

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JAN 16 1996

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

FEDERAL AGENCY RESOURCES OF
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name: LAWTON MILLS HISTORIC DISTRICT

other name/site number: N/A

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number: Community, Railroad, and Norwich Avenues - see Item 7

city/town: Plainfield not for publication: N/A
vicinity: N/A

state: CT county: Windham code: 015 zip code: 06374

=====

3. Classification

=====

Ownership of Property: private, public-local

Category of Property: district

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>225</u>	<u>26</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u>2</u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	objects
<u>229</u>	<u>27</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

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: John W. Shannahan, Director, Connecticut Historical Commission; Date: 12/01/95

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
determined eligible for the National Register
determined not eligible for the National Register
removed from the National Register
other (explain):

Signature of Keeper: Edward B. Beall; Date: 2/16/96

Entered in the National Register

Signature of Keeper; Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Table with 2 columns: Historic/Current and Sub. Rows include categories like DOMESTIC, INDUSTRY and subtypes like multiple dwelling, single dwelling, manufacturing facility.

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Colonial Revival

Other Description: N/A

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

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

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: 1905-1936

Significant Dates: See item 7

Significant Person(s): _____

Cultural Affiliation: _____

Architect/Builder: Lockwood, Green - engineer, mill
A. N. Carpenter - contractor, mill
George E. Pitcher - engineer, houses
A. W. Gladwin - contractor, houses

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

X See continuation sheet.

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:

- X State historic preservation office Connecticut Historical Commission
- Other state agency 59 South Prospect Street
- Federal agency Hartford, Connecticut 06106
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: approx. 140 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	___	_____	_____	B	___	_____	_____
C	___	_____	_____	D	___	_____	_____

X See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: X See continuation sheet.

The boundary is shown on the accompanying map, scale 1"=200'.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

The boundary includes the mill and all contiguous properties that were directly related to the mill during the period of significance, as well as adjacent commercial and institutional buildings from that period.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Bruce Clouette and Maura Cronin, reviewed by John Herzan,

Conn. Hist. Commission

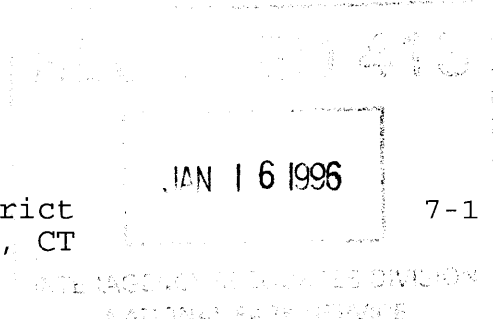
Organization: Historic Resource Consultants Date: May 23, 1995

Street & Number: 55 Van Dyke Avenue Telephone: 203-547-0268

City or Town: Hartford State: CT Zip: 06106

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**



Description Lawton Mills Historic District
 Plainfield, Windham County, CT

7-1

The Lawton Mills Historic District consists of over 100 houses and other mill-related structures surrounding a large former textile mill in Plainfield, Connecticut. Arranged west and east of the mill, most of the houses are plainly detailed former tenements built to accommodate the mill's workers. The district also includes a large Neo-Classical building that served as a recreational building for the mill workers and the Lawton Inn, a Colonial Revival structure built to lodge visitors and the travelling representatives of the mill when they were in Plainfield. The district extends along Railroad Avenue to include several commercial and religious buildings that were either associated with the mill or that date from the same period.

