



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

historic name: BIGELOW-HARTFORD CARPET MILLS HISTORIC DISTRICT

other name/site number: _____

2. Location

street & number: Bigelow and Hartford Avenues; Cottage Green; Thompson Court; Asnuntuck, Church, Lafayette, Martin, New, North, Pearl, Pleasant, Prospect, Spring, Tariff, Union, West, Windsor, and Whitworth Streets (see item 7 for complete list of addresses)

city/town: Enfield

not for publication: N/A
vicinity: N/A

state: CT county: Hartford

code: 009 zip code: 06082

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: district

Number of Resources within Property:

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|---------------|-----------------|------------|
| <u>256</u> | <u>27</u> | buildings |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | sites |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | structures |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | objects |
| <u>256</u> | <u>27</u> | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 5

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. See cont. sheet.

Signature of certifying official: [Handwritten Signature] Date: 10/20/94
Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Entered in the National Register

- 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):

Edson H. Beall 11-25-94
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: DOMESTIC Sub: multiple dwelling
DOMESTIC single dwelling
INDUSTRY manufacturing facility
Current: DOMESTIC Sub: multiple dwelling
DOMESTIC single dwelling

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification:

Greek Revival
Gothic Revival
Colonial Revival

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation STONE roof ASPHALT
walls WOOD other N/A
BRICK

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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8. Statement of Significance
=====

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: state.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : N/A

Areas of Significance: INDUSTRY
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
ARCHITECTURE

Period(s) of Significance: c.1840-c.1940

Significant Dates: See item 7

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Not known

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. X See continuation sheet.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

| | | |
|-------------|--|-----|
| Description | Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Mills Historic District Enfield, Hartford County, CT | 7-1 |
|-------------|--|-----|

The Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Mills Historic District encompasses several blocks of dense residential development surrounding a complex of large brick former factory buildings in the Thompsonville section of Enfield, Connecticut. Approximately 150 of the buildings in the district are houses that formerly served as company tenements; they were built over a period of years from c.1830 to c.1920 and vary in materials, size, style, and siting, including both brick and wood-frame construction. The houses are arranged in several different ways: there is one group of single-family houses that formerly surrounded a court, several long rows of multiple-family buildings, an area of short intersecting streets creating a grid of small blocks, and two long, tree-lined streets of variant designs mimicking a middle-class residential neighborhood.

The factory complex that is at the core of the district includes six early 20th-century manufacturing buildings formerly used in the production of wool carpets; now converted to residential use, all are listed on the National Register as the Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Mills. The buildings are several stories tall, of brick-pier construction, and cover an immense floor area (Photographs 1 and 2). Although there formerly were even more mill buildings, the sheer size of those that remain continues to make the complex the visual focal point of the area. The district extends westward across Amtrak's railroad right-of-way to include the ruins of a seventh building, the powerhouse, of which only some coal bunkers and a tall yellow-brick chimney remain. On the opposite or south side of Freshwater Brook is another related factory, the 2 1/2-story brick Enfield Manufacturing Company stockinet mill (Photograph 3), built in 1845.

Except for two center-chimney houses on Church Street that may date back to the 1830s, the oldest company houses in the district are the six 1 1/2-story Gothic Revival-style brick dwellings on Cottage Green, built about 1845 (Photograph 4); most retain their original elaborate bargeboard, pendants, and finials. They formerly surrounded a broad, open green; however, the company later added two more rows of tenements, effectively obliterating the original concept. This grouping also includes a much larger Gothic Revival-style dwelling with a board-and-batten exterior on Prospect Street (Photograph 5) built about 1860 by the owner of the stockinet mill; several brick multiple-family houses with Greek Revival cornice detail; and three long brick tenements on Spring Street (Photograph 6).

