

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY
BUILDING AND STRUCTURES

HIST-6 NEW 5/77

237

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
 CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 59 SOUTH PROSPECT STREET, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106
 (203) 566-3005

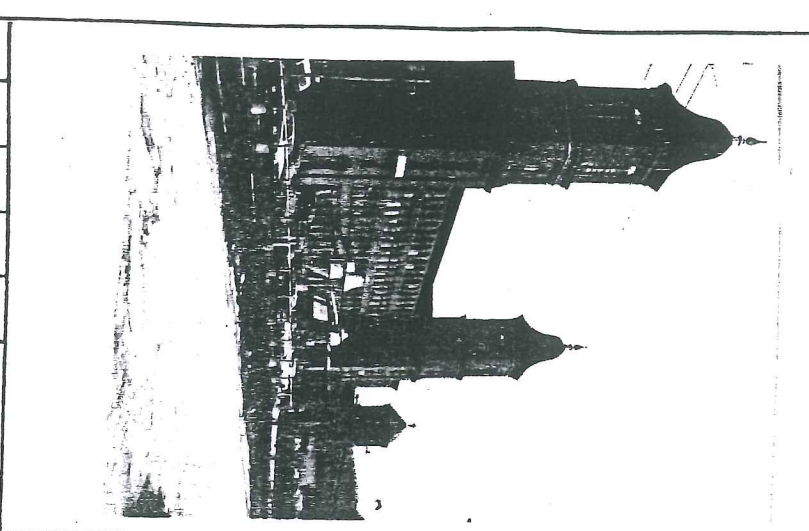
167/60/7//

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
Town No.:	Site No.:
UTM	
QUAD:	
DISTRICT	IF NR. SPECIFY
<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> NR	<input type="checkbox"/> Actual <input type="checkbox"/> Potential

IDENTIFICATION	1. BUILDING NAME (Common) (Historic) CLUETT, PEABODY MILL GROSVENOR DALE COMPANY MILL NO. 2	
	2. TOWN CITY THOMPSON	VILLAGE NORTH GROSVENORDALE
	3. STREET AND NUMBER (and/or location) 1050 ROUTE 12 & RIVER STREET (929 RIVERSIDE DR.) 167/60-7	
	4. OWNER(S) c/o U.S. Managers Realty, 433 N. Camden Drive, NIUNA-THOMPSON, INC. Suite 960, Beverly Hill, CA 90210 <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private	
	5. USE (Present) (Historic) Manufacturing/Vacant Cotton Textile Mill	
	6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	EXTERIOR VISIBLE FROM PUBLIC ROAD <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
	7. STYLE OF BUILDING Industrial DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1872, later additions	
DESCRIPTION	8. MATERIALS (Indicate use or location when appropriate)	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Clapboard	<input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Siding
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brick	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Siding
	<input type="checkbox"/> Board & Batten	<input type="checkbox"/> Stucco
	<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldstone	<input type="checkbox"/> Cobblestone
	<input type="checkbox"/> Aluminum Siding	<input type="checkbox"/> Concrete Type:
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cut stone Type: Granite sills	
	9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Wood frame	<input type="checkbox"/> Post and beam
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Load bearing masonry	<input type="checkbox"/> balloon	
<input type="checkbox"/> Structural iron or steel	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
10. ROOF (Type)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Gable	<input type="checkbox"/> Flat	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mansard	<input type="checkbox"/> Monitor	
<input type="checkbox"/> sawtooth	<input type="checkbox"/> Gambrel	
<input type="checkbox"/> Shed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hip	
<input type="checkbox"/> Round	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
(Material)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> Roll Asphalt	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tin	<input type="checkbox"/> Slate	
<input type="checkbox"/> Gable end to the street	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Asphalt shingle	
<input type="checkbox"/> Built up	<input type="checkbox"/> Tile	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ridge parallel to the canal	
11. NUMBER OF STORIES 4		
APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS		
12. CONDITION (Structural) (Exterior)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	
13. INTEGRITY (Location)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On original site	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	
WHEN?	(Alterations)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
IF YES, EXPLAIN various late 19th century additions		
14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES		
<input type="checkbox"/> Barn	<input type="checkbox"/> Shed	
<input type="checkbox"/> Garage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other landscape features or buildings (Specify)	
power canal runs just to the east of the mill.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Carriage house	<input type="checkbox"/> Shop	
<input type="checkbox"/> Garden		
15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT		
<input type="checkbox"/> Open land	<input type="checkbox"/> Wood-land	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residential	<input type="checkbox"/> Scattered buildings visible from site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indus-trial	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High building density	
16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS At the northern end of North Grosvenordale, surrounded by 19th century mill housing.		

