

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing Company

other names/site number Pearce Brothers Woolen Mill, Royal Chemical Company

**2. Location**

street & number 9 Howard Avenue  not for publication

city or town Coventry  vicinity

state Rhode Island code RI county Kent code 003 zip code 02816

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

- entered in the National Register  
 See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- other (explain)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing Company  
Name of Property

Kent County, Rhode Island  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box.)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3		buildings
		sites
2		structures
		objects
5	0	total

**Name of related multiple property listings**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING: manufacturing facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING: manufacturing facility  
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING: industrial storage  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

No style  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation CONCRETE  
walls BRICK  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof ASPHALT  
other STONE:granite: WOOD:weatherboard:  
STUCCO  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing Company  
Name of Property

Kent County, Rhode Island  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) 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 #

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

INDUSTRY

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1859–1955

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1859: Pearce Brothers acquires woolen mill

ca. 1908: Royal Chem Co/Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing established

ca. 1939: historic buildout completed

**Significant Person**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository  
RI Hist. Soc., Pawtuxet Valley Preservation & Hist. Soc.

Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing Company  
Name of Property

Kent County, Rhode Island  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 9.2 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	19	288766	4622082
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	19	289026	4621982

3	19	288914	4621918
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	19	288850	4621962

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Matthew Kierstead and Mark Rayburn

organization PAL date May 2005

street & number 210 Lonsdale Avenue telephone 401 728-8780

city or town Pawtucket state Rhode Island zip code 02860

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Nine Howard Development, LLC

street & number 9 Howard Avenue telephone 401 828-2222

city or town Coventry state Rhode Island zip code 02816

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing Company, Coventry, Rhode Island

Section number 7

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### DESCRIPTION

The Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing Company is a mill complex located on Howard Avenue in the village of Harris in the northeastern corner of the town of Coventry, Rhode Island. The mill complex is located on the south bank of the North Branch of the Pawtuxet River, and encompasses 9.2 acres on two parcels separated by Howard Avenue.

The complex includes three contributing buildings: the Mill, the Upper Pump House, and the Lower Pump House, and two contributing structures: the Pearce Pond Dam and the Tailrace, all associated with the historical development of the property during its period of significance (circa 1859–1955). The Mill, the Lower Pump House, and the Tailrace are located within 9 Howard Avenue, the parcel north of the road, and the Upper Pumhouse and Pearce Pond Dam are located within the parcel south of the road.

The land slopes gently to the north from the Pearce Pond Dam, and drops off steeply at the river bank north of the Mill. The property is bisected from southwest to northeast by Black Rock Brook, which flows from Black Rock Reservoir, one mile to the west, into the property at the three-acre Pearce Pond, over the Pearce Pond Dam to Howard Street, under Howard Street and the Mill in a culvert, out of the Mill into the Tailrace, and discharges into the river. This brook was the source of waterpower and clean water for dyeing and finishing processes as well as a route for waste disposal. The site contains a collection of aboveground and subterranean water storage and conveyance resources that were initially used for waterpower, and later, for process water for finishing operations. The function of some of these features is not clear and further research would be required to determine their role over time. The complex is surrounded by residential properties on Lincoln Avenue and Mumford Street to the east and south, and on Howard Street to the west, and woods south and west of Pearce Pond.

Vehicular access to the Mill lot at 9 Howard Avenue consists of curb cuts on the north side of Howard Avenue that lead to two separate parking lots, and a large parking lot to the north of the complex, accessed from Lincoln Avenue. Historically, there was a railroad line to the north of the Mill, along the south bank of the river. While the tracks have been removed, the embankment and right-of-way remain between the Mill and the river, and they extend northwest outside the property upriver to the Harris Mill dam and the nearby mill village of Arkwright. An improved section of the right-of-way, the Phenix–Harris trail, extends downriver, east of Lincoln Avenue to the nearby mill village of Phenix. The Upper Pump House on the south side of Howard Avenue fronts onto a dirt parking lot.