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The next to be built were the numerous c.1860 Greek Revival-style wood-frame houses, 2 1/2 stories tall with duplex plans, arranged in rows at the north end of Church and Pleasant Streets (Photograph 7). All have simple pilaster-and-lintel entries, and most have porches and smaller wings on the side elevations. They share the brick foundations and multiple small brick chimneys that characterize most of the mill housing in the district; many have slate roofs.

Around 1880 the company added a row of 2 1/2-story duplex-plan houses on the north side of Cottage Green (Photograph 8); their exposed purlins along the roofline and porches with turned columns and curving post brackets show the influence of the Stick style of architecture. Most of the houses that the company built in the late 19th-century, however, were plain utilitarian dwellings with no stylistic reference. Crowded together on the streets north of the mill (and in another row on Cottage Green), these tenements are 2 1/2 and 3 stories high with four or more units per floor (Photographs 9 and 10). Around 1900 another variant was employed, a 2 1/2-story duplex-plan house with a large center dormer (Photograph 11); the original porch detail included turned posts and vine-pattern brackets (Photograph 12).

Around the time of World War I, the carpet company set a new course in company housing with the 2 1/2-story dwellings on Bigelow Street and Hartford Avenue (Photographs 13 - 15). These houses, combining Queen Anne-style and Colonial Revival elements, were originally covered with a combination of clapboards and shingles. There are three basic plans: gable-roofed with the gable facing the street, gable-roofed with the ridge set parallel to the street, and gambrel-roofed. These appear to be randomly interspersed along the tree and sidewalk-lined streets. The development features additional variety created by diverse porch and window details. Unlike earlier housing, the new streets were laid out some distance from the mill, beginning one block east of the rest of the mill's houses.

As a consequence, the district boundary, which was drawn so as to include all areas of identifiable mill housing, necessarily includes some buildings such as those on Windsor Street (Photograph 16), that are contemporaneous but were never company-owned. These buildings are counted as contributing buildings because they are the same age as many of the mill houses. Similarly, one church (Photograph 5), several early 20th-century commercial or apartment blocks (Photograph 17), and

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| Description | Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Mills Historic District Enfield, Hartford County, CT | 7-3 |
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a former public school (Photograph 19) are embedded within the area of carpet-mill housing.

The district both as a whole and in its individual buildings retains much of its historical appearance. Vacant lots have replaced some tenements north of the mill, but on the whole there are very few gaps; the preponderance of former company housing continues to be visually striking. The houses themselves have undergone a wide range of modifications, the most prevalent of which is the covering of historic siding materials with aluminum or vinyl substitutes. With all types of houses, however, a few remain with their original siding material exposed, and there are numerous examples that retain their original sash, porch detail, and entry treatments, even when they have been sided (for example, the house shown in Photograph 7).

A few modern houses have been built in the district: four duplexes in a contemporary design at the intersection of Pleasant and Whitworth Streets (Photograph 19), a c.1980 house on Union Street, and a brick row house on Cottage Green (Photograph 20). Along with modern garages and two older houses that have been substantially altered, these constitute the only noncontributing structures.

Very few of the houses have historic outbuildings. However, there are small barns with board-sided exteriors scattered throughout the district, along with several c.1920 cinderblock garages built by the mill to serve the neighboring tenements. In the Inventory that follows, such barns and garages are included in the count of contributing buildings (C); conversely, the count of noncontributing buildings (NC) includes outbuildings that appear to be of relatively recent construction. "Siding" indicates either aluminum or vinyl siding, and "composition" indicates shingles of molded wood particles, asbestos, or other composites. Dates are estimated by the preparers of this form, based on architectural features and historic maps of the area (see Bibliography).

