph #19).

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" 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 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		

Criteria A and C

Specific dates 1820 - 1936

Builder/Architect Various unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

A rare survival of rural industrial history, the Georgetown Historic District is a significant and cohesive entity which has retained its nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century historic character (Criterion A). A company town for over 160 years, almost exclusively associated with the Gilbert and Bennett Manufacturing Company, national producers of wire products, the district contains all its well-preserved historic components: residential, industrial, and institutional architecture dating from about 1820 to 1936 (Criterion C). Several styles are represented in the residential architecture, including a small notable group of Italianate-style houses and a larger number of modest examples of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century housing. The latter include a large group of Colonial Revival-style duplexes, workers' housing for employees of the Gilbert and Bennett Company.

History:

Nineteenth-century Georgetown was substantially created by the Gilbert and Bennett Company. Although there is no reason to believe that Georgetown was a social experiment, or that there was a conscious attempt to create a planned industrial community there, the company played a major role in the social and economic structure of the village in the nineteenth century and established many of its major institutions. Guided by nineteenth-century paternalism and enlightened self-interest which carried over well into the twentieth century, the company shaped a community which today resembles the rural industrial village of nineteenth-century Utopian ideology.

Nothing in the company's recorded industrial history explains this phenomenon.¹ Most companies which survived for long periods in the same location in New England have similar histories. Capitalizing on one man's ideas, the Gilbert and Bennett Company survived the proto-industrial period, mechanized production, and adopted modern business practices by the mid-nineteenth century. After a disaster (a fire which destroyed most of the plant), the company reorganized its financial structure and concentrated on the manufacture of a specialized product. The early part of the twentieth century saw a major capital development program as Gilbert and Bennett became producers of wire products on a national scale.

Benjamin Gilbert, the founder, a Georgetown resident, was a tanner and currier by trade. He conceived of the idea of weaving cattle and horsehair into sieves. According to tradition the hair was woven on a loom by his wife while he formed the hoops out of wood with a draw shave. Demand for his novel product created a cottage industry involving several of his neighbors. Several improvements to his original concept, which included a machine for picking (similar to one used for picking cotton) to straighten and prepare the animal hair for weaving, required waterpower, and the business eventually moved into an old sawmill on the Norwalk River downstream from the existing factory. The animal

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2. Location

Town of Redding:

9, 23, 25 Brookside Road
6 through 40 Church Street (even only)
7 through 43, 20 through 50 North Main Street
20 through 44, 56 through 70 Portland Avenue (even only);
75 through 155 Portland Avenue (odd only)
3 through 18 Smith Street (odd and even)
2, 3, 4, 6, 7 South Church Street

Town of Wilton:

1 through 49 Church Street (odd only)
20 through 48, 31, 49 New Street
12, 16, 17, 20 New Street Terrace
5, 9 New Street Extension
62 through 68, 86 through 96 Portland Avenue (even only)
67 - 73 Portland Avenue (odd only)
872 Danbury Road (Route 7)
20 through 27 Redding Road
13 through 32 West Church Street (odd and even)

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites, Connecticut. 1981.

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Most of the nineteenth-century residential development consists of two main types or styles. While there are a few cube-form Italianate-style houses, the vast majority are gable-to-street wood-frame buildings with small front porches. Occasionally the basic rectangular plan of these houses is elaborated with a cross gable or a bay window. Originally all were sided in clapboard; some today have aluminum siding, or stucco, and a few of the porches have been enclosed. Some of these modest dwellings were multi-family tenements constructed for Gilbert and Bennett workers. The Hiram St. John House (circa 1860) (Inventory #18; Photograph #11) at 49 Church Street, or the Aaron Davis House (Inventory #8; Photograph #7) across the street, are representative examples of the Italianate style as found in the district. They share common characteristics, the cube form, the carved eave brackets, but most notably, extended attic windows below the eaves. The Davis House still retains two hexagonal panes in these windows, a feature found on most of the other houses of this style, not only in the district but elsewhere in the Georgetown area. Although the double pane has been replaced on the St. John House with a single light, it is undoubtedly the most elaborate house of this style in the district. The foliated carvings on the double brackets under the eaves and the use of bead-and-reel molding under the cornice are just two of its special features. Both these houses have retained their original barns or carriage houses. The St. John House has a large red barn to the south of the main house, and the Davis House has a barn converted to a carriage house with a cupola, to the north and rear of the residence. For other examples of this style please see Inventory #4, 78; Photograph #15.

Most of the simple nineteenth-century domestic houses or tenements can be found on Smith Street, West Church, or south of Route 107 on what is now called South Church Street. In this latter area are a group of tenement buildings that clearly functioned as multiple family housing in the nineteenth century. The one exception here is the Malcolm Gregory House, a unique building which today displays many Greek Revival features but may date from the eighteenth century (Inventory #133; Photograph #4). Smith Street is lined with simple gable-to-street houses, with two exceptions. A Sears Roebuck bungalow-style house at Number 10 was built about 1920 (Inventory #128). Across the street is a Queen Anne-style house now used as the rectory for the Bible Church (formerly the Gilbert Memorial [Congregational]) Church on North Main Street [Inventory #129]). It is a larger building with a veranda wrapping around the facade and the north elevation. In comparison to the neighboring cottages, it has a considerable amount of detail including imbricated shingles in the gable pediment of the veranda and in the gable peaks. Church Street, as well, has a few of these simple nineteenth-century houses, particularly at the lower end where it now intersects with Route 107.