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The complex is dominated by the Mill, which consists of several connected elements with an irregular overall footprint. This configuration was the result of the organic growth of the complex starting with the orientation of the original Pearce Brothers Woolen Mill building (before 1859) at the north end of the property. Late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century growth and building orientation were constrained and dictated by factors including orientation of Howard Avenue, the Black Rock Brook, the railroad tracks, and the location of the former A.A. Campbell Elevator and Grist Mill building on the east side of the property, which, when it burned in the early 1960s, allowed the final eastward expansion of the complex. The Mill is currently partially occupied by several commercial and light industrial concerns including a clothing embroiderer, a used lumber milling operation, and a fabricator of large metal dumpsters. The interior of the Mill has been stripped of all historic dyeing machinery, physical plant and power generation equipment.

Many of the buildings within the complex share a common and regular vocabulary of construction materials and architectural features established in the design of the buildings beginning about 1911, including flat, built-up roofs; fire-resistive, wood frame interior construction; brick walls with segmental arch windows; and other features common to early-twentieth-century mill construction. The following individual building descriptions follow the growth of the Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing Company in chronological order as determined by historical sources including atlases, fire insurance maps, and visual inspection.

### Mill

The Mill is located north of Howard Street and west of Lincoln Street. It consists of several single- and multi-story, rubblestone, brick, and wood and steel frame construction industrial buildings with a variety of rectangular or irregular polygonal, oblique foundations that occupy a sprawling, irregularly shaped footprint. These buildings are connected, in some cases, by party walls, and, in other cases, by formerly open narrow alleys and irregular spaces between building sections that were later framed up and roofed over.

#### Pearce Brothers Woolen Mill (before 1859)

The Pearce Brothers Woolen Mill is the earliest building on the property. It is located at the north end of the Mill, immediately south of the river and railroad grade. It is a rectangular, two-story building measuring 84 feet east-west by approximately 40 feet north-south, with later

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additions on all but the north side. The original core building has a flat, built-up roof with a simple plank soffit and fascia. The walls are built of mortared rubblestone covered with a layer of mortar parging, with exposed, rectangular, split granite quoins and window lintels. The only fully exposed original wall is on the north side, which contains 12 regularly-spaced window bays. All window openings are boarded up with plywood. A horizontal row of diamond-shaped, cast iron floorbeam anchor rod washers is located between the first and second floor windows. The interior is of fire-resistive construction, with heavy wood post-and-beam framing and multiple layer wood plank floors. The interior structure has suffered considerable water damage and there is evidence of extensive repairs and alteration to the wood framing. A historic engraving and a historic photograph in the archives of the Pawtuxet Valley Preservation and Historical Society, both from the mid- to late nineteenth century, indicate that the building originally had a gable roof with a full-length clerestory monitor, and a stone-walled stair tower attached to the south elevation. The base of that tower may be incorporated in the mid-twentieth-century infill construction linking the building to those standing to the south.

The addition to the east consists of a shallow, approximately 15-foot-wide section constructed by 1898; a second, approximately 11-foot-wide section constructed to the east by 1911; and a longer, 54-foot-long section constructed by 1922. Together, these form a two-story, wood frame block with a flat, built-up roof with a simple plank cornice, clapboard siding sheathed with faux brick novelty asphalt roll material, and a foundation of mortared granite rubble and poured concrete. The fenestration pattern is irregular with original wood, six-over-six, double-hung sash, some of which are boarded over. There are two north entrances, one a personnel entry door, and the other a roll top garage door with a wooden frame awning. The 44-foot-wide east elevation, which is at a skewed angle to the north and south walls, contains two first-floor roll-type garage doors above a raised concrete loading dock, and a single, second-story, garage loft door with an awning. The skewed angle resulted from the construction of the addition against the side of an elevated bridge (no longer extant) that ran between the south elevation and a railroad freight house to the east. The interior of the east extension is constructed of fire-resistive, heavy post and beam framing with a multiple-layer, wood plank floor. The interior is in poor condition with water damage and deterioration of the framing and plank flooring. The east addition straddles Black Rock Brook, which emerges from a culvert under the building into the Tailrace leading north to the river. The 1911 Sanborn fire insurance map indicates that there was once a waterwheel in the southeast corner of the second, ca. 1911 section.