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Mills Historic District 7-4
Enfield, Hartford County, CT

INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

| ADDRESS | STORIES | DATE | DESCRIPTION | MATERIAL | C | NC |
|--|---------|--------|--|-------------------------|---|----|
| 4 Alden Avenue POLISH NATIONAL HOME/WAWEL BLOCK - Photograph 17 | 3 | 1923 | Commercial Block | brick | 1 | 0 |
| 5 Alden Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1870 | House | siding | 1 | 1 |
| 11 Alden Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1875 | House Second Empire style | siding | 3 | 0 |
| 13 Alden Avenue | 1 | c.1900 | Former store | clapboards | 1 | 0 |
| 15 Alden Avenue | 1 | c.1900 | Former store | clapboards | 1 | 0 |
| 17 Alden Avenue | 2 | c.1900 | House | siding | 2 | 0 |
| 7-13 Asnuntuck Street | 2 1/2 | c.1900 | Mill tenement | composition | 1 | 0 |
| 8-10 Asnuntuck Street | 2 1/2 | c.1880 | Mill tenement Stick style | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 14-16 Asnuntuck Street | 2 1/2 | c.1880 | Mill tenement Stick style | composition | 1 | 0 |
| 17-23 Asnuntuck Street | 2 1/2 | c.1900 | Mill tenement | composition | 1 | 0 |
| 20-22 Asnuntuck Street Photograph 8 | 2 1/2 | c.1880 | Mill tenement Stick style | clapboards | 1 | 0 |
| 26-28 Asnuntuck Street | 2 1/2 | c.1880 | Mill tenement Stick style | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 27-33 Asnuntuck Street | 2 1/2 | c.1900 | Mill tenement | composition | 1 | 0 |
| 37-43 Asnuntuck Street | 2 1/2 | c.1900 | Mill tenement | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 38 Asnuntuck Street ENFIELD MANUFACTURING CO. STOCKINET MILL - Photograph 3 | 2 1/2 | c.1845 | Mill/storehouse | brick | 1 | 0 |
| 42-50 Asnuntuck Street | 2 | c.1900 | Commercial building | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 47-53 Asnuntuck Street | 2 1/2 | c.1900 | Mill tenement | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 56 Asnuntuck Street | 3 | c.1880 | Commercial building Italianate details | clapboards, asphalt | 1 | 0 |
| 57-63 Asnuntuck Street | 2 1/2 | c.1900 | Mill tenement | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 2-4 Bigelow Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement Queen Anne-Colonial style | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 5-7 Bigelow Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement Queen Anne-Colonial style | clapboards, shingles | 1 | 0 |

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Description Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Mills Historic District 7-5
Enfield, Hartford County, CT

INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

| ADDRESS | STORIES | DATE | DESCRIPTION | MATERIAL | C | NC |
|---------------------------------------|---------|--------|---------------|---|---|----|
| 6-8 Bigelow Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement | siding Queen Anne-Colonial style | 1 | 0 |
| 9-11 Bigelow Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement | siding Queen Anne-Colonial style | 1 | 0 |
| 10-12 Bigelow Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement | siding Queen Anne-Colonial style | 1 | 0 |
| 13-15 Bigelow Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement | siding Queen Anne-Colonial style | 1 | 0 |
| 14-16 Bigelow Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement | siding Queen Anne-Colonial style | 1 | 0 |
| 17-19 Bigelow Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement | siding Queen Anne-Colonial style | 1 | 0 |
| 18-20 Bigelow Avenue Photograph 14 | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement | clapboards, Queen Anne-Colonial shingles style | 1 | 0 |
| 21-23 Bigelow Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement | composition Queen Anne-Colonial style | 1 | 0 |
| 22-24 Bigelow Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement | composition Queen Anne-Colonial style | 1 | 0 |
| 25-27 Bigelow Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement | siding Queen Anne-Colonial style | 1 | 0 |
| 26-28 Bigelow Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement | siding Queen Anne-Colonial style | 1 | 0 |
| 29-31 Bigelow Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement | siding Queen Anne-Colonial style | 1 | 0 |
| 30-32 Bigelow Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement | composition Queen Anne-Colonial style | 1 | 0 |
| 33-35 Bigelow Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement | siding Queen Anne-Colonial style | 1 | 0 |
| 34-36 Bigelow Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement | composition Queen Anne-Colonial style | 1 | 0 |
| 37-39 Bigelow Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement | siding Queen Anne-Colonial style | 1 | 0 |
| 38-40 Bigelow Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement | siding Queen Anne-Colonial style | 1 | 0 |
| 41-43 Bigelow Avenue Photograph 13 | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill Tenement | siding Queen Anne-Colonial style | 1 | 0 |