The first of the mill's structures (Photographs 1, 2, and 3) were located immediately south of Railroad Avenue and consisted of a three-story spinning mill 225' long by 100' wide, a one-story weave shed which was connected to the south end of the mill, 22' by 150', and a number of ancillary buildings, including a storehouse, a picker house, a boiler house and engine room, and a 150' high smokestack. All structures were built of brick. The original power source was a Cooper cross-compound engine producing 1,209 horsepower. The architect was Lockwood, Greene & Co. of Boston, the nation's premier textile engineering firm. The capacity of the mill was 30,000 spindles and 250 to 300 operatives were employed. In 1911 the size of the mill was more than doubled. A 180' addition was constructed on the north side of the original spinning mill and the weave shed was extended 200' to the south. Then, a second mill and weave shed, duplicating the dimensions of the expanded original mill, was built, with the weave sheds joined together to form a structure almost 2,000' in total length, the weave sheds alone measuring almost 1,000'. Another steam engine was employed, and the entire mill was illuminated with electric lights. Again the architect was Lockwood, Greene & Co. At its peak, Lawton Mills had a capacity of 130,000 spindles and employed 1,200 people. The only other industrial structure in the district is a small one-story brick factory built in 1915 to accommodate a textile-machine roller-covering business.

The district's mill housing was built in two phases, paralleling the expansion of the mill (Photographs 4 through 7). Initially, a number of tenements were built in rows to the west of the mill, across the tracks of the Norwich and Worcester Railroad. Later, additional mill housing was constructed on a newly purchased tract of land between the mill and Norwich Road (Route 12) to the east. Eventually, the company constructed 125 two-family tenements for its workers and about 15

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description Lawton Mills Historic District
 Plainfield, Windham County, CT

7-2

houses for supervisory personal. The 1 1/2-story plainly detailed houses have a center cross gable and a double central entry.

The Colonial Revival style is seen in several buildings erected by the mill company. Houses built for supervisory personnel (Photograph 8), Harold Lawton's own house (Photograph 9), and the Lawton Inn (Photograph 10) all display details of the Colonial Revival style, such as gambrel roofs, small-pane sash, and large central chimneys. The Community Building (Photograph 11) is also of Colonial Revival design, particularly the cupola, although the stuccoed walls and heavy timbers seem derived from Spanish Mission architecture of the Southwest; it currently serves as Plainfield's Town Hall and as a recreation center (it was built with an indoor swimming pool).

The commercial architecture of Plainfield is fairly limited. There are a few plain c.1900 buildings with the then-popular bracketed cornices, such as the former opera house (Photograph 15), and a small but elaborately detailed brick Neo-Classical Revival former bank (Photograph 16). There is only one large brick block, built in the 1920s for the Mercier drug and department store (Photograph 14).

The great majority of the buildings in the district retain their original form. Replacement of original clapboard exteriors with modern siding materials is the chief alteration evident in the district, but even where this has occurred, enough remains of entry and window trim to indicate the buildings' original detailing. There are very few noncontributing buildings to interrupt the concentration of historic buildings within the district. The boundary was delineated so as to include all contiguous formerly mill-related properties. The boundary generally follows property lines; however, some property lines were cut so as to exclude excessive land or buildings that were not associated with Lawton Mills.

The count of contributing properties includes one site, a small public park with war memorials (Photograph 12), and two structures, both of which are water towers built by the mill to provide water for fire protection and for domestic use in the village (Photograph 7).

In the Inventory that follows, the term "siding" is used to indicate either vinyl or aluminum siding, and "composition" indicates any of a number of pressed-fiber shingle materials, such as asbestos and wood pulp. Contributing resources are enumerated in the "C" column and noncontributing resources in the "NC" column.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description Lawton Mills Historic District 7-3
Plainfield, Windham County, CT

INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

ADDRESS	STORIES	DATE	DESCRIPTION	MATERIAL	C	NC
BUILDINGS						
2-6 Babcock Avenue	1	c.1900	Commercial building	brick, composition	1	0
5-7 Babcock Avenue	1	c.1960	Commercial building	brick, vertical boards	0	1
8 Babcock Avenue	1 1/2	c.1870	House	clapboards	2	0
10 Babcock Avenue	1	c.1960	Commercial building	brick,	0	1
11-17 Babcock Avenue	1	c.1960	Commercial building	siding, brick	0	1
16-18 Babcock Avenue	1 1/2	1903	House	composition	2	0
20 Babcock Avenue	1	1960	Nursing home	stucco	0	1
21 Babcock Avenue LAWTON INN- Photograph 10	2 1/2	1919	Former hotel	stucco	1	0
22-24 Babcock Avenue	2 1/2	c.1915	House	composition	1	1
23 Babcock Avenue THOMAS FOY HOUSE	2 1/2	c.1920	House	brick	2	0
25 Babcock Avenue	2 1/2	c.1920	House	composition	1	0
26-28 Babcock Avenue	2 1/2	c.1910	Multi-family house	siding	1	0
30-32 Babcock Avenue	2 1/2	c.1905	Multi-family house	clapboards	1	0
34 Babcock Avenue	2	c.1900	House	clapboards, shingles	1	0
36 Babcock Avenue	1	c.1965	House	composition	0	1
1 Butterworth Avenue	2 1/2	1911	Supervisor's house	shingle	1	1
1 Center Street STANDARD ROLLER COMPANY BUILDING	1	1915	Factory	brick	1	0
2 Center Street	1 1/2	c.1910	House	siding	1	0
3 Center Street	1 1/2	c.1900	House	siding	1	0
4 Center Street	1 1/2	c.1910	House	siding	1	0
5 Center Street	2	c.1900	House	composition	1	0
3 Church Street	1 1/2	c.1930	House	siding	1	0
6 Church Street	2 1/2	c.1930	House	clapboards	1	0

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description Lawton Mills Historic District 7-4
Plainfield, Windham County, CT

INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

ADDRESS	STORIES	DATE	DESCRIPTION	MATERIAL	C	NC
8 Church Street	1 1/2	c.1930	House	siding	1	0
13 Church Street	1 1/2	c.1915	House	composition	1	0
19 Church Street	2	c.1920	Supervisor's house	clapboards	1	0
21 Church Street	2	c.1920	Supervisor's house	siding	2	0
2 Community Avenue	2	c.1915	House	siding	1	0
4 Community Avenue	1 1/2	c.1910	House	clapboards, shingles	1	0
5 Community Avenue	1	c.1960	House	siding	0	1
6 Community Avenue	1 1/2	c.1910	House	clapboards, shingles	1	1
7 Community Avenue	2	c.1955	Commercial building	siding	0	1
8 Community Avenue COMMUNITY BUILDING- Photograph 11	2	1920	Town Hall	stucco	1	0
13-15 Community Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	1	0
14,76 Community Avenue LAWTON MILL- Photographs 1,2 & 3	3	c.1906-11	Cotton mill	brick	1	0
17-19 Community Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
21-23 Community Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
25-27 Community Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
29-31 Community Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
33-35 Community Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	1	0
37-39 Community Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	1	0
41-43 Community Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	1	0
45-47 Community Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	composition	1	0
49-51 Community Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	clapboards	2	0
53-55 Community Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	1	0
57-59 Community Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	1	0
60 Community Avenue	1	c.1960	Office building	composition	0	1
61-63 Community Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	clapboards	2	0
65-67 Community Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	1	0

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description Lawton Mills Historic District 7-5
Plainfield, Windham County, CT

INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

ADDRESS	STORIES	DATE	DESCRIPTION	MATERIAL	C	NC
69-71 Community Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	1	0
73-75 Community Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
77-79 Community Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
81-83 Community Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
85-87 Community Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	composition	1	0
1-3 Eighth Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
2-4 Eighth Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	clapboards	1	0
5-7 Eighth Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	clapboards	1	0
6-8 Eighth Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	clapboards, asphalt	1	0
9-11 Eighth Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	composition	1	0
10-12 Eighth Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
13-15 Eighth Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
14-16 Eighth Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	clapboards	1	0
17-19 Eighth Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
18-20 Eighth Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
21-23 Eighth Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
2-4 First Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	clapboards	1	0
6-8 First Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	composition	2	0
10-12 First Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
14-16 First Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
18-20 First Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	1	0
22-24 First Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
26-28 First Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	clapboards	1	0
30-32 First Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
34-36 First Street Photograph 5	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
38-40 First Street Photograph 5	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	clapboards	1	0