The addition to the west, constructed by 1911, is a rectangular, two-bay-by-three-bay building measuring 20 feet east-west by 36 feet north-south. It has a flat built-up roof. The ground floor

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is constructed of parged granite rubble, and the second story is of wood frame construction sheathed in faux brick asphalt novelty siding. The south elevation contains a wooden, garage roll door. On the south elevation is an attached, rectangular, one-bay-by-two-bay, one story, wood frame shed with a corrugated aluminum shed roof and walls, and square window openings with crude plank trim missing their sash. The second story section above the stone foundation and the attached shed are both in poor condition. The 1911 Sanborn fire insurance map indicates that the stone section contained a single, horizontal steam boiler with a 70-foot-tall iron chimney and a 25 horsepower steam engine. The 1922 map indicates that the building had been converted to a Lime House and contained a round storage bin.

The addition to the south is a long, narrow, rectangular, approximately 175-foot-long by 25-foot-wide, flat-roofed, wood-frame block running along the entire length of the south side of the Pearce Brothers Woolen Mill. This block was built in two major sections. The eastern half was in place by 1911 and originally contained three, large chemical tanks associated with soap manufacturing. The west half was built by 1922. The formerly open area to the south between this addition and the following buildings is now covered by later wood frame infill in poor condition.

### Finishing Room (1921)

The Finishing Room is one of four buildings constructed south of the Pearce Brothers Woolen Mill between 1911 and 1922. Together, these buildings form a narrow V-shape in plan, with the Finishing Room forming the east leg of the V, the Boiler House its northern tip, the Old Office its vertex, and the Skein Dye House its west leg. The space between the Finishing Room and the Skein Dye House is covered with later infill, and the Finishing Room shares its east wall with the New Warehouse to the east. According to its cast stone date plaque on the Howard Avenue elevation, the Finishing Room was built in 1921, and the other attached buildings first appear on the 1922 Sanborn fire insurance map. The Finishing Room was constructed at a skew to the earlier Pearce Brothers Woolen Mill so that its length runs directly above Black Rock Brook to facilitate intake of clean process water and discharge of wastewater. The only exposed elevation, the south one facing Howard Avenue, was constructed at a skew to the rest of the building to conform to the curb line where it fronts onto Howard Avenue.

The Finishing Room is a long, narrow, one-story, production shed-type building measuring 165 feet north-south by 45 feet east-west. It has a concrete foundation, brick walls, and a flat, built-up roof with a modern rubber membrane; exposed beveled rafter tails; and a simple, plank soffit

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with a crown molding at the gutter line. The roof has a 6-foot-high, box monitor running approximately 80 percent of its length. The monitor is sheathed with vertical plank siding on the Howard Street elevation. The wall of the south (Howard Street) elevation is four bays wide and features corbelling just below the spring line of the four, segmental arch window openings. The east bay is obscured by a later, one-bay-by-four-bay, infill section enclosing a brick-walled, shed-roofed hallway connecting the Finishing Room and both floors of the New Warehouse building to the New Office. This infill section contains a steel door and three, rectangular windows with cast stone sills and steel lintels containing two-over-two wooden sash. The three remaining bays of the Finishing Room were originally open to the ground level but have been shortened with several rows of concrete block infill at the bottom. The center bay contains a deteriorated, wooden, roll garage door, and the two flanking bays include paired, wood, six-over-six, replacement sash with granite sills.

The interior is divided into two longitudinal aisles by a single row of seven, round wooden posts. The exposed roof deck is constructed of thick, splined, wood planks. The monitor contains rows of fixed, 12-pane, wood windows that have been partially covered with wood panels. The roof framing is constructed of heavy, rectangular, wood beams with chamfered edges with the ends bolted to cast iron connections on top of the posts. The windows in the east wall, which is party to the adjacent New Warehouse, have been filled with concrete block with the exception of one that has been cut down to make a doorway connecting the two buildings. The brick walls in the north and south end bays of the original west wall have been removed to provide passage into the adjacent Skein Dyeing House to the west. The brick piers between the windows have bull-nose corners. The floor is poured concrete with a crown for liquid runoff and several pits covered with wood planks or steel panels. The basement of the Finishing Room is constructed of massive, poured, reinforced concrete piers and beams more than one foot thick. The basement contains a large rectangular tank constructed of reinforced concrete with pipes and valves connecting it to the culvert carrying Black Rock Brook from Pearce Pond under the Mill to the Pawtuxet River. This apparatus may have served one or more applications and is characteristic of infrastructure associated with several finishing industry process conditioning or by-product conservation practices including process water softeners, dyehouse discharge purifiers, and wool scouring grease collectors (Knecht et al. 1920:80–86).