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Description Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Mills Historic District 7-6
Enfield, Hartford County, CT

INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

| ADDRESS | STORIES | DATE | DESCRIPTION | MATERIAL | C | NC |
|-----------------------|---------|--------|--|-------------------------|---|----|
| 42-44 Bigelow Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement Queen Anne-Colonial style | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 45-47 Bigelow Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement Queen Anne-Colonial style | clapboards, shingles | 1 | 0 |
| 46-48 Bigelow Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement Queen Anne-Colonial style | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 51 Church Street | 2 | c.1900 | Commercial block Italianate details | asphalt | 1 | 0 |
| 57-59 Church Street | 2 1/2 | c.1900 | House | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 58 Church Street | 2 1/2 | c.1830 | Mill tenement | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 62-64 Church Street | 2 1/2 | c.1830 | Mill tenement | composition | 1 | 0 |
| 63-65 Church Street | 2 1/2 | c.1890 | House Eastlake details | asphalt | 1 | 0 |
| 69 Church Street | 2 1/2 | c.1875 | House Italianate style | asphalt | 1 | 0 |
| 73 Church Street | 2 | c.1920 | Commercial block | brick | 1 | 0 |
| 76-78 Church Street | 2 1/2 | c.1860 | House Victorian porch | composition | 1 | 0 |
| 85 Church Street | 2 1/2 | c.1900 | House | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 88 Church Street | 2 1/2 | c.1920 | House | concrete block | 1 | 0 |
| 90 Church Street | 2 | c.1900 | House | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 91 Church Street | 2 | c.1875 | House Italianate detail | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 95 Church Street | 1 | c.1900 | Former store | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 97-103 Church Street | 2 | c.1850 | Mill tenement Greek Revival style | asphalt | 1 | 0 |
| 98 Church Street | 2 | c.1910 | Apartment house Neo-Classical style | brick | 3 | 0 |
| 104-106 Church Street | 2 | c.1900 | House | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 107-113 Church Street | 2 | c.1850 | Mill tenement Greek Revival style | asphalt | 1 | 0 |
| 117-123 Church Street | 2 | c.1850 | Mill tenement Greek Revival style | asphalt | 1 | 0 |

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Description Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Mills Historic District 7-7
Enfield, Hartford County, CT

INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

| ADDRESS | STORIES | DATE | DESCRIPTION | MATERIAL | C | NC |
|---|---------|--------|--|-------------|---|----|
| 127-133 Church Street | 2 | c.1850 | Mill tenement Greek Revival style | composition | 1 | 0 |
| 135-139 Church Street | 2 | c.1870 | Mill tenement | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 141-143 Church Street | 2 | c.1870 | Mill tenement | composition | 1 | 0 |
| 3-5 Chapel Street | 2 | c.1870 | House | clapboards | 1 | 0 |
| 17 College Street | 3 | c.1910 | Apartment building Neo-Classical style | brick | 1 | 0 |
| 36-38 College Street | 2 1/2 | c.1850 | Mill tenement | asphalt | 1 | 1 |
| 43 College Street | 2 1/2 | c.1900 | House | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 51 College Street NORTH SCHOOL - Photograph 18 | 2 1/2 | 1882 | Former school Queen Anne style | brick | 1 | 0 |
| 3 Cottage Green Photograph 20 | 1 1/2 | c.1980 | Gambrel-roofed attached houses | brick | 0 | 1 |
| 4-8 Cottage Green | 2 1/2 | c.1900 | Mill tenement | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 5-11 Cottage Green Photograph 9 | 3 | c.1885 | Mill tenement | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 10-16 Cottage Green | 2 1/2 | c.1900 | Mill tenement | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 15-21 Cottage Green | 3 | c.1885 | Mill tenement | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 20-22 Cottage Green | 1 1/2 | c.1845 | Mill tenement Gothic Revival style | brick | 1 | 0 |
| 24-26 Cottage Green | 1 1/2 | c.1845 | Mill tenement Gothic Revival style | brick | 1 | 0 |
| 25-31 Cottage Green | 3 | c.1885 | Mill tenement | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 30-36 Cottage Green | 2 1/2 | c.1900 | Mill tenement | composition | 1 | 0 |
| 46 Cottage Green | 1 1/2 | c.1845 | Mill tenement Gothic Revival style | brick | 1 | 0 |
| 50 Cottage Green Photograph 4 | 1 1/2 | c.1845 | Mill tenement Gothic Revival style | brick | 1 | 0 |
| 54 Cottage Green | 1 1/2 | c.1845 | Mill tenement Gothic Revival style | brick | 1 | 1 |
| 58 Cottage Green | 1 1/2 | c.1845 | Mill tenement Gothic Revival style | brick | 1 | 0 |
| 2-4 Hartford Avenue | 2 1/2 | c.1915 | Mill tenement Queen Anne-Colonial style | siding | 1 | 0 |

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Description Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Mills Historic District 7-10
Enfield, Hartford County, CT

INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

| ADDRESS | STORIES | DATE | DESCRIPTION | MATERIAL | C | NC |
|--------------------------|---------|--------|--|--------------------------|---|----|
| 5-11 Martin Street | 2 1/2 | c.1870 | Mill tenement | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 12 Martin Street | 2 1/2 | c.1870 | Mill tenement | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 13-19 Martin Street | 2 1/2 | c.1870 | Mill tenement | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 20-22 Martin Street | 2 1/2 | c.1870 | Mill tenement | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 21-23 Martin Street | 2 1/2 | c.1870 | Mill tenement | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 2-4 New Street | 2 | c.1990 | House | clapboards | 0 | 1 |
| 10-16 New Street | 3 | c.1880 | Mill tenement | asphalt | 1 | 0 |
| 18-24 New Street | 3 | c.1880 | Mill tenement | asphalt | 1 | 0 |
| 35 North River Street | 2 | c.1900 | House (altered) | siding | 0 | 1 |
| 37 North River Street | 2 | c.1850 | Mill tenement | composition, asphalt | 1 | 0 |
| 39-41 North River Street | 2 | c.1850 | Mill tenement | stucco | 2 | 0 |
| 5 Northwood Street | 2 | c.1990 | Duplex | siding | 0 | 1 |
| 16 Northwood Street | 2 | c.1980 | Duplex | siding | 0 | 1 |
| 21 Northwood Street | 1 | c.1970 | House | siding | 0 | 1 |
| 25-27 Northwood Street | 2 1/2 | c.1870 | Mill tenement | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 26-28 Northwood Street | 2 1/2 | c.1870 | Mill tenement | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 12 Pleasant Street | 2 1/2 | c.1850 | House Greek Revival style | clapboards | 1 | 0 |
| 14 Pleasant Street | 2 1/2 | c.1880 | House Stick style | clapboards, shingles | 1 | 0 |
| 20 Pleasant Street | 2 1/2 | c.1850 | House Greek Revival detail | composition | 2 | 0 |
| 22-24 Pleasant Street | 2 | c.1900 | Commercial building | brick, concrete block | 1 | 0 |
| 26 Pleasant Street | 2 | c.1900 | Commercial building | asphalt | 1 | 0 |
| 27 Pleasant Street | 2 | c.1910 | Commercial block Neo-Classical style | brick | 1 | 0 |
| 33 Pleasant Street | 2 | c.1850 | House Greek Revival style | clapboards | 1 | 0 |