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description Lawton Mills Historic District
 Plainfield, Windham County, CT

7-6

INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

ADDRESS	STORIES	DATE	DESCRIPTION	MATERIAL	C	NC
42-44 First Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	2	0
46-48 First Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	composition	1	0
50-52 First Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
54-56 First Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	clapboards	1	0
58-60 First Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
1-3 Fourth Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
5-7 Fourth Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
9-11 Fourth Street Photograph 7	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	clapboards	1	0
13-15 Fourth Street Photograph 7	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
2-4 Greene Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	2	0
6-8 Greene Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
10-12 Greene Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	1	0
14-16 Greene Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
18-20 Greene Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
22-24 Greene Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
26-28 Greene Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	composition	1	0
30-32 Greene Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
34-36 Greene Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
38-40 Greene Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
42-44 Greene Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	ashalt	1	0
46-48 Greene Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	clapboards	1	0
2 Mill Street	1	c.1955	House	siding	0	1
4 Mill Street	1 1/2	c.1910	House	siding	1	0
6 Mill Street	2	c.1920	House	siding	2	0
2-4 Ninth Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	1	0
6-8 Ninth Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	composition	1	0
10-12 Ninth Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	composition	1	0

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description Lawton Mills Historic District 7-7
Plainfield, Windham County, CT

INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

ADDRESS	STORIES	DATE	DESCRIPTION	MATERIAL	C	NC
14-16 Ninth Street	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	clapboards	1	0
582-586 Norwich Avenue	2	1906	House	clapboards	2	0
588-590 Norwich Avenue	2	c.1825	House	siding	1	0
592-594 Norwich Avenue	2	c.1890	House	siding	2	0
595 Norwich Avenue HAROLD LAWTON HOUSE- Photograph 9	2 1/2	1906	House	siding	1	0
596-598 Norwich Avenue	2 1/2	c.1902	House	clapboards	1	0
605 Norwich Avenue	2	c.1900	House	asphalt	2	0
607-609 Norwich Avenue	1 1/2	c.1918	House	composition	1	0
613 Norwich Avenue	1	c.1960	House	siding	0	2
617 Norwich Avenue	1	c.1960	Commerical building	metal siding	0	11
619 Norwich Avenue	2 1/2	c.1917	Supervisor's house	shingle, clapboards	2	0
627 Norwich Avenue	1 1/2	c.1915	House	clapboards	1	1
633 Norwich Avenue ST. PAUL'S PARSONAGE	1 1/2	c.1886	Parsonage	siding	1	0
635 Norwich Avenue ST. PAUL'S CHURCH- Photograph 13	1 1/2	1914	Church	shingle, brick	1	0
643 Norwich Avenue	2 1/2	1911	Superintendent's house	siding	1	0
651 Norwich Avenue PLAINFIELD GRAMMAR SCHOOL	2	1913,1927	School	brick	1	0
665-667 Norwich Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
669-671 Norwich Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
673-775 Norwich Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
777-779 Norwich Avenue	2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
1 Payson Street	2 1/2	c.1910	House	clapboards	2	0
2 Payson Street	2	c.1918	Supervisor's house	composition	2	0
3 Payson Street	2	c.1920	House	clapboards	2	0
4 Payson Street	2	c.1918	Supervisor's house	siding	1	0
6 Payson Street	2 1/2	c.1918	Supervisor's house	siding	1	0

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description Lawton Mills Historic District 7-8
Plainfield, Windham County, CT

INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

ADDRESS	STORIES	DATE	DESCRIPTION	MATERIAL	C	NC
2 Porteous Terrace Photograph 8	2 1/2	c.1912	Supervisor's house	composition	1	0
4 Porteous Terrace Photograph 8	2 1/2	c.1912	Supervisor's house	siding	1	0
6 Porteous Terrace Photograph 8	2 1/2	c.1912	Supervisor's house	siding	1	0
4 Railroad Avenue	1 1/2	c.1900	House	siding	2	0
7 Railroad Avenue	2 1/2	1901	House	siding	2	0
8 Railroad Avenue	2	1912	House	asphalt	3	0
9 Railroad Avenue	2	c.1895	House	clapboards	1	0
11-15 Railroad Avenue	2	c.1900	House	clapboards	2	0
12 Railroad Avenue ST. JOHN'S SCHOOL	2	1929	School	brick	1	0
14 Railroad Avenue	2 1/2	c.1883	House	siding	1	0
16 Railroad Avenue	1	1980	Bank	brick	0	1
17 Railroad Avenue ST. JOHN'S CHURCH	1	1960	Church	brick	0	1
20 Railroad Avenue BABCOCK OPERA HOUSE- Photograph 15	2	c.1905	Commercial building	siding	1	0
21 Railroad Avenue	1	1934	Commercial building	siding	1	0
22 Railroad Avenue	2	c.1900	House	clapboards	1	0
24 Railroad Avenue FIRST NATIONAL BANK- Photograph 16	2	1912	Former bank	brick vertical boarding	1	0
25-29 Railroad Avenue	1	1969	Commercial building	brick	0	1
33 Railroad Avenue	1 1/2	c.1880	House	siding	1	0
35 Railroad Avenue	1 1/2	c.1890	House	composition	1	0
37 Railroad Avenue	1 1/2	c.1910	House	siding	1	1
36-38 Railroad Avenue Photograph 14	2	c.1920	Commercial building	brick	1	0
39 Railroad Avenue	1	c.1920	Commercial building	clapboards	1	1
41-43 Railroad Avenue	2	c.1910	Building	composition	1	1
40-42 Railroad Avenue	2	c.1910	Commerical building	composition	0	1

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description Lawton Mills Historic District 7-9
Plainfield, Windham County, CT

INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

ADDRESS	STORIES	DATE	DESCRIPTION	MATERIAL	C	NC
47 Railroad Avenue	2 1/2	c.1890	House	clapboards	1	0
48 Railroad Avenue	1	c.1930	Commercial building	brick	1	0
49 Railroad Avenue PLAINFIELD SOCIAL CLUB	1 1/2	c.1910	Former house/store	siding	2	0
50-54 Railroad Avenue	2	c.1910	Commercial building	siding	1	0
1-3 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
2-4 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	1	1
5-7 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	composition	1	0
6-8 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
9-11 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
10-12 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	2	0
13-15 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	composition	2	0
14-16 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
17-19 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
18-20 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	clapboards	1	1
21-23 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	composition	1	0
22-24 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	clapboards	1	0
25-27 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
26-28 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	composition	1	0
29-31 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
30-32 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
33-35 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
34-36 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	composition	1	0
37-39 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
41-43 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
45-47 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	1	0
49-51 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
53-55 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	composition	1	0

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description Lawton Mills Historic District 7-10
Plainfield, Windham County, CT

INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

ADDRESS	STORIES	DATE	DESCRIPTION	MATERIAL	C	NC
57-59 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	composition	2	0
61-63 Second Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	composition	1	0
1-3 Seventh Street Photograph 6	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	2	0
2-4 Seventh Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	1	0
5-7 Seventh Street Photograph 6	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
6-8 Seventh Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
9-11 Seventh Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
10-12 Seventh Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
13-15 Seventh Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
14-16 Seventh Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	1	0
1-3 Sixth Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	2	0
2-4 Sixth Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
5-7 Sixth Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	composition	1	0
6-8 Sixth Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	composition	1	0
9-11 Sixth Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
10-12 Sixth Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
14-16 Sixth Street	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding/brick	1	0
1-3 Third Street Ext.	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	2	0
2-4 Third Street Ext.	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	2	0
5-7 Third Street Ext.	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	composition	1	0
6-8 Third Street Ext.	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
9-11 Third Street Ext.	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	2	0
13-15 Third Street Ext.	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	1	0
10-12 Third Street Ext. Photograph 4	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	clapboards	1	0
14-16 Third Street Ext. Photograph 4	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	clapboards	1	0
17-19 Third Street Ext.	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	1	0