Several institutional buildings remain in the district including four churches, two schools, and a post office (now vacant). The churches display a wide range of styles. They include the Greek-Revival style Methodist Episcopal (now United Methodist) Church on Church Street (Inventory #15; Photograph #9) and across the street a Carpenter Gothic-style Roman Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart which is distinguished by some exceptional stained glass windows in rose and green tones (Inventory #11; Photograph #8). Almost directly opposite the Gilbert and Bennett factory is the Gilbert Memorial Church (now the Bible Church), built of stone in the Gothic Revival Style in 1902 (Inventory #36; Photograph #20). Although small in scale, it utilizes many other

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features found in larger churches built in this style at that time, including buttresses and pointed arch windows, a square main tower, and on the west side a round turret with a conical roof. An unusual feature of this same elevation is a porte cochere with a separate door leading into the church. The step for this doorway is located at the height of a carriage, possibly a feature installed for the benefit of the Gilbert family. To the rear of the church is a small cemetery containing the graves of Edwin Gilbert and his wife (Inventory #37). On Portland Avenue is the Swedish Lutheran Church, built originally in 1908 (Inventory #86). A wooden enclosed portico added about 1950 somewhat obscures its historic appearance. It too has fine stained glass windows on the end elevations. The immediate adjacent neighbor on the north is the church rectory, a cross-gable house displaying the Queen Anne influence (Inventory #87).

Two schools were constructed in the District in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: a one-room schoolhouse now used as a residence on Route 107 (Inventory #122) and the Gilbert and Bennett School, an elaborate buff brick building constructed in the Beaux Arts Classical style in 1915 (Inventory #29; Photograph #1). This latter building also displays a red terra cotta tile roof and utilizes molded plaster consoles under the overhanging eaves. The Flemish gable of the entrance is elaborated by decorative brickwork. The unaltered interior of this building contains a large assembly room just inside the main entrance. It is decorated with a mural depicting the original Benjamin Gilbert and his wife when they first began manufacturing hair sieves, the start of the Gilbert and Bennett industry. An unusual feature of the layout of this building is that all of the classrooms open both to a central corridor and to the outside. A playing field which extends from the building all the way to Route 7 to the west is also included in the district.

Most of the twentieth-century residential development took place on two streets, New Street and Portland Avenue. The development on New Street accompanied the building of the school by Gilbert and Bennett in 1915. Only two houses clearly predate the school in this area. They are located on New Street extension and are identical houses of the folk house type, built in 1913 (Inventory #30, 31). A limited variety of Colonial Revival-style houses and bungalows are located along the east side of New Street. Two of the representative examples are located at 34 and 38 New Street (Inventory #25, 26). New Street Terrace contains a group of four buildings built just prior to World War II. Although technically non-contributing they deserve mention because of their common characteristics, most notably the use of rusticated cinder block foundations, a construction material first used much earlier in the twentieth century.

Portland Avenue contains a number of duplexes constructed by Gilbert and Bennett after World War II and rented to employees. Interspersed among them are several earlier gable-to-street houses built about 1880, also owned by the company. The twentieth-century housing utilizes two basic plans: square and rectangular. Variety is added by varying the roof treatments of the rectangular houses. Some of the better examples are Inventory #108, 112, 115; Photographs #23). The American Four-Square style houses are concentrated in the center of this development, alternating on opposite sides of the street. See Inventory #107; Photograph #25 for an example of this type.

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A complete inventory of buildings and sites in the district follows. It includes names of owners or builders derived primarily from historic map searches, although a few title searches on key buildings were carried out. Dates given for the inventoried buildings were based on architectural style and, where possible, confirmed by tax assessors' records in Wilton and Redding. There is no attempt to differentiate between the two towns in the district in the inventory. Streets located in both towns are numbered consecutively by the address of the resource. Refer to the map of the historic district for the location of the town line between Redding and Wilton.

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Inventory of Contributing Buildings and Sites

Inventory #	Address	Name/Style/Date	C/NC	Photo-graph #
1.	9 Brookside Road	Cape, ca. 1820 with modern commercial building, 1985	C	
2.	23 Brookside Road	Gable-front, ca. 1870	C	
3.	25 Brookside Road	19th-c. domestic, ca. 1850	C	
4.	1 Church Street	ST. JOHN HOUSE, Italianate, 1859	C	
5.	2 Church Street	19th-c. workers' housing, ca. 1870	C	6
6.	3 Church Street	Cross-gable, ca. 1890	C	
7.	6 Church Street	19th-c. domestic, ca. 1870	C	
8.	18 Church Street	AARON H. DAVIS HOUSE, Italianate, ca. 1860	C	7
9.	20 Church Street	JAMES CORCORAN HOUSE, Cross-gable, ca. 1880	C	
10.	23 Church Street	20th-c. domestic, 1915	C	
11.	30 Church Street	CHURCH OF THE SACRED HEART, Carpenter Gothic, ca. 1880	C	8
12.	30 Church Street	Colonial Revival, ca. 1935	C	
13.	30 Church Street	PRYOR-HUBBARD MEMORIAL HALL, 1965	NC	
14.	33 Church Street	19th-c. domestic, ca. 1860	C	
15.	37 Church Street	METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, Greek Revival, 1867	C	9
16.	38 Church Street	METHODIST FRIENDSHIP HALL, 1904, (converted to residence)	C	
17.	40 Church Street	Modern residence, 1950	NC	

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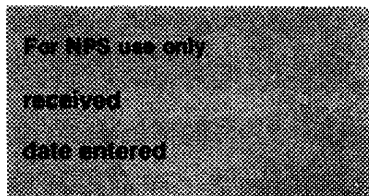
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Inventory #	Address	Name/Style/Date	C/NC	Photo-graph #
18.	49 Church Street	HIRAM ST. JOHN HOUSE, Italianate, ca. 1860	C	11
19.	872 Danbury Road	Gable-front folkhouse, ca. 1880	C	
20.	10 New Street	20th-c. domestic, 1929	C	
21.	20 New Street	Cross-gable, 1920	C	
22.	24 New Street	Bungalow, 1915	C	
23.	28 New Street	Colonial Revival with docked gable, 1914	C	
24.	31 New Street	Modern Cape, 1940	NC	
25.	34 New Street	20th-c. domestic, Queen Anne influence, 1925	C	
26.	38 New Street	Gambrel cape, 1928	C	
27.	42 New Street	Gambrel cape, ca. 1935	C	
28.	48 New Street	Bungalow, 1928	C	
29.	49 New Street	GILBERT & BENNETT SCHOOL Beaux Arts Classical, 1915 (now Landmark Academy)	C	1
30.	5 New Street Extension	Gable-front folkhouse, 1913	C	
31.	9 New Street Extension	Gable-front folkhouse, 1913	C	
32.	12 New Street Terrace	Modern Cape, 1938	NC	
33.	16 New Street Terrace	Modern Cape, 1940	NC	
34.	17 New Street Terrace	Modern Cape, 1940	NC	
35.	20 New Street Terrace	Modern Cape, 1940	NC	
36.	7 North Main Street	GILBERT MEMORIAL CHURCH Gothic Revival (stone), 1900	C	20