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Description Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Mills Historic District 7-14
Enfield, Hartford County, CT

INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

| ADDRESS | STORIES | DATE | DESCRIPTION | MATERIAL | C | NC |
|------------------------------------|---------|--------|-----------------------------|-------------|---|----|
| 70-72 West Street | 2 | c.1870 | Mill tenement | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 71-73 West Street | 2 | c.1870 | Mill tenement | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 76-78 West Street | 2 | c.1870 | Mill tenement | asphalt | 1 | 0 |
| 79-81 West Street | 2 | c.1870 | Mill tenement | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 84-86 West Street | 2 | c.1870 | Mill tenement | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 90-92 West Street | 2 | c.1870 | Mill tenement | asphalt | 1 | 0 |
| 7-9 White Street | 2 | c.1870 | House Italianate details | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 11 White Street | 2 1/2 | c.1850 | House/former store | clapboards | 1 | 0 |
| 15-17 White Street | 2 1/2 | c.1870 | House | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 25 White Street | 2 1/2 | c.1870 | House Italianate details | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 27 White Street | 2 1/2 | c.1900 | House Victorian | siding | 1 | 0 |
| 37-39 Whitworth Street | 2 | c.1990 | House | siding | 0 | 2 |
| 49-51 Whitworth Street | 2 | c.1990 | Duplex | clapboards | 0 | 1 |
| 11-13 Windsor Street | 2 1/2 | c.1910 | House | siding | 1 | 1 |
| 17 Windsor Street | 2 | c.1900 | House | siding | 1 | 1 |
| 21 Windsor Street | 2 | c.1870 | House hip roof | plywood | 1 | 0 |
| 23 Windsor Street | 2 1/2 | c.1880 | House Victorian details | asphalt | 1 | 0 |
| 24 Windsor Street | 2 | c.1875 | House Italianate details | asphalt | 2 | 0 |
| 27 Windsor Street | 2 1/2 | c.1875 | House Italianate details | composition | 1 | 1 |
| 28 Windsor Street | 2 1/2 | c.1875 | House Italianate details | clapboards | 1 | 0 |
| 33 Windsor Street Photograph 16 | 2 | c.1875 | House Italianate style | brick | 1 | 0 |
| 34 Windsor Street | 2 | c.1875 | House Italianate details | siding | 2 | 0 |

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| Significance | Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Mills Historic District Enfield, Hartford County, CT | 8-1 |
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Summary

The Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Mill Historic District is significant because the mills and company housing in the district dramatically illustrate the immense impact that the carpet-making industry had on Connecticut (Criterion A). From 1828, when Orrin Thompson and a group of Scottish hand-loom weavers began in a small waterpowered mill on Freshwater Brook, until production ceased in 1971, the Thompsonville carpet mills were the largest single industry in Enfield and one of the largest in the state. At its height in the 1920s, when it was known as the Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Company, the firm employed 13,500 people in what was then the largest carpet mill complex in the United States. The district is also of architectural significance, since its approximately 150 former workers' dwellings represent one of Connecticut's largest concentrations of company-built houses, a distinctive architectural type (Criterion C). From the Gothic Revival-style cottages of the 1840s to the dense rows of utilitarian tenements of the 1880s to the suburb-like development of the 1920s, the company houses of Thompsonville offer a capsule history of changing trends in employee housing.

