

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
(203) 566-3005

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM
For Buildings and Structures

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY			
TOWN NO.:	SITE NO.:		
UTM: 18/	/	/	/
QUAD:			
DISTRICT:	S	NR:	ACTUAL
			POTENTIAL

IDENTIFICATION

1. BUILDING NAME: Common: Middlesex Cabinet Shop Historic: Starr Mill; Russell Manufacturing Company
2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: Staddle Hill COUNTY: Middlesex
3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): Beverly Heights; northwest corner of Middlefield Street
4. OWNER(S): J.J. Vinci PUBLIC PRIVATE
5. USE: Present: Industrial Historic: same
6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: yes no
Interior accessible: yes, explain with owner's permission no

DESCRIPTION

7. STYLE OF BUILDING: 19th Century Industrial DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: Eastern Building, possibly c. 1812; Western Building, c. 1865
8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):
 clapboard asbestos siding brick
 wood shingle asphalt siding fieldstone
 board & batten stucco cobblestone
 aluminum siding concrete: type: _____ cut stone: type: brownstone
 other: _____ foundation
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
 wood frame: post and beam balloon
 load bearing masonry structural iron or steel (interior framing, with wood)
 other: _____
10. ROOF: type:
 gable flat mansard monitor sawtooth
 gambrel shed hip round other _____
 material:
 wood shingle roll asphalt tin slate
 asphalt shingle built up tile other: _____
11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 3 1/2 APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: _____
12. CONDITION: Structural: excellent good fair deteriorated
 Exterior: excellent good fair deteriorated
13. INTEGRITY: Location: on original site moved, when: _____
 Alterations: no yes, explain: Sheds, heating plant added; sliceway
14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:
 barn shed garage other landscape features or buildings: pond, dam,
 carriage house shop garden bridge (See #18)
15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:
 open land woodland residential scattered buildings visible from site
 commercial industrial rural high building density

16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: These two 19th century factory buildings are sited on a bank beside Starr Mill pond on Beverly Heights just off Middlefield Street. Each building is 3 1/2 stories tall, and overlooks a picturesque pond and woods to the west; a parking lot packed with trucks and industrial equipment on the south; and nineteenth century housing on Beverly Heights to the north.

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

- Corbeled, denticulated cornice
- Brownstone arch for sliceway below eastern building
- Late 19th century turbine attached to building
- Monitor on powerhouse adjacent to dam
- 1927 pony-truss bridge constructed by Berlin Construction Company

SIGNIFICANCE

Architect: _____ Builder: _____

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: Nathan Starr, Sr., a scythe manufacturer, purchased land on the West (now Coginchaug) River in Staddle Hill in 1799. Joined by his son, Nathan, Jr., in 1812, Starr began the first of a long series of government contracts to produce swords, pistols, and eventually, rifles. They constructed a factory here, c. 1812, which is probably the easternmost building sited by the pond. After Nathan, Sr's. death in 1812, his son carried on the business until 1845. During this period some 70,000 arms of varied kinds were made here, as well as a number of commemorative swords for national heroes.

From 1845 to 1864 the factory was relatively inactive. In the latter year the Russell Manufacturing Company bought the property; in 1865 they erected the building immediately to the west of the original plant in a similar height, scale, material, and style. This was an auxiliary operation, complementing the main South Farms factories; Russell conducted manufacturing here for some ninety years. A plumbing products firm and then a lighting fixture company ran short-lived manufacturing operations here; the facilities were vacant in the late 1960s. Joseph J. Vinci bought the property in 1971. Several

(see continuation sheet)

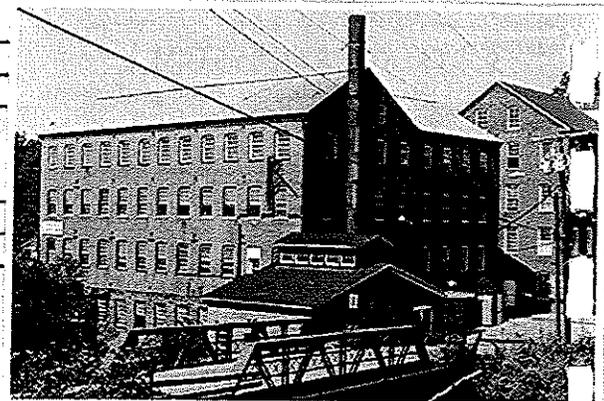
PHOTOGRAPH

photographer: Roger Sherman
date: 9/78 view: east
negative on file: Roll 38, #8

COMPILED BY:

name: Roger Sherman date: 12/29
organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust.
address: 27 Washington St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

19. SOURCES: Middletown Land Records; Middletown Probate Records; Joellyn Kuhnlein and Elizabeth Reynolds, "Starr Mill, " GMPT Report, 1973



20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:

none known highways vandalism developers other: _____
 renewal private deterioration zoning explanation: _____

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Item number: 18 Date: 9/78

Starr Mill; Russell Manufacturing Company
Beverly Heights, Middletown, Ct. 06457

#18

small businesses currently operate here, including a cabinetmaker, garment shop, and a welding outfit.

The Starr Mill is an archetypical nineteenth century mill: a tall, many-windowed brick building beside a mill pond. There have been few major exterior alterations. Round-arched brownstone sluiceways (now bricked up) run beneath the building. On each end of the building three gable end chimney stacks terminate in the attic. Artifacts from former functions of the mill abound. A late 19th century turbine lies in the water near the southeastern corner of the earlier building.

This complex is a well-preserved and significant industrial site which has been successfully adapted to light manufacturing uses.