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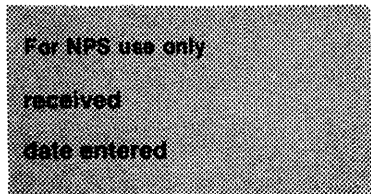
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Inventory #	Address	Name/Style/Date	C/NC	Photo-graph #
37.	7 North Main Street	GILBERT CEMETERY (rear of church)	C	
38.	15 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT garages *	C	
39.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT Office 20th-c. cobblestone bungalow, 1909	C	19
40.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT modern office, 1953-1962	NC	
41.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT mill (35'x249'), 1894-1904	C	
42.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT cafeteria (20'x33'), 1957	NC	
43.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT wire weaving building (45'x279'), 1908-1922	C	
44.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT warehouse (metal; 123'x235'), 1956-1964	NC	
45.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT galvanizing building (48'x162'), 1900	C	
46.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT storage building (39'x98'), 1904	C	
47.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT loom building (50'x300'), 1874	C	
48.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT high pressure boiler house (34'x42'), 1904	C	
49.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT pump house (25'x36'), 1904	C	
50.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT low pressure boiler house, 1904	C	
51.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT gatehouse, 1947-1951	NC	

* Information for Gilbert & Bennett Manufacturing Company taken from Industrial Report, Tax Assessor's Office, Redding, CT. See photographs # 16, 17, 21 for general views.

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52.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT warehouse, 1973	NC	
53.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT brick factory (4 story); (46'x46'), 1914	C	
54.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT storage building, 1956	NC	
55.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT galvanizing building (40'x113'), 1909-1927	C	
56.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT reverse twisting building (42'x117'), 1904	C	
57.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT storage, 1950-1954	NC	
58.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT annealing & rod cleaning building (50'x221'), 1900	C	
59.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT rod baker (20'x55'), 1900	C	
60.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT laboratory (15'x30), 1946	NC	
61.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT galvanizing & morgan wire drawing building (36'x300), 1948	NC	
62.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT factory (50'x240'), 1909	C	18
63.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT galvanizing building, 1910	C	
64.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT service garage, 1924	C	
65.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT blacksmith shop (40'x29'), ca. 1900	C	

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Inventory #	Address	Name/Style/Date	C/NC	Photo-graph #
66.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT paint shop (22'x30'), ca. 1900	C	
67.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT dam, concrete (15'x80'), 1874	C	
68.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT dam, concrete (12'x70'), n.d.	C	
69.-73.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT bridges, n.d. (2 concrete, 2 steel [1 enclosed], 1 timber railroad)	C	
74.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT pumphouse, 1973	NC	
75.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT storage shed (72'x96'), 1974	NC	
76.	20 North Main Street	GILBERT & BENNETT water storage tank (100,000 gal. cap.), n.d.		
77.	43 North Main Street	GEORGETOWN POST OFFICE (vacant), ca. 1880	C	
78.	50 North Main Street	THE EDWIN GILBERT HOUSE (vacant) Italianate, ca. 1860	C	15
79.	54 North Main Street	W.R. SMITH HOUSE (vacant) Victorian cottage, ca. 1860	C	14
80.	North Main Street	B. BENNETT STORE, ca. 1850 Victorian detailing, ca. 1860 (converted to residence ca. 1900)	C	13
81.	North Main Street	Carriage house, ca. 1880 (converted to residence)	C	12
82.	61 North Main Street	Gable-front domestic, ca. 1860	C	
83.	20 Portland Avenue	19th-c. domestic, ca. 1860	C	
84.	20 Portland Avenue	19th-c. domestic, ca. 1840	C	

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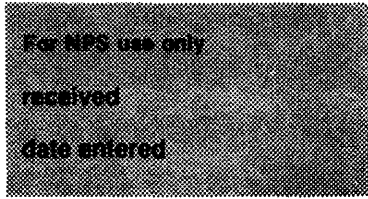
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Inventory #	Address	Name/Style/Date	C/NC	Photo-graph #
85.	32 Portland Avenue	Cross gable, 1911	C	
86.	44 Portland Avenue	BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH, 1908 modernized, ca. 1950	C	
87.	44 Portland Avenue	BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN RECTORY, Cross-gable, ca. 1900	C	
88.	56 Portland Avenue	Gable-front folkhouse, 1898	C	
89.	58 Portland Avenue	Cross-gable, ca. 1890	C	
90.	62 Portland Avenue	Gable-front, ca. 1900	C	22
91.	66 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Gable-front, ca. 1870	C	22
92.	74 Portland Avenue	Modern Cape, 1952	NC	
93.	75 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Colonial Revival duplex, ca. 1920	C	
94.	80 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Colonial Revival duplex, ca. 1920 (docked gable main roof and porches)	C	
95.	85 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Colonial Revival duplex, ca. 1920	C	
96.	88 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Colonial Revival duplex, 1922 (gable on hip roof)	C	
97.	95 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Colonial Revival duplex, ca. 1920	C	
98.	96 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Colonial Revival duplex, 1920	C	

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Inventory #	Address	Name/Style/Date	C/NC	Photo-graph #
99.	104 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Four-Square duplex, 1922	C	
100.	105 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Four-Square duplex, 1922	C	
101.	112 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Cross-gable, ca. 1880	NC	
102.	115 Portland Avenue	Modern residence, 1964	NC	
103.	122 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Four-Square duplex, 1922	C	
104.	125 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Four-Square duplex, ca. 1922	C	
105.	132 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Cross-gabled, ca. 1880	C	
106.	135 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Four-Square duplex, ca. 1920	C	25
107.	142 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Four-Square duplex, ca. 1920	C	
108.	145 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Colonial Revival duplex, ca. 1920, gable on hip roof	C	
109.	152 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Cross gable, ca. 1880	C	
110.	152A Portland Avenue	Modern bungalow (rear)	NC	
111.	155 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Colonial Revival duplex, ca. 1920, docked gable entry porches	C	
112.	162 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Colonial Revival duplex, ca. 1920, docked gable entry porches	C	23

