

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:	8	NR:	ACTUAL POTENTIAL

IDENTIFICATION

- 1. BUILDING NAME: Common: P&H Bliss Company Historic: Sanseer Mill, Russell Manufacturing Company
- 2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY: Middlesex
- 3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 215 East Main Street
- 4. OWNER(S): Harry W. Dickerson PUBLIC  PRIVATE
- 5. USE: Present: Office and Storage Historic: Industrial
- 6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: yes  no   
Interior accessible: yes, explain \_\_\_\_\_  no

DESCRIPTION

- 7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Late 19th Century Industrial DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: c. 1885
- 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 foundation  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:  
 wood frame:  post and beam  balloon (interior framing)  
 load bearing masonry       structural iron or steel (tie rods)  
 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: 74'x40'
- 12. CONDITION: Structural:  excellent       good       fair       deteriorated  
Exterior:  excellent       good       fair       deteriorated
- 13. INTEGRITY: Location:  on original site  moved, when: \_\_\_\_\_  
Alterations:  no  yes, explain: Tower above stairwell removed
- 14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:  
 barn       shed       garage       other landscape features or buildings: adjoining brick building, south; large wood building, east (See Form #95A)  
 carriage house       shop       garden
- 15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:  
 open land       woodland       residential       scattered buildings visible from site  
 commercial       industrial       rural       high building density

16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: This large brick structure is one of three industrial buildings that share a secluded, well-kept site in the South Farms district. Separated from Main Street Extension by trees and undergrowth, the landscaped grounds are behind a row of East Main Street buildings. This, the largest structure, adjoins a brick building south; nearby to the east is a large barn-like structure.

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

**SIGNIFICANCE**

Architect: \_\_\_\_\_ Builder: \_\_\_\_\_

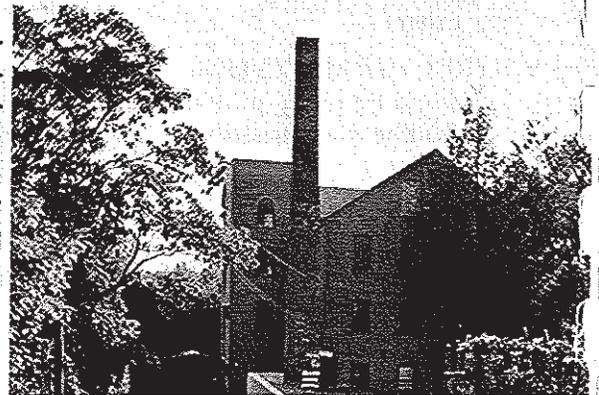
18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: This large brick building was constructed probably a short time after the Russell Manufacturing Company obtained the property in 1884. The site, formerly developed by the Sanseer Manufacturing Company, includes a brick building which had been that company's main shop. (See Form #95A). The Russell Manufacturing Company, established in 1834, produced a great variety of cotton and elastic woven goods. By 1894, it was the nation's largest manufacturer of suspenders, employing 900 workers in the company's seven groups of mills. This mill, powered by steam, probably housed weaving looms as did the other two buildings nearby. These structures formed the company's Sanseer Mill complex. In 1937, Phillip Bliss purchased the property. Since then, the building has been primarily used for office and storage space by the P & H Bliss Company.

The structure has two dominant vertical elements: a four-story stairwell extends from the middle of one side and a tall rectangular stack stands closeby. The main entrance displays a small wooden portico. Its columns and plain entablature, painted white, contrast with the building's brick walls.

This structure, one of the least altered early mills in the area, reflects the substantial (see continuation sheet)

**PHOTOGRAPH**

photographer: Robert Svec  
date: 9/78 view: east  
negative on file: Roll 31, #29



**COMPILED BY:**

name: Robert Svec date: 9/78  
organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust  
address: 27 Washington St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

19. SOURCES: Middletown Land Records; History of Middlesex County (New York: J.B. Beers, 1884); H.F. Donlan, Middletown Tribune: Souvenir Edition (Middletown: 1896); 1859 Walling Map; 1874 Beers Atlas; 1877 Bailey Perspective View Map

**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

Sanseer Mill, Russell Manufacturing Co.  
215 East Main St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

#18

development South Farms underwent following the Civil War. During the late nineteenth century, the district experienced marked industrial and residential growth, primarily influenced by the success of the Russell Manufacturing Company.