### Boiler House (between 1911 and 1922)

The Boiler House is located at the north end of the Finishing Room, south of the Pearce Brothers Woolen Mill. It is a high, one-story, rectangular, 40-foot-by-36-foot building with a flat, built-

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up roof; brick and concrete block walls; and a concrete slab floor. The lower two-thirds of the building has walls of common bond brick, and the upper third of the building, which is a later addition, is constructed of modern concrete block. The boiler house has minimal fenestration with a few scattered, moveable, steel sash units of various styles with concrete sills on the upper section of the exposed north wall. The lower section of the north wall has one window opening with a segmental brick arch and wood frame with beaded molding that has been filled with a fiberglass panel. On the ground level of the north elevation there are two large access doorways with wood infill and concrete lintels. The interior is open to its full height; all original steam boiler and electrical power equipment has been removed. Off the northwest corner of the Boiler House is a truncated, round boiler chimney built of mortared yellow glazed tile block. On the east side of the chimney are the letters "NG CO," likely the remainder of "Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing Co.," set vertically into the structure in red glazed brick.

### Old Office (between 1911 and 1922)

The Old Office is located on the north side of Howard Avenue, west of the Finishing Room and south of the Skein Dye House. It is a trapezoidal, approximately 60-foot-by-53-foot, two-story building with a flat, built-up roof with simple plank fascia and wooden crown at the gutter line, and a concrete slab foundation without a basement. The exposed south (Howard Street) elevation contains five bays. The second story is clearly a later addition to the structure, based on differences in brickwork and fenestration. The ground floor window and door openings have segmental arches that have been filled in with modern concrete block and single pane windows or glass block. The central bay features a multilight transom and a buff-colored cast stone lintel with the date "1921." The walls are corbeled below the spring line of the segmental arch window lintels. The brick on the second story is set back several inches from this first floor corbelling. The second story window openings are rectangular with fifteen-light, metal sash with moveable sections for ventilation. The interior of the Old Office is of fire resistive timber construction with two aisles separated by one row of five, round, wooden columns, supplemented by several later steel columns. This space contains several later partition walls with lumber frames and sheetrock sheathing. A modern loading dock addition extends from the west side of the Old Office and consists of an L-shaped, 50-foot-by-35-foot, one-story building with a built-up shed roof, wood frame, shiplap siding, and a raised concrete foundation. The Howard Street elevation has three wooden roll garage doors, and a personnel entrance at the west end with wooden steps and a crude railing.

### Skein Dye House (between 1911 and 1922)

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The Skein Dye House is located west of the Finishing Room and north of the Old Office. It was originally a shorter, freestanding building that was oriented at a slightly westward angle from the adjacent Finishing Room that was later replaced or expanded with a longer, wider building on the same axis. Unlike the other buildings in the complex, the reason for the exact axis of the original core building is unknown. It is a long, narrow, rectangular, 125-foot-long by approximately 65-foot-wide, one-story building with a flat, built-up roof with a box monitor running approximately 80 percent of its length. The monitor has wood clapboard siding partially covered with green corrugated fiberglass sheets, and fixed pane, 12-light, wood sash that appear to be original. The walls are constructed of mortared, common bond brick with corbelling just below the spring line of the segmental window arches. The window openings have triple-course, segmental-arch brick lintels, and contain paired, fixed, six-over-six wood sash. One window bay at the south end of the west (exterior) wall has been replaced by a large set of modern wood doors. On the east end of the west wall, six window bays were removed to create a long, narrow alcove with a high concrete foundation, steel beam framing, and plywood sheathing. The building has a poured concrete slab foundation and no basement. The interior is of fire-resistive mill construction. It is divided into seven bays by a single, longitudinal row of six round wood posts, creating two parallel aisles. The ceiling is constructed of thick, splined wood planks, and the fixed, 12-pane, wood windows of the centrally spaced monitor are intact. The roof framing is constructed of heavy, rectangular, wood beams with chamfered edges with the ends bolted to cast iron connections on top of the posts. The building widens in plan to the north, as it was expanded to the east during the period of significance to meet the west wall of the adjacent Finishing Room to the east. This infill includes a small rectangular room at the north end identified as a "drug room" (dyeing chemical room) on the 1922 Sanborn fire insurance map.