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Inventory #	Address	Name/Style/Date	C/NC	Photo-graph #
113.	66-68 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Colonial Revival, 1925, pent roof	C	
114.	67-69 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Colonial Revival duplex, 1925 Gambrel roof	C	24
115.	71-73 Portland Avenue	GILBERT & BENNETT HOUSING Colonial Revival duplex, 1925 Gable on hip roof	C	
116.	86 Portland Avenue	Cross-gable, ca. 1900	C	
117.	90 Portland Avenue	Italianate, ca. 1880	C	
118.	96 Portland Avenue	OLMSTEAD HOUSE Greek Revival, ca. 1850		
119.	106 Portland Avenue	20th-c. domestic, ca. 1920	C	
120.	20 Redding Road (Rte. 107)	Colonial Revival, 1922	C	
121.	25 Redding Road	Gable-front folkhouse, 1910	C	2
122.	27 Redding Road	19th-c. domestic, 1859 (possibly schoolhouse)	C	3
123.	Redding Road (set back from road)	"VILLA CAROLINA" Eclectic alterations of 19th-c. house, n.d.	C	
124.	3 Smith Street	C. HERBERT TAYLOR HOUSE 20th-c. domestic, 1909	C	
125.	4 Smith Street	CHARLES GLANS HOUSE 20th-c. domestic, 1908	C	
126.	6 Smith Street	20th-c. domestic, ca. 1900	C	
127.	9 Smith Street	19th-c. domestic, ca. 1880	C	
128.	10 Smith Street	Sears Roebuck Bungalow, 1920	C	

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Inventory of Contributing Buildings and Sites

Inventory #	Address	Name/Style/Date	C/NC	Photo-graph #
129.	15 Smith Street	DR. HOWARD MANSFIELD HOUSE Queen Anne, 1894	C	
130.	16 Smith Street	FRANK & EMMA BERGFORS HOUSE 20th-c. domestic, 1912	C	5
131.	18 Smith Street	Modern Cape, 1940	NC	
132.	3 South Church Street	19th-c. tenement, ca. 1870	C	
133.	4 South Church Street	MATTHEW GREGORY HOUSE Greek Revival (possibly 18th c.), ca. 1840	C	4
134.	6 South Church Street	Gable-front tenement, ca. 1880	C	
135.	7 South Church Street	Gable-front tenement, ca. 1880	C	
136.	13 West Church Street	Cross-gable, 1912	C	10
137.	16 West Church Street	19th-c. domestic, 1870	C	
138.	17 West Church Street	19th-c. domestic, 1888	C	
139.	21 West Church Street	19th-c. domestic, ca. 1870	C	
140.	22 West Church Street	20th-c. domestic, 1930	C	
141.	25 West Church Street	Cross-gable, 1912	C	
142.	28 West Church Street	Cross-gable, 1879	C	
143.	31 West Church Street	Queen Anne, ca. 1880	C	
144.	32 West Church Street	A. BENNETT HOUSE Greek Revival, ca. 1860	C	

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Georgetown Historic District

Redding and Wilton, CT

Section number 7 Page 7

The purpose of this sheet is to amend the inventory of contributing buildings and sites to the Georgetown Historic District, Item No. 7 page 7 No. 38, 15 North Main Street Gilbert & Bennett garages (listed as contributing structures). Due to new information on construction dates would like to have these classified as non-contributing.

Enclosed is a map of building location for a 1935 appraisal of the Gilbert & Bennett Co.* With the exception of the small two-bay garage shown as #33 on the map the other garages are not shown. The other garages are not fifty years old. To substantiate this further inquiry revealed that the Georgetown firehouse shown as building #31 on this map was destroyed by fire in February 1946 and that the small three-bay unit was constructed after this to house fire equipment until the new firehouse was built. The long multi-bay garage was not built until 1952 when the Route 107 overpass was completed. Had the garages been constructed prior to 1946 they would have been in the way of the firetrucks direct path to North Main Street.**

All the garages are in structurally poor shape, have no foundations and dirt or asphalt floors. They are all on the perimeter of the district separated by a roadway and backed up against the Route 107 overpass. They share no significant integration with the other buildings in the mill complex or the district in general.

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* Have drawn in existing garages circa 1946-52.

** Information supplied by Carl Rosendahl, retired vice-president for Gilbert & Bennett and Roger Therrien, former shop carpenter for G&B during this period.

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Georgetown, Connecticut Item number 8 Page 2

hair that was unsuitable for making sieves was also utilized for mattresses and carriage cushions, with the firm supplying the carriage manufacturers of New Haven and Bridgeport with hair for this purpose. Another side line of the company about 1850 was the manufacture of glue, again an animal byproduct. In 1834 a mill site was purchased near the present Georgetown railroad station to the south of the district, remaining in operation until 1889. A salesman was employed to peddle the goods throughout New England.

The firm remained a family-oriented business. Sturgess Bennett of Wilton, who married Benjamin's eldest daughter, joined the firm about 1828. Edmond Hurlburt, also of Wilton, another son-in-law, along with William J. Gilbert, the eldest son of the founder, joined the company in 1829. In 1842, Edwin Gilbert, the second son, became a member, five years before his father died in 1847.

By the Civil War the company had installed power looms for the weaving of wire cloth, a process formerly done by the company on hand carpet looms when it produced the first insect screening in the United States. The first wire mill which was to become the foundation of the later nineteenth- and twentieth-century development was built in 1863. In the spring of 1874 a major fire destroyed most of the existing factory complex, with an estimated property loss of \$200,000. Immediate rebuilding took place, accompanied by reorganization as a joint-stock corporation. The Danbury and Norwalk Railroad (which had run by the factory complexes both at the upper and lower pond since 1850) provided a spur line into the complex.