Industrial History Significance

Orrin Thompson (1788-1873) was one of a small number of entrepreneurs who, taking advantage of a favorable tariff enacted in 1824, formed the core around which the American carpet industry developed. In 1828 Thompson started the Thompsonville Carpet Company in a small mill with a few dozen workers from Scotland working at hand looms. After the nearby Tariffville carpet mill failed in the Panic of 1837, Thompson acquired that facility as well, running the two plants as a single company. Then in 1851, having invested heavily in mechanized looms to replace those operated by the expensive and assertive Scottish labor, Thompson himself went bankrupt. Within a short time, a group of investors from Hartford resuscitated the business, naming it the Hartford Carpet Company, and resumed production at Thompsonville. This company prospered throughout the rest of the 19th century, as a growing middle class and Victorian tastes in interior decoration fueled the market for the intricately patterned yet affordable carpets woven at Thompsonville. Both Orrin Thompson and his son Henry G. Thompson stayed on as top managers within the new company.

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Meanwhile, Henry G. Thompson (1818-1903) had started his own enterprise. In 1845 he built a small mill to produce knitted woolen products using knitting machines. Known as the Enfield Manufacturing Company, this mill continued in production until 1873, at which time the mill and its employee housing were acquired by the carpet company. In later years the building was used for the storage of wool.

The growth of Thompsonville paralleled that of the carpet company. Despite the mill's construction efforts, not all employees lived in company houses, and extensive non-company-owned residential areas grew up on all sides; it is safe to assume that by 1900 only a minority of carpet workers lived in the company's houses. At the same time, schools, churches, and social halls were built to serve the needs of the burgeoning population, as well as numerous large commercial buildings that accommodated professional offices, newspaper, saloons, and the village's many stores.¹

In 1901 the company merged with another large carpet firm, E. S. Higgins of New York, and consolidated all productions in Thompsonville. Over the next few years, the Hartford Carpet Company completely rebuilt the plant by replacing the old mills with new and much larger structures, and it added extensively to its stock of company-owned houses. In 1914 the company undertook an even larger merger with the Bigelow Carpet Company of Clinton and Lowell, Massachusetts, becoming the Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Company. This company expanded the Thompsonville manufacturing facility to its largest extent, completing a massive new Axminster building in 1923; it also undertook the mill's last major housing development. It is estimated that the Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Company accounted for approximately 10% of America's entire carpet production in these years. In 1929 the final merger took place, with the Sanford Carpet Company of Amsterdam, New York, becoming the Bigelow-Sanford Carpet Company. Because of the Depression, changing consumer tastes, and the shift in textile production to the

¹These areas were generally excluded because their relationship to the main theme of carpet-making is only secondary; however, in embracing the mills and mill-built housing, the district necessarily takes in several commercial buildings (one of which also accommodates an ethnic association--Photograph 17), a church, and a school. These are contributing because they illustrate the mill's impact on the town.

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South, carpet making in Connecticut never again reached the sustained peak of the 1920s.

Carpet making was an example of the numerous industries which Connecticut manufacturers developed to the point of controlling a substantial share of the national market. Like the others--hats, clocks, corsets, brass products, firearms, builders' hardware, ~~firearms~~--carpet manufacture benefited from a combination of fortunate circumstances: an adequate initial source of mechanical power (though Freshwater Brook was soon supplemented and eventually entirely replaced by steam power); a reservoir of labor skilled in machine-building and maintaining; and easy access to the wholesale markets in New York City, which provided vital up-to-date information about fashions and economic trends which the manufacturers could then use to adjust production.² Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Connecticut manufacturers were able to take advantage of, and in many cases to innovate, improvements in mechanization and other manufacturing technology. These improvements allowed them to utilize less skilled immigrant labor and made their products available to an ever wider consumer base. Over the course of just two or three generations, Connecticut was transformed by industries such as carpet manufacture from an agrarian society to one that was primarily based upon an industrial economy. The huge mills of Thompsonville, along with the associated worker housing, epitomize the development of Connecticut into one of the country's leading industrial areas.