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description Lawton Mills Historic District 7-11
 Plainfield, Windham County, CT

INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

ADDRESS	STORIES	DATE	DESCRIPTION	MATERIAL	C	NC
18-20 Third Street Ext. Photograph 4	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	siding	1	0
21-23 Third Street Ext.	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	1	0
22-24 Third Street Ext.	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	1	0
25-27 Third Street Ext.	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	asphalt	1	0
29-31 Third Street Ext.	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	composition	1	0
33-35 Third Street Ext.	1 1/2	c.1906-11	Mill house	composition	1	0

STRUCTURES

Fourth Street (Block 18C, Lot 19A)		1907; 1917	Water towers		2	0
---------------------------------------	--	------------	--------------	--	---	---

SITE/OBJECTS

Community Avenue Photograph 12			Park with modern war memorial, c.1930 tank		2	1
-----------------------------------	--	--	---	--	---	---

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Significance Lawton Mills Historic District
 Plainfield, Windham County, CT

8-1

Summary

The historic resources included in the Lawton Mills Historic District are significant because they illustrate the tremendous impact of textile manufacturing in the development of eastern Connecticut (Criterion A) and because they embody the distinctive architectural and spatial characteristics of a 19th-century mill town (Criterion C). In the early years of the 20th century, the economic and social life of Plainfield was transformed when Harold Lawton built a large steam-powered cotton factory that necessitated hundred of workers. The presence of the mill and its economic success allowed this part of Plainfield to grow and prosper, changing it from a minor railroad junction into a vibrant small town, with numerous stores, churches, a bank, and places of entertainment.

Historic Significance

Harold Lawton's first experience of cotton manufacturing occurred while he was a young man in England. Lawton emigrated to America in 1872 and held a series of successive jobs in mills located in Rhode Island and eastern Connecticut, as well New Hampshire and Canada. In 1901 Lawton became superintendent and manager of Baltic Mills in Sprague, Connecticut, and remained there until he built his own mill in 1905. It is unknown why Lawton chose Plainfield as the site of his mill. Plainfield Junction, a terminus for both east-west and north-south rail lines, provided excellent transportation facilities for the delivery of cotton and coal and for the shipment of finished goods. Also, the presence of numerous cotton and wool manufacturers already at work in town provided a pool of skilled, experienced textile workers.

Lawton purchased the site of the former Robinson and Fowler Foundry and constructed a three-story cotton spinning mill and an attached one-story weave shed. The company's product was fine combed goods. In 1911 the size of the mill was doubled and all buildings were illuminated by electric lights. Eventually, the mill went from the capacity of 30,000 spindles to 130,080 spindles. The mill employed 1,200 people and had 2,442 looms.

To accommodate its workers, Lawton Mills constructed 125 duplex residences between 1906 and 1911 on land located east and west of the mill. Originally, Lawton wanted the residents of Plainfield themselves

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Significance Lawton Mills Historic District
 Plainfield, Windham County, CT

8-2

to construct houses for the mill workers. William Payson Babcock and his brother Telly bought a large plot east of the mill. They sold some lots to prospective homeowners and built one tenement; however, they did not meet with overall success. They then sold the land to the mill company, which used it to build houses for supervisory personnel. Since other developers also experienced little success, Lawton Mills built the majority of the village's tenements.

The mill promoted growth in Plainfield's commercial district. Along Railroad Avenue a bank was built in 1912 (with Harold Lawton as president), as well as an opera house and several large stores. Edmund Mercier built a drug and department store around 1920 that sold a wide variety of goods, including a complete line of clothing.