The homes of the major nineteenth-century stockholders and officers still remain in the district, including the Aaron H. Davis House (Inventory #8; Photograph #7), the Matthew Gregory House (Inventory #133; Photograph #4), the Edwin Gilbert House (Inventory #78; Photograph #15), and the Hiram St. John House (Inventory #18; Photograph #11). Gregory was an early financial supporter of Benjamin Gilbert. The David H. Miller House, reputedly a fine Italianate mansion which stood across the street from the St. John House on Church Street, was torn down in this century and replaced by a modern house. Its carriage house still stands on North Main Street (Inventory #81; Photograph #12). Miller was one of the first non-family members to play a major role in the company. An English immigrant, he became its bookkeeper in 1856, later vice president and treasurer, then president when Edwin Gilbert died. The St. John family, all Gilbert and Bennett stockholders, had lived in Georgetown since the eighteenth century. They were directly involved with the establishment of the Methodist Protestant Church in Georgetown (a separate group from the Methodist Episcopal).

From an early period Gilbert and Bennett's management was associated with this sect, including Benjamin Gilbert and his wife, reputed to be members of the first "class". Meetings were held at the home of Sturgess Bennett, his son, and church officers included John O. St. John, who donated the land where the church was built, and his son, Hiram, whose house is still standing at 49 Church Street (Inventory #18; Photograph #11).² After the Methodist Protestants in Georgetown voted to become Congregationalists, the Gilbert Memorial Church was constructed in 1902 by Edwin Gilbert

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(Inventory #36; Photograph #20). David H. Miller established a large trust fund for the church at this time.

Catherine Miller, the wife of David H., had been involved earlier in the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church in Georgetown. An Irish Catholic (born in Dublin), she supplied the construction mortgage for the church (Inventory #11; Photograph #8). The land was provided by James Corcoran, who built his house next door (Inventory #9). The deed to the church property was first held by Thaddeus Walsh, a priest who had been supplying a "mission" to Georgetown's Irish population for several years.

The labor history of the company in the late nineteenth century has been well documented from the surviving manuscript records of the business.³ Apparently a Knights of Labor union was established in the Georgetown area, but the company never became a closed shop. It is clear that its pay scales were comparable for the period. In fact, Gilbert and Bennett's laborers received almost precisely the average hourly wage of all manufacturing concerns in Connecticut at this time (about \$1.50) a day. The pay books of the company indicate that there was a company store (possibly the Bennett Store on North Main Street) (Inventory #80; Photograph #13) and deductions for cord wood and rent. Tenements were rented for \$4 or \$5 a month, the standard rate for the period.

Most of the labor force was drawn from the major immigrant groups. Many Irish lived in Georgetown (near the lower mill) and worked at Gilbert and Bennett. Swedish immigrants⁴ actively recruited by the company arrived in great numbers by the end of the century. The Swedish neighborhood was first located in the Weston section. In the twentieth century they occupied the housing provided on Portland Avenue by the company, where they built their church (Inventory #86). Scandinavian surnames also predominated on New Street by 1927.⁵ Ethnic neighborhoods were also established by the Polish and Italian immigrants in Georgetown (outside the district), although a few Italian Americans lived in the Wilton section of Portland Avenue.

Like many nineteenth-century companies, Gilbert and Bennett involved itself in the lives of its employees, requiring absolute temperance, and encouraging home ownership to the extent that it supplied low-interest mortgages. "Model" company tenements were built after the Civil War, but their number cannot be determined.⁶ Some officers of Gilbert and Bennett owned houses which they rented out to workers. It would not be until the twentieth century that the company made a concerted effort to supply workers' housing.

The twentieth century was a period of rapid expansion for Gilbert and Bennett. By 1900 Gilbert and Bennett had 147 employees, according to the Twelfth Census of the United States, representing 20 percent of the wire industry workers in Connecticut. By 1906, the last year under direct Gilbert family leadership, the company employed 600 workers and had built most of the large brick mills used for specialized manufacturing processes at the factory complex. Following World War I, undoubtedly to attract more workers to the area, the company laid out Portland Avenue in the Redding section of Georgetown on land it owned overlooking the mill pond. A few earlier houses were already located there, possibly company tenements (Inventory #91, 101, 105, 109). It proved to be an

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ideal location for the Colonial Revival-style duplexes built as rental housing between 1920 and 1925. It is not known whether this housing, which seems to be of a level suitable for middle management, was rented by this group, or by unskilled workers. The development continued to be used as rental property until December 1947, at which time Gilbert and Bennett sold the entire group of houses apparently to their then-current residents. Many of the grantees at this time had Swedish-American surnames.

The twentieth-century expansion of Gilbert and Bennett was overseen primarily by the Miller family. David H. Miller, who became president in 1906, was succeeded by his son, Samuel J. Miller, in 1915, followed by his grandson, D. Henry Miller III, in 1936. In 1954 the presidency of the company was taken over by John Milliken, a son-in-law of David Miller II and currently serving (19__). Raymond C. Miller, the son of D. Henry Miller III, is now vice president and secretary of Gilbert and Bennett. The Millers clearly followed the earlier Gilbert and Bennett tradition of community involvement and commitment to the social welfare of their workers. Under their leadership, the company was concerned in the education of its employees' children. It built the Gilbert and Bennett School and donated it to the town (Inventory #29; Photograph #1). It is now owned and operated as a private school, the Landmark Academy on New Street. Although it was reputed to have been built at company expense, it is clear that the employees indirectly helped pay for its construction since they agreed to forego pay raises for a specified number of years to help defray the cost of the building.

Expansion of the physical plant of the company in Georgetown in the twentieth century was accompanied by addition of new buildings elsewhere in the nation, starting in 1895. That year a large manufacturing plant was purchased in Blue Island, Illinois to serve the company's western market. Other companies in the same field were bought out by Gilbert and Bennett, including Coatings Engineering of South Natick, Massachusetts, and the Roman Wire Company of Sherman, Texas; by 1981, Toccoa, Georgia had become the site of Gilbert and Bennett warehouses. Some of its more recent products which demonstrate its command of the technology in the field of weaving, twisting or welding wire including "Yard Gard" and "Rabbit Gard" (patented fencing).

