

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY
BUILDING AND STRUCTURES
 HIST-6 NEW 5.77

271

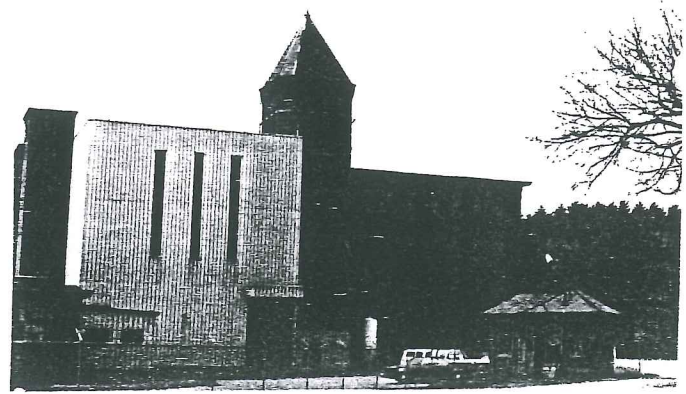
STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 59 SOUTH PROSPECT STREET, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106
 (203) 566-3005

63/95/1/1

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) BELDING CORTICELLI MILL		(Historic) GROSVENOR DALE MILL NO. 4	
	2. TOWN CITY THOMPSON		VILLAGE GROSVENORDALE	COUNTY WINDHAM
	3. STREET AND NUMBER (and/or location) 1668 ROUTE 12 & BLAIN ROAD		Q (630 RIVERSIDE DR.) 63/95-1	
	4. OWNER(S) BELDING CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES, INC.		P.O. BOX 300 GROSVENORDALE, CT 06246 <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private	
	5. USE (Present) Chemical Research/Storage		(Historic) Cotton Textile Mill	
DESCRIPTION	5. 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 1862; later additions	
	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"/> Fieldstone <input type="checkbox"/> Board & Batten <input type="checkbox"/> Stucco <input type="checkbox"/> Cobblestone <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aluminum Siding <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete Type: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Cut stone Type: _____			
	9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Wood frame <input type="checkbox"/> Post and beam <input type="checkbox"/> balloon <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Load bearing masonry <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 type="checkbox"/> Hip <input type="checkbox"/> Round <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Varies, generally hip</u> 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 type="checkbox"/> Asphalt shingle <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Built up <input type="checkbox"/> Tile <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Ridge parallel to the street			
	11. NUMBER OF STORIES See #17		APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS	
12. CONDITION (Structure)				
<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 (Exterior)				
13. INTEGRITY (Location)		WHEN		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On original site <input type="checkbox"/> Moved		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (Alterations) IF YES, EXPLAIN See #17; numerous		
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) On large industrial lot; power canal extant <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 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				
Set in a modest collection of 19th century mill housing.				

PHOTO	PHOTOGRAPHER Mark McDonough		DATE 1986
	VIEW NW; E; SE	NEGATIVE ON FILE L3; L7; F16	
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)

Four story main building has brick walls laid up in common bond with Flemish variation. Wall anchors with shield shaped exterior plates. Segmental arched windows with old 6-over-9 wood sash, stone sills. Raised basement story with granite water table. Brick belt courses between stories.

Continuous brick drip molding on third floor; wall corbelled out at top of fourth floor windows. Cornice detail; small corbelled brackets, overhanging eaves on large exposed purlins, molded wood cornice, sheet metal coping.

Five story central tower has large round arched openings front and right with glazed transoms and corbelled out drip moldings on basement through fourth floor. Front tower entry altered; corrugated metal facing, modern metal and glass doors. Tower beveled above second story; right bevel unaltered, with sheet copper cladding and Gargoyle. Above fourth floor, carved stone tablet reads "AD 1862". Fifth floor (belfry) has triple round arched openings, granite belt course. Corbelled dentils and cornice, octagonal slate roof with copper coping.

18 ARCHITECT

BUILDER

19 HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE

This large brick cotton textile mill was built in 1862 by Dr. William Grosvenor (1810-1888), who had recently consolidated his hold on the French River mill properties developed earlier in the century by the Mason family.

The 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. Grosvenor 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 properties (the Mason's owned two mills, the 1826 Masonville mill still extant just to the north of this building and the 1812 wood frame mill known as "The Swamp Factory", moved from this site when the 1862 mill was built and later demolished).

Grosvenor became Agent for the Masonville Company in 1848, and consolidated his control of the company throughout the 1850s and early 1860s. By the time this mill opened in 1864 (its operation was delayed for two years by the Civil War, which shut off supplies of cotton

SOURCES

Bayles, History of Windham County
 F.P. Sheldon, Sons, A Half-Century of Achievements
 Margolick, Patterns of Change in New England Textile Towns
 Connecticut Historic American Engineering Record Inventory

21 THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE

<input type="checkbox"/> None known	<input type="checkbox"/> Highways	<input type="checkbox"/> Vandalism	<input type="checkbox"/> Developers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>Owners considering demolition</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	<input type="checkbox"/> Private	<input type="checkbox"/> Deterioration	<input type="checkbox"/> Zoning	<input type="checkbox"/> Explanaton _____

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CONTINUATION SHEET #17 GROSVENOR DALE MILL NO. 4
Item number: _____ Date: _____

finial. Adjoining tower on left, 1968 corrugated metal addition. With exception of structural steel 1968 addition, construction generally timber post and beam.

Additional Structures: Adjoining wing at right rear has bricked up headrace opening in north wall, recent entry in somewhat altered extension with partial fieldstone facing. Construction in this wing generally similar to main building. Wood and steel walkway over French River connects right rear wing to brick cotton storage located along rail line to rear. Storage shed is one story, brick pier construction. Windows appear to have been added to many bays originally blind.

Concrete dam (1930) and headrace are located just to north, across Blain Road. To south, large brick one story weave shed with central two story entry tower similar to that on main building. Tower has recessed entry in round arched opening with double brick drip moldings, granite keyblock. Round arched windows on left and right walls similarly treated. Double paneled wood doors.

At second story, brick dentils, granite belt course, ocular windows flanked by paired brick pilasters. Above, small corbelled brackets, corbelled dentils, copper coping, pyramidal roof with copper fleur-de-lis finial. General weave shed construction is brick pier with segmental arched windows, 10-over-15 eaves.

Yard items include octagonal brick (fire)hose houses, with bell shaped (parabolic) roofs, small brick guard house with overhanging eaves on scalloped wood brackets with triangular cut-outs.

#19 GROSVENOR DALE MILL NO. 4

from the south), the company was wholly owned by Grosvenor and his superintendent, Lucius Briggs. That same year, Grosvenor bought the nearby mill properties formerly owned by William Fisher. In 1868, the Masonville Company was 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 large weave sheds to both this mill and the 1872 North Grosvenordale mill in the 1890s and constantly updating and expanding the properties.

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 percent 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 water power 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, cheap labor, and transportation more competitive than isolated upland

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CONTINUATION SHEET #19 GROSVENOR DALE MILL NO. 4
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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 and bringing an end to what was in many respects a near feudal economic system (Dr. William Grosvenor, himself the proud owner of Newport and Providence 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. The large North Grosvenordale mill was purchased by the Cluett, Peabody Company, which operated it until 1954.

After passing through a number of hands, this mill was purchased in 1955 by Belding Chemical Industries, a diversified textile conglomerate. BCI maintains limited operations in the facility.

The Grosvenor Dale Company Number 4 is historically significant as one of Thompson's largest surviving textile complexes, 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 one story weave shed, and the closely spaced windows are all typical features.