Architectural Significance

From the first, company housing was a necessity in Thompsonville. The area was essentially a void when Thompson began, and so the company erected a series of small one-story cottages for its workers that became known as Scottish Row. Because of later expansion of the mill, nothing remains of these earliest mill houses, but drawings depict them as very small, especially if they were shared by two families. Like the two formerly company-owned houses on Church Street, these had the then-common center-chimney plan. In fact, as remaining examples at

²Before turning to manufacturing, Orrin Thompson himself had been a partner in a New York City merchant firm that specialized in imported carpets.

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Tariffville show, company houses differed little from ordinary dwellings in the first phase of industrialization.

The adoption of heating and cooking stoves probably hastened the development of industrial tenements as a distinct type. Stoves, with their smaller chimneys, freed the house plan from the demands of the cooking fireplace and huge central stack, allowing a basic module to be more easily replicated both horizontally and vertically. Although 2 1/2-story, four-family duplexes are the modal type, both at Thompsonville and throughout Connecticut's industrialized areas, in times of rapid employment growth the basic tenement type could be expanded to a full third story and lengthened to four or more ground-floor units. Although some reference to current architectural fashion is evident in the house's Greek Revival doorways and denticulated cornices, Stick-style eave treatments, and Victorian porch details, the overall utilitarian appearance of Thompsonville's mill houses exemplifies the norm.

In general, industrial housing in Connecticut was constructed on the nearest available land with little regard to an overall plan, and this is apparent in Thompsonville in the long rows of tenements on Pleasant and Church streets. Faced with a shortage of housing for their workers, most mills simply filled up adjacent land with rows of identical houses. Three other typical plans are present in Thompsonville as well. North of the mill, the company laid out a grid of closely spaced streets. The resulting blocks, each enclosing a small area on the interior of the block for the tenements' backyards, probably allowed a slightly higher building density than the long rows. Grids are found at Wauregan, Taftville, and other textile towns in eastern Connecticut and were built when mills first started out or experienced a sudden increase in employment, requiring a large number of houses at once. Grids were only built where a sufficient expanse of flat land was available, so most company towns have both blocks and rows intermixed. This grid at Thompsonville dates from c.1870, when production formerly carried on at Tariffville was entirely shifted to Thompsonville following the disastrous fire of 1867.

Thompsonville's Cottage Green represents a third, far less common arrangement, the use of courts or squares surrounded by worker houses. Originally, Cottage Green was a large grassy square with a fountain or well in the center. Enfield Manufacturing Company's 1845 single-family

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upon a number of current or at least recent styles, including the Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman movements. The combination of clapboards and shingles, for example, along with the overhanging upper stories on the side bays (Photographs 14 and 15), derived from the Queen Anne style prevalent in the Victorian period. The porch columns, gambrel roofs, and small-pane divided sash in the dormers were Colonial in inspiration, while other features, such as the diamond-paned windows found on some houses (Photograph 15) were more typical of Bungalows and other Craftsman-inspired houses. In addition to the size and stylishness of the houses, the area is distinguished by the relatively broad tree-lined streets, the sidewalks, and the mixture of the basic types and variation in detail so as to avoid the monotonous, uniform appearance formerly associated with company housing. In its 1925 promotional book, the Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Company specifically cited this "modern Residential development" as one of its major accomplishments.⁴

⁴Alexander Cook, ed., A Century of Carpet and Rug Making in America (New York: Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Company, 1925). Similarly diverse employee-housing developments were built in this period at the Cheney silk mills in Manchester and the Goodyear tire-duck mill in Killingly, Connecticut.

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Geographical Data Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Mills
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Wavel Building/Polish National Home, 4 Alden Street, 1923, camera facing southeast, former mill tenements on right
Photograph 17 of 20

North School, 1882 (addition, c.1910), 51 College Street, camera facing north, former mill tenements visible on left
Photograph 18 of 20

Modern house, c.1990 (noncontributing), 106-108 Pleasant Street, camera facing northeast
Photograph 19 of 20

Modern brick row houses (noncontributing), 3 Cottage Green, camera facing west
Photograph 20 of 20