While district residents still speak with pride about the company, the modern industrial plant which exists today in Georgetown has few direct connections with the community. Although some are third-generation workers, less than ten percent of the 260 employees still live in Georgetown.

Architectural Significance

The Georgetown Historic District is a twentieth-century anachronism: peaceful, tree-lined residential streets converge on a functioning industrial complex; well-preserved historic houses stand cheek-by-jowl with modern factories; the deteriorated slum neighborhoods associated with modern industry do not exist.

This residential pattern was exceptional even in the late nineteenth century. The elite of Georgetown, almost exclusively people associated

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with Gilbert and Bennett, lived in the midst of their workers. The predictable ethnic neighborhoods did exist in Georgetown, outside the district for the most part, but their employees were apparently encouraged to occupy, or build houses next to the mansions of the managers and officers. Furthermore, while it would be expected that the workers would live near the factory in this period, it is most unusual to find upper-class houses in this location.

Built within a short time frame (1860-1880), these Italianate-style houses are well-preserved and architecturally similar. Their architectural significance is perhaps enhanced by their setting and the contrast with the more modest neighboring houses, but as a group their local architectural significance is undeniable even though they are similar in style and lack the individual architectural assertiveness common in a Victorian period. Two are individually architecturally significant, the Hiram St. John House (Inventory #18; Photograph #11) and the Edwin Gilbert House (Inventory #78; Photograph #15). Despite the fact that the latter house has stood vacant and been allowed to deteriorate, it still displays most of its exceptional architectural features: eave brackets, window hoods, and the front porch with its second-story balustrade. The St. John House is exceptionally well-preserved. All of its hand-crafted details remain in place. Of particular note are the foliated brackets carved in high relief, set off by the almost austere facade. Another major difference in this house is the use of the Palladian window over the portico, an interesting and successful combination of the Georgian and Italianate styles. Although most of the sash are replacements, the architectural detailing of the verandah is original, including the unusual cutwork design of the skirt. Here the flushboarding wall of the porch enhances the decorative effect.

The remaining nineteenth-century residential architecture is a major contributing component to the district. Although none of the houses is exceptional in its own right, this group is generally well-preserved and for the most part has retained its architectural integrity. Some of the better examples have retained their original siding and modest Victorian detail. They include Inventory #7, Photograph #6, a well-preserved example of a quite plain nineteenth-century gable-to-street house and the W. R. Smith House, a Victorian cottage on North Main Street next to the Bennett House, which is set off by its foliated bargeboards (Inventory 29; Photograph #14).

The nineteenth-century churches in the district are also architecturally significant, well-preserved examples of ecclesiastical architecture, especially the fine Carpenter Gothic-style Church of the Sacred Heart. It is an exceptional example of its type and it has retained all of its exterior features (Inventory #11; Photograph #8). This style is also executed in stone in the Gilbert Memorial Church, almost a miniature of similar cathedrals of the period (Inventory #36; Photograph #20). Typical of institutional architecture, particularly libraries and chapels built around the turn of the century, this church is distinguished by its exceptional stonework and degree of detail, which is set off by the original slate-shingled roof. The only major stone building in the

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district, it was located right next to the factory, a site chosen by Edwin Gilbert.

The twentieth-century housing development created by Gilbert and Bennett is remarkable for two reasons: first, as a rare example of twentieth-century workers' housing, and second, because it is exceptionally well-preserved. Most of the houses still display architectural features which were installed to provide variety to quite similar forms. These include not only a variety of roof types and porches, but, for example, dentil work in the cornices and imbricated shingles found on the pedimented gables of the American Four-Squares, of which there are five on the street (see Inventory #107; Photograph #25 for one of the best-preserved examples). The degree of style used on these multi-family houses is in itself unusual, adding significance to this body of architecture.

The industrial complex itself contains a number of significant buildings. For the most part there has been little modification to the exterior of the historic mills. The fenestration pattern, the sash, and the variety of openings, stone and brick arches, and lintels, have been preserved. Rather than change these buildings, there seems to have been a deliberate effort on the part of Gilbert and Bennett to retain the historic facades, do interior modifications where necessary for modernization, and connect these buildings to more modern additions. Running along North Main Street on the west side of the complex is an example of this type where three or four different styles of industrial building are joined together and extend for more than 1,000 feet (see Photograph #17). One of the best examples of the historic factory buildings at Gilbert and Bennett is also located on North Main Street along the south side of the complex (Inventory #62; Photograph #18). Built in an unusual shape to accommodate its location between the spur track of the railroad and the Norwalk River, it has retained all of its exterior integrity and is an exceptionally well-preserved example of early nineteenth-century industrial architecture. Most of the other historic buildings at the factory are obscured from view, either due to their location in the complex or because of the presence of the exceptionally large, metal-framed, warehouses built in the last 20 years, which tend to overwhelm some of the smaller neighboring historic buildings. The early-nineteenth-century building which still serves the company as an office is an architecturally significant example of its type (Inventory #39 ; Photograph #19). Really a bungalow executed in cobblestone, it makes quite a contrast both in scale and type with the larger industrial buildings behind it. Again, a need for more space resulted in an addition to the rear of this building rather than a modification to its existing form or exterior.

Notes:

1. The history of the company is compiled from several sources. See Marc B. Feeley, "Gilbert and Bennett: An American Success Story"; Charles Burr Todd, The History of Redding, Connecticut (New York: 1906).
2. Nationally the Methodist Protestant sect was established following a schism in the church lead by a Reverend William Stillwell; hence the group was known as

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"Stillwellites." Stillwell's followers wished to regain lay control of the church. It is recorded that Stillwell himself was the first minister in Georgetown.