### New Office (between 1922 and 1939)

The New Office is a roughly square, 35-foot-by-35-foot, five-bay-by-five-bay, one-story, brick administrative building located on Howard Avenue, east of the Finishing Room and south of the New Warehouse. It has a shallow-pitch, ridge-hip, asbestos-shingled roof. The north and south roof planes each contain a hip-roof dormer with two, fixed-pane, wood-sash windows. The main roof and dormers have elaborate molded wood cornice, soffits, and fascia and replacement aluminum gutters. The walls are built of a smooth, water-struck brick and have a raised concrete foundation. The windows are rectangular, with smooth, bush hammered, protruding granite sills and original two-over-two, double-hung, wood sash. The Howard Street entrance door is offset to the west and consists of a modern, single-pane, wood door in an original wood frame with

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bead molding. The door is flanked by tapestry brickwork piers with diamond-shaped concrete medallions and sheltered by a shallow wood awning with a hipped, tin-clad roof with wood crown molding, soffit, fascia, and prominent dentils. The interior of the New Office retains a high degree of integrity, with the hallway, front and rear administrative rooms, and executive office all retaining their original, varnished oak trim and fielded paneling, and textured glass transoms with adjusting mechanisms.

### New Warehouse (early 1960s, non-contributing)

The New Warehouse is located east of the attached Finishing Room. It is a large, two-story, 140-foot-by-180-foot, eight-by-eight-bay, parallelogram-plan building. The building's plan was dictated by the north-south axis of the Finishing Building to the west, with which it shares a party wall, and the east-west axis of the preexisting foundation and railroad siding for the former Allan A. Campbell Grain Mill (established 1903) to the north, which burned in the early 1960s (no evidence of the former grain elevator, coal shed, or farm supply buildings remains). The building has a flat, built-up roof, concrete block walls, and a concrete slab foundation with a partial basement on the north side. The south basement wall is not normal to the east and west walls, which may have resulted from incorporation of a preexisting 10-foot-high retaining wall that stood on the former grain mill lot. The windows are a mix of modern units, including horizontal sliding-pane, fixed single-pane, and double-hung vinyl replacement types. The building has multiple personnel and truck entrance doors on its three exposed elevations. The north and east elevations each have a wooden roll garage door on both floors and in the basement. The interior is divided into seven east-west and seven north-south bays by six rows of six columns. The framing consists of round steel columns, with bolted steel beams supporting the second floor, and wood beams supporting the roof. The ground floor is a poured concrete slab except for a plank section over the basement on the north side. The second floor is covered with wood plank throughout. There is no evidence of any power transmission equipment, specialized process engineering, or removal of such. The building has three one-story additions. A high, 45-foot-by-32-foot, wood-frame, four-bay truck dock with a flat, built-up roof, shiplap siding, and a raised concrete foundation projects from the south elevation toward Howard Avenue. West of this, a low, one-story, 70-foot-long, 20-foot-wide, flat roofed, concrete block section extends west behind the Office. On the east elevation, a one-story, 25-foot-wide, flat-roofed, concrete block loading dock projection with a metal roll door on the south elevation extends east to the Warehouse Addition.

### Warehouse Addition (late twentieth century, non-contributing)

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## **National Register of Historic Places**

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The Warehouse Addition is attached to the east side of the New Warehouse. It is a high, rectangular, 100-foot-by-60-foot, one-story, prefabricated, steel frame building with a sheet metal roof, coarse corrugated metal siding, concrete slab floors, and full-height double doors centrally located on the east elevation. The north elevation incorporates a sunken loading dock with a concrete ramp and a metal garage roll door, with a steel entry door to the east.