(OVER)

PHOTO	PHOTOGRAPHER Mark McDonough		DATE 1986
	VIEW NW	NEGATIVE ON FILE A30	
COMPILED BY	NAME Mark McDonough		DATE 1986
	ORGANIZATION Town of Thompson, Connecticut		
	ADDRESS		



20 SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATION:

17 OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior)

This multi-story brick factory is divided into two primary parts: the four story southern wing, built 1870-1872, and the two story weave shed added to the north end of the complex in the middle 1890s. South wing construction features segmental arched windows with stone sills, corbeled architrave, molded wood cornice, sheet metal coping. Old wooden sash is mixed, primarily 6-over-6. Brick walls are laid up in common bond with headers every 10 courses. Two large six story towers are located near the ends of the southern wing along its eastern wall; somewhat plainer five story towers are similarly placed on its west wall.

At southeast corner, early or original two story office wing. At junction of wing with main portion (northwest corner of wing), quarter-round bay window. The weave shed has smaller three story towers at either end of its east wall. Weave shed construction features brick piers with wall anchors; most original windows are partially bricked up.

Tower details: Six story: first four floors have segmental arched openings with paired

18 ARCHITECT

BUILDER

19 HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE

This large brick cotton textile mill was built in 1872 by the Grosvenor Dale Company which, under the direction of Dr. William Grosvenor (1810-1888), transformed Thompson's backward, small scale cotton textile industry into a modern enterprise taking advantage of the latest mechanized methods and a large workforce of unskilled immigrant labor. Grosvenor and mill superintendent Lucius Briggs purchased the extensive property, then known as Fisherville after early mill owner William Fisher. This building was erected by F.P. Sheldon, a Providence, Rhode Island architectural and engineering firm.

Grosvenor, a Rhode Island capitalist with Windham County roots, was both a trained physician and an avid businessman. Early in his career, he made a moderate inherited fortune much larger as a dye, chemical, and textile merchant in Providence. He gained control of a still larger fortune by marrying Rosa Anne Mason, principal heiress to the Mason family's Thompson textile properties.

Grosvenor became Agent for the Masonville Company in 1848, and consolidated his control of the company throughout the 1850s and early 1860s. In 1868, the Masonville Company was

SOURCES

Bayles, History of Windham County
 F.P. Sheldon, Sons, A Half-Century of Achievements
 Margolick, Patterns of Change in New England Textile Towns
 Northeastern Connecticut Oral History Project (Thompson Library)
 Roth, Connecticut Historic American Engineering Record Inventory

21 THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE

None known Highways Vandalism Developers Other _____

Renewal Private Deterioration Zoning Explanaton _____

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TOWN NO.:	SITE NO.:		
UTM: 18/	/	/	/
QUAD:			
DISTRICT:	S	NR:	ACTUAL POTENTIAL

CONTINUATION SHEET #17 GROSVENOR DALE COMPANY MILL NO. 2
 Item number: _____ Date: _____

6-over-6 sash and brick drip moldings (front wall openings contain ground level entry (altered) and freight doors above). Brick corner pilasters. Fifth stage has corbelled cornice, bevelled corners with buttress-like projections, round arched openings with brick drip moldings and paired round arched windows (modern fiberglass panels). Wood spandrels have applied star designs.