Under the leadership of Samuel Taylor Butterworth, Harold Lawton's successor, Lawton Mills concerned itself with its workers' well-being. Butterworth, like Lawton, had held a number of successive jobs in nearby mills before he assumed his position at Lawton Mills. Lawton Mills was an extremely paternalistic company. The mill realized that contented and satisfied workers produced better results. The mill houses had indoor plumbing and electric lights, two features that were far from common in the industrial housing of the period, and they were exceptionally well-maintained. The company constructed a recreation building in 1920 with an indoor swimming pool, bowling alleys, pool tables, a card room, and a library. The mill also built the Lawton Inn to accommodate the company's travelling representatives and visitors. Because of the rapidly increasing number of school-age children in the village, a new public school was constructed in 1912. Harold Lawton contributed one third of the \$15,000 needed for the building.

Many of the workers at Lawton Mills were immigrants, and their presence affected the town's social life in many ways. To supply the religious needs of the majority of millworkers, who were French Canadians, a Catholic mission was formed soon after the mill was opened, and services were held in various halls until a church was built in 1907. In 1929 a Catholic elementary school was opened. There were also a number of skilled textile workers from England, and in 1914 an Episcopal church was built on Norwich Road.

The quarter-century after the building of Lawton Mills was a positive period in the history of Plainfield. The mill offered steady employment, paid good wages, and kept its housing in excellent condition. To be sure, the governance of the mill and its workers'

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Significance Lawton Mills Historic District
 Plainfield, Windham County, CT

8-3

lives was pure paternalism, not democracy. The mill's managers promoted schools and recreation for their own interests, and workers had no voice in their administration. Nevertheless, under the leadership of Harold Lawton and Samuel Taylor Butterworth, the company's policies were genuinely benevolent and brought many advantages to its employees. Unions found it difficult to organize Lawton Mills, and for the company's first 30 years, no strike was ever called.

With the onset of the Great Depression, Lawton Mills entered a period of decline. Losses mounted steadily after 1930, and the company found it increasingly difficult to finance needed improvements. In early 1936 the first strike in the company's history stopped production, and in March, nervous shareholders voted to liquidate all assets.

The closing of Lawton Mills left a tremendous void at the center of community life in Plainfield. Gradually however, space in the empty mills was rented to other companies, and by 1940 the economic outlook was improving. Growth continued after the Second World War, and today the area possesses a healthy mixture of diversified industries and historic areas of great character. The future of the mill itself, however, is less certain; most of the complex is currently vacant.

Architectural Significance

The huge mill complex and the nearby tracts of mill-related housing make Plainfield an exceptionally good example of the mill village, a settlement pattern found throughout eastern Connecticut. The streets of nearly identical employee houses that surround the mill re-create the sense of order and company control that historically characterized such villages. The paternalistic presence of the mill is further recalled by the former community building and the Lawton Inn, indications that Lawton Mills provided not only work and shelter but also other necessities of life and even opportunities for recreation.

The mill company's own buildings, the largest buildings in the village, are also the most elaborately detailed, symbolizing their central importance. Of these, the Colonial Revival Lawton Inn is perhaps the most impressive: its slate-covered gambrel roof, fan lights, and Neo-Georgian entrance treatment recall the formal architecture of the Colonial period. The Community Building, also a Colonial Revival design, continues the theme with its overall symmetry and cupola,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Significance Lawton Mills Historic District
 Plainfield, Windham County, CT

8-4

although the stuccoed walls and heavy timbers seem derived from Spanish Mission architecture of the Southwest. Finally, Harold Lawton's own house, surprisingly modest for the richest man in the village, incorporated Colonial Revival elements, particularly in its porch details.

In contrast, the houses built for the mill's workers are archetypal company-built dwellings: plain in form, with symmetrical duplex or other modular plans. As was typical, most of the houses are devoid of architectural embellishment. Only the houses built for supervisory personnel have a semblance of architectural style. Although rather plainly detailed, these have the gambrel-roofed or hip-roofed box-like form associated with the Colonial era, and many have a large central chimney, small-pane windows, and other Colonial Revival details.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Bibliography Lawton Mills Historic District 9-1
 Plainfield, Windham County, CT

Bayles, Richard. History of Windham County, Connecticut. New York,
1889.