#### Upper Pump House (1936)

The Upper Pump House is located south of Howard Avenue, immediately north of the Pearce Pond Dam. The building's primary (north) elevation faces across a gravel parking area toward Howard Avenue. The rectangular building's dimensions are 44 feet on the east and west elevations and 42 feet on the north and south elevations. The building has a flat, built-up tar-and-plank roof, brick walls, and a poured concrete foundation. The building features a simple wooden plank soffit with a crown molding at the gutter line, and exposed rafter tails. The brick is laid in a common bond pattern. The building's north facade contains four, evenly spaced bays, with the two north bays and the south bays occupied by concrete-block-filled, rectangular window openings with steel beam and soldier-coursed brick lintels and sloping, cast stone window sills. The remaining bay contains a steel replacement entry door with a small, wood-frame entry awning. The south elevation has four, evenly spaced, rectangular window openings, all filled with concrete block. The west elevation contains two filled window openings on the eastern end of the facade, with a large loading bay opening on the north end that has been filled with concrete blocks. The remains of a small, low, brick-walled shed are visible on the south corner of the west elevation. The east elevation is blank. The interior is divided into three bays by a single row of two, square wood posts, and has a poured concrete slab floor with no basement. A short set of poured concrete steps off the northwest corner of the building lead to the top of the Pearce Pond Dam behind the building.

#### Lower Pump House (early to mid-twentieth century)

The Lower Pump House is located north of the east addition to the Pearce Brothers Woolen Mill, on the east edge of the Tailrace, between the Mill and the river. It is a small, approximately 10-foot-by-10-foot, one-story, square-plan building with a concrete slab foundation, brick walls, and a shallow, pyramidal, hip roof with a wood frame, asphalt shingles and a deteriorated wood cornice. The east elevation contains a door opening and the west elevation contains a window opening with a concrete sill and 12-pane steel sash with a moveable section. Inside the pump

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house is an electric rotary water pump, and wall-mounted switches and electrical panels. The building does not appear on any maps, however, its appearance and construction date it from between the early part of the twentieth century and the end of the period of significance.

Pearce Pond Dam (before 1859, twentieth-century modifications)

The Pearce Pond Dam is located immediately west of the Upper Pump House. It is an approximately 100-foot-long, 10-foot-high, 11-foot-wide, earth-fill gravity dam with fieldstone walls, concrete cap, and a 20-foot-long concrete spillway (RI DEM). It has a flow control gate at its west end. A series of shallow, concrete-lined pits containing standpipes and gate valves extends in a straight line northeast from the west end of the dam toward the Mill across Howard Street. The type of dam and materials are consistent with a mid-nineteenth-century industrial waterpower dam with twentieth-century modifications.

Tailrace (before 1859, modified ca. 1874)

The Tailrace is located north of the east addition to the Pearce Brothers Woolen Mill. It is an approximately 40-foot-long, 10-foot-wide, stone-lined trench that carries Black Rock Brook from Pearce Pond from where it exits under the building in a culvert, through the railroad embankment, immediately west of the Lower Pump House, and into the river. It is rectangular in cross section, with walls built of mortared granite rubblestone. It incorporates abutments for a short, ca. 1874 railroad bridge where the railroad right-of-way crosses it. These walls consist of large, rectangular, quarry faced, tabular, split granite blocks with sill pockets for a short timber deck span, no longer in place.