Six stage (belfry) has larged round arched openings, scalloped corbelling, then molded wood cornice on small brick dentils. Bell shaped (parabolic) roof with metal finial. Stone tablet on south tower reads "Grosvenor Dale Co.", north tower, "Erected AD 1872". Five story towers are similar with simpler detailing.

Three story towers (weave shed): First and second stages treated in single round arched recessed panel with brick drip molding and keyblock. Front has entry in round arched recess with double original wooden doors. Doors have panels with chamfered edges. Left and right walls have simpler entries.

Second floor: large round arched windows with stone sills, same molding and keyblock. At bottom of third stage, corbeled brick dentils and granite belt course. Third stage has ocular radial glazed windows surrounding by raised brick molding and flanked by paired brick pilasters. Pyramidal roof with copper finial suggesting fleur-de-lis.

Yard items include two small brick (fire) hose houses with parabolic roofs.

#19 GROSVENOR DALE COMPANY MILL NO. 2.

reorganized as the Grosvenor Dale Company, and the villages of Masonville and Fisherville were re-named Grosvenordale and North Grosvenordale.

Grosvenor continued to expand his Thompson holdings until his death in 1888. His son William Grosvenor Jr. charted a similar course, adding weave sheds to both this mill and the 1862 Grosvenor Dale mill in the 1890s and constantly updating and expanding the properties (the small mill built in the 1820s by William Fisher was demolished to make room for the North Grosvenordale weave shed).

The arrival of cotton textile manufacturing on a truly industrial scale beginning in the 1860s transformed Thompson from a primarily Yankee town with a relative handful of immigrant mill hands into a settlement in which 90 per cent of the population was foreign born or of foreign parentage. In the Grosvenordales, French was heard far more often than English as thousands of impoverished farmers migrated from Quebec to sample the steady wage labor provided by the mills. The Grosvenor Dale Company reached a high water mark just before the First World War.

After about 1910, several factors lead to a slow decline. The waterpower which originally brought the mills to Thompson declined in importance with the availability of cheap, reliable steam engines -- this made southern locations with easy access to raw cotton, docile labor, and transportation more competitive than isolated upland mills in New England. The coming of the automobile also broke down the isolation of Thompson's insular mill villages, creating a new sophistication in the town's once passive labor force

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and bringing an end to what was in many respects a near feudal economic system (Dr. William Grosvenor, himself the proud owner of Providence and Newport mansions, was an ardent campaigner against the ten hour day, dismissing it as the work of "English factory agitators").

Faced with new challenges, the Grosvenor Dale Company made some efforts to modernize, but the last major additions to its mills were made just after 1900. In 1938, the company sold off the bulk of its company owned housing, in 1942, it sold its mill operations. This mill was purchased by the Cluett, Peabody Company, which operated it until 1954. Since that time, it has passed through a number of hands and has been subdivided for use by industrial tenants.

It is important to stress that, however harsh conditions may have been in the Grosvenor-dales by modern standards (pensions and paid vacations were unheard of, there were no coffee breaks, wages were low, the pace of work was fast, and many workers first entered the mill in their early teens), most mill employees viewed the company favorably. Until the end, the Grosvenor Dale Company was a reliable source of employment, operating at relatively high capacity even during the Depression. Many workers felt coerced by economic necessity, but others genuinely identified with the company and regarded it as a benefolent force in the community.

While this later view is understandable, it is also true that Thompson has little to show for the many millions in profits that its mills produced, and that the withdrawal of what had been a quasi-governmental institution left the town without a substantial tax base, without adequate services, and without an adequate number of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs.

The Grosvenor Dale Company Mill No. 2 is historically significant as Thompson's largest surviving textile complex, and for its long time association with the Grosvenor Dale Company, which dominated Thompson's social, economic, and political life for eight decades.

Architecturally, it is significant as a good example of brick factory construction. The timber posts and beams, decorative brick corbelling, the added weave shed, and the closely spaced windows are all typical features. The prominent stair towers, aside from their decorative and practical functions, served as a reminder of the company's authority. The residents of the crowded company owned housing just to the south of the mill not only labored up to 12 hours a day in the mill, but spent most of their lives within sight of its towers.