3. See Feeley, "Gilbert and Bennett," Appendix where tables have been compiled from the pay records of selected years.
4. Ibid., pp. 44-55.
5. Map of Wilton, 1927. (Residents' names are listed for the street.)
6. Model tenements are referred to by Edwin Gilbert, who wrote the history of the company in Todd, The History... Because of the difficulty of title searching all properties owned by the company, only a few houses have been determined to be definitely nineteenth-century tenements.
7. According to the secretary at the Gilbert and Bennett office on North Main Street, June, 1986.

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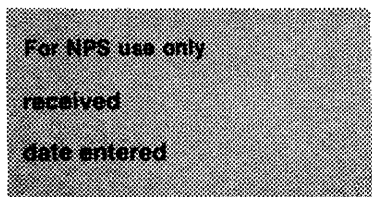
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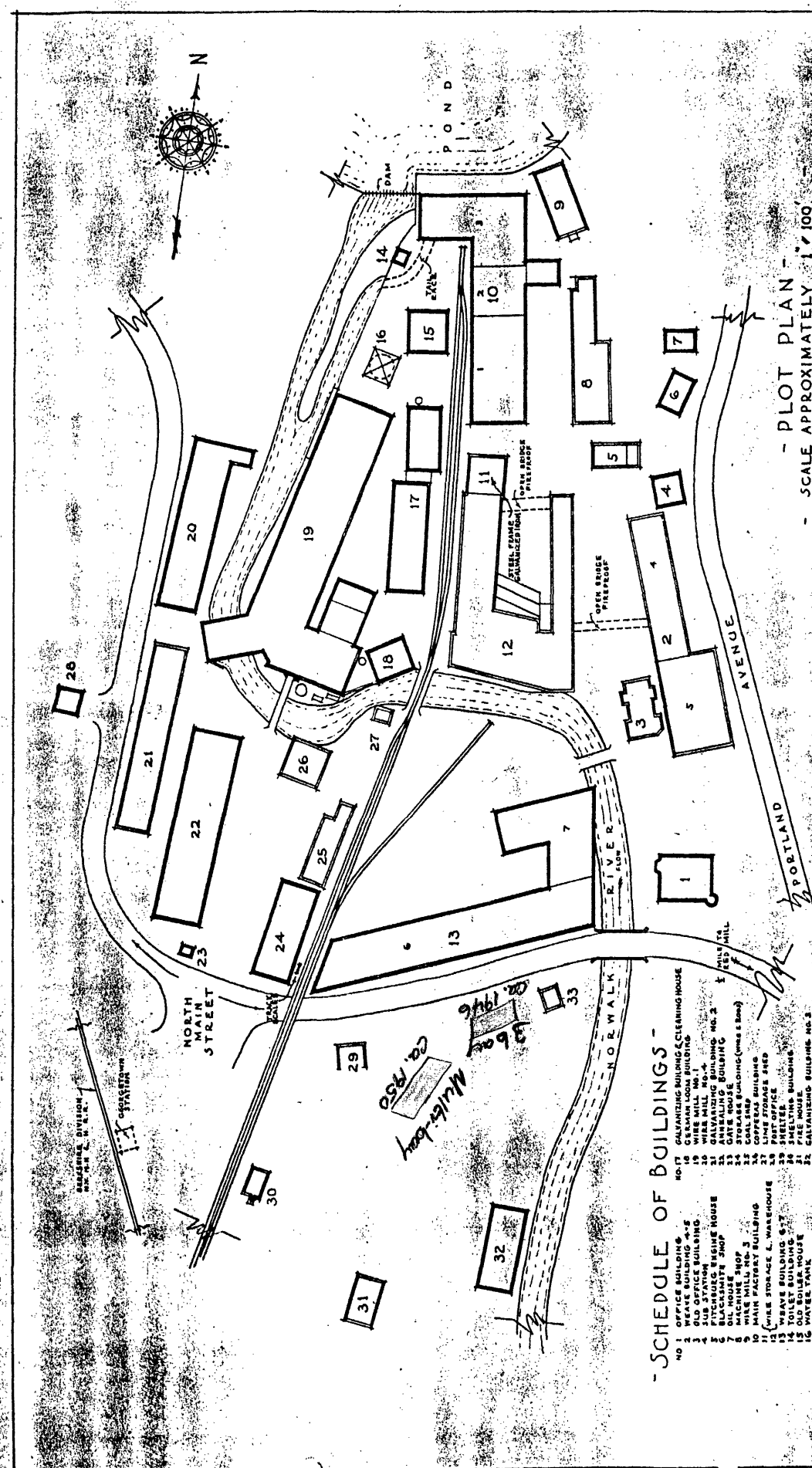
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Verbal Boundary and Justification

The district boundaries were drawn to encompass the maximum number of historic properties associated with the industrial and residential development of Georgetown in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Physical and man-made boundaries define the district on several sides, including the Norwalk River and the railroad track. The district is bounded on the west lower quadrant by Route 7 between New Street and Rte. 107. It then turns east down said road to a point opposite the first historic property at 27 Redding Road (Route 107) before turning to the north and west to encompass all the historic houses on West Church Street. After returning up the north side of West Church Street, it includes the entire property at 49 Church Street, and extends across Church Street. Excluding the first modern house at the northeast corner of North Main and Church Streets, it continues back to the north and runs along the railroad line to a point opposite the northern boundary line of 96 Portland Avenue. Here it crosses the road, encompasses said property and returns to the south along the entire length of Portland Avenue (along the rear property lines of all houses listed in the inventory) to Brookside Avenue. At said road the boundary extends down Brookside road to include all three historic properties there before returning to Portland Avenue. At this point it crosses the road to run along the east side of the road in a southerly direction, crosses North Main Street and extends to the railroad overpass along the north side of Route 107. At the overpass the boundary returns to the south along the railroad track to a point opposite the east end of New Street Terrace. After including all the properties on New Street Terrace, New Street, and New Street Ext., the boundary returns to the first point at the northeast corner of New Street and Route 7.