Burgess, Charles, ed. Plainfield Souvenir. Moosup, Connecticut:
Charles P. Burgess, 1895.

Clouette, Bruce and Hal Keiner. Historic Resource Survey of
Plainfield. Town of Plainfield and Connecticut Historical
Commission, 1980.

Larned, Ellen. History of Windham County, Connecticut. 2 Vols.
Worcester: Charles Hamilton, 1876-1880.

Lincoln, Allen B. A Modern History of Windham County, Connecticut: A
Windham County Treasure Book. Chicago: The S. J. Clarke
Publishing Company, 1920.

Moosup Journal, 1900-1910.

Roth, Matthew W. Connecticut: An Inventory of Historic Engineering
and Industrial Sites. Washington: Society for Industrial
Archeology, 1981.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Geographical Data Lawton Mills Historic District
 Plainfield, Windham County, CT

10-1

UTM REFERENCES:

- 1: 19.256840.4618230
- 2: 19.257250.4618230
- 3: 19.257250.4618160
- 4: 19.257370.4618170
- 5: 19.257380.4618240
- 6: 19.257420.4618240
- 7: 19.257420.4618130
- 8: 19.257360.4618130
- 9: 19.257290.4617470
- 10: 19.257120.4617460
- 11: 19.257120.4617290
- 12: 19.256950.4617290
- 13: 19.256950.4617240
- 14: 19.256700.4617260
- 15: 19.256770.4617690
- 16: 19.256470.4617710
- 17: 19.256480.4617820
- 18: 19.256670.4617900
- 19: 19.256680.4617980
- 20: 19.256570.4617990
- 21: 19.256600.4618130
- 22: 19.256840.4618150

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Photographs Lawton Mills Historic District Photos-1
 Plainfield, Windham County, CT

All photographs:

1. Lawton Mills Historic District
2. Plainfield, Windham County, CT
3. Photo Credit: HRC, Hartford, CT
4. October, 1994
5. Negative filed with Connecticut Historical Commission
Hartford, CT

Captions:

Lawton Mills, Community Avenue, camera facing northwest
Photograph 1 of 16

Lawton Mills, Community Avenue, camera facing northeast
Photograph 2 of 16

Detail of fence surrounding Lawton Mill, camera facing southeast
Photograph 3 of 16

Former worker tenement, 18-10 Third Street Extension, camera facing
northeast
Photograph 4 of 16

Former worker tenement, 34-40 First Street, camera facing southwest
Photograph 5 of 16

Former worker tenement, 1-7 Seventh Street, camera facing northwest
Photograph 6 of 16

Former worker tenement, 13-9 Fourth Street, camera facing northwest
Photograph 7 of 16

Row of former supervisor houses, 2-4 Porteous Terrace, camera facing
southeast
Photograph 8 of 16

Harold Lawton House, 595 Norwich Avenue, camera facing southwest
Photograph 9 of 16

Lawton Inn, 21 Babcock Avenue, camera facing northeast
Photograph 10 of 16

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Photographs Lawton Mills Historic District Photos-2
 Plainfield, Windham County, CT

The Community Building, (Plainfield Town Hall) 8 Community Avenue,
camera facing northwest
Photograph 11 of 16

Town park, Babcock Avenue and Community Avenue, camera facing northwest
Photograph 12 of 16

St. Paul's Church, 635 Norwich Avenue, camera facing northwest
Photograph 13 of 16

Former Mercier department store, 36-38 Railroad Avenue, camera facing
northeast
Photograph 14 of 16

Former Babcock Opera House, 24 Railroad Avenue, camera facing northwest
Photograph 15 of 16

Former First National Bank, 22 Railroad Avenue, camera facing northeast
Photograph 16 of 16