4/3/90



- PLOT PLAN -
 - SCALE APPROXIMATELY 1" = 100'
 - THE GILBERT & BENNETT MFG. CO. -
 - GEORGETOWN, CONN. -

- SCHEDULE OF BUILDINGS**
- NO. 1 OFFICE BUILDING
 - 2 WEAVE BUILDING 4-F
 - 3 OLD SPINNING BUILDING
 - 4 FITTING ENGINE HOUSE
 - 5 BLACKSMITH SHOP
 - 6 MACHINE SHOP
 - 7 WIRE MILL NO. 3
 - 8 MAIN FACTORY BUILDING
 - 9 WIRE STORAGE 2, WAREHOUSE
 - 10 WARE BUILDING 5-F
 - 11 OLD BOILER HOUSE
 - 12 WATER TANK
 - 13 GALVANIZING BUILDING NO. 1
 - 14 GALVANIZING BUILDING NO. 2
 - 15 WIRE MILL NO. 4
 - 16 GERMAN LOOM BUILDING
 - 17 GALVANIZING BUILDING & CLEARING HOUSE
 - 18 WIRE MILL NO. 1
 - 19 WIRE MILL NO. 2
 - 20 GALVANIZING BUILDING NO. 2
 - 21 ANNEALING BUILDING
 - 22 STORAGE BUILDING (Wires & Bars)
 - 23 COAL SHED BUILDING
 - 24 WIRE MILL NO. 5
 - 25 WIRE MILL NO. 6
 - 26 WIRE MILL NO. 7
 - 27 WIRE MILL NO. 8
 - 28 WIRE MILL NO. 9
 - 29 PART OFFICE
 - 30 SHELTER BUILDING
 - 31 FIRE HOUSE
 - 32 GALVANIZING BUILDING NO. 3
 - 33 SPINNING MILL

LEGEND:
 BRICKS
 FRAME
 CONCRETE
 STONE

BLISS & COLE
 HARTFORD, CONN.
 MAY, 1935

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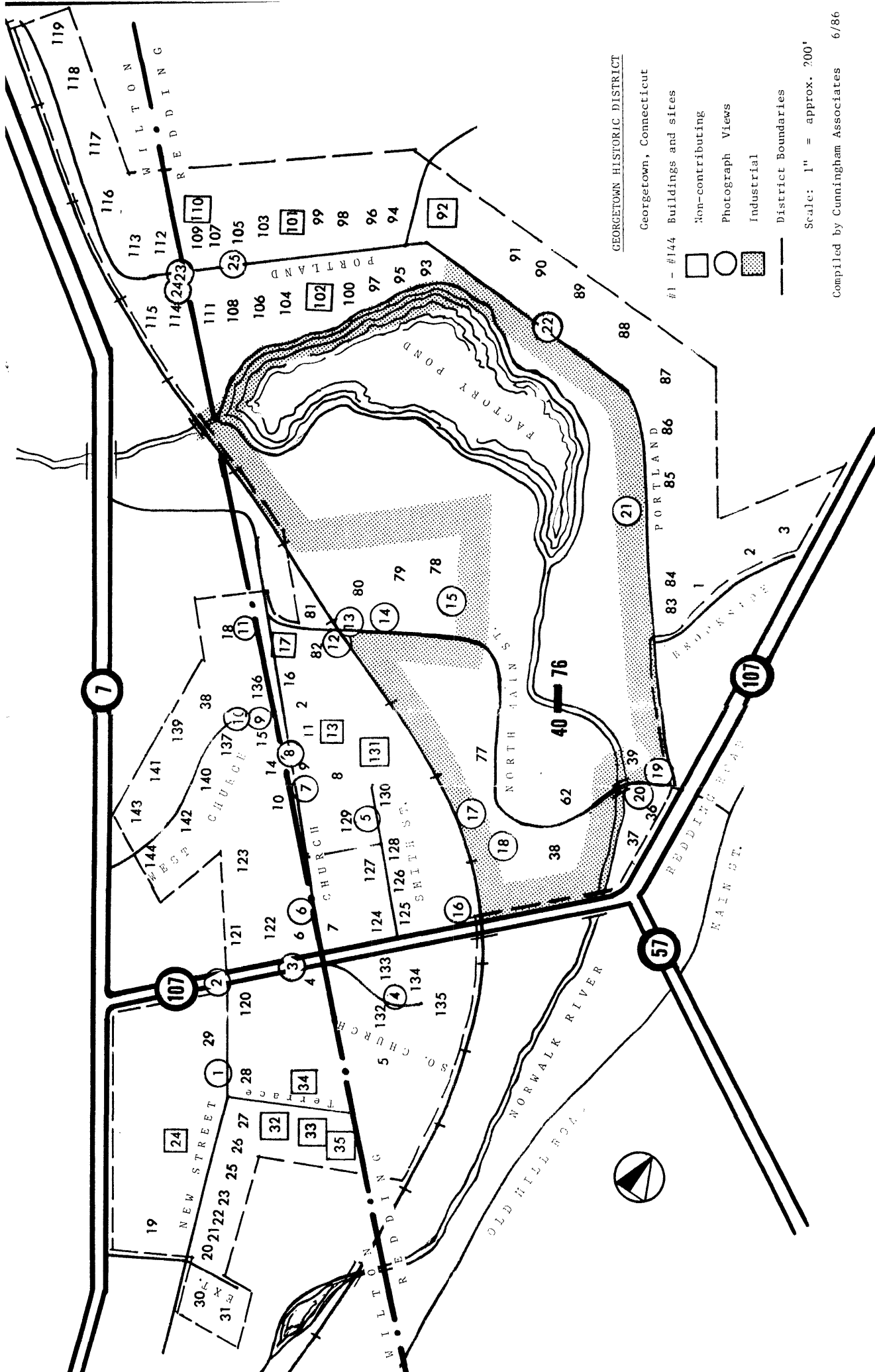
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Georgetown Historic District

Fairfield County, CONNECTICUT

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVAL

for Keeper *Albert Bryan* 4/12/90



GEORGETOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

Georgetown, Connecticut

#1 - #144 Buildings and sites

Non-contributing

Photograph Views

Industrial

District Boundaries

Scale: 1" = approx. 200'