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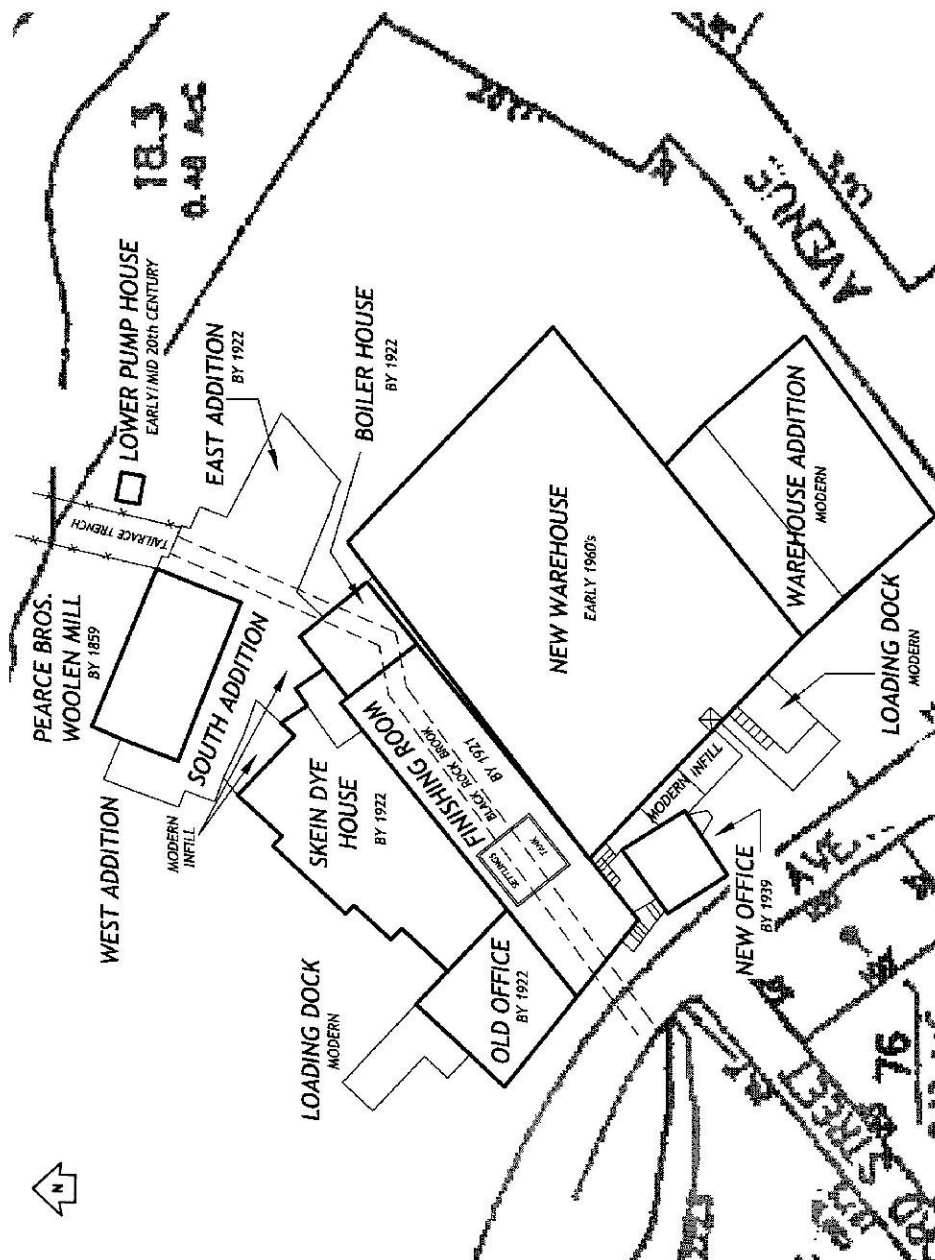
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## Mill Floor Plan



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### Photographic Information

Photographer: Matthew A. Kierstead  
Date of Photographs: April 2005

Negative Location: PAL, Inc.  
210 Lonsdale Avenue  
Pawtucket, RI 02860

(Note: These photographs were taken with a digital camera at high resolution and printed on Epson Premium Glossy paper using Epson UltraChrome pigmented inks per the National Park Service March 2005 Photo Policy Expansion list of Acceptable Ink and Paper Combinations for Digital Images).

### Index to Photographs:

1. View looking east on Howard Avenue.
2. View looking east on Howard Avenue showing from left to right: Old Office, Finishing Room, and New Office
3. View looking east showing west side of Skein Dye House
4. View looking northwest on Howard Avenue showing from right to left: New Office, Finishing Room, and Old Office
5. View of New Warehouse from intersection of Howard and Lincoln avenues looking north
6. View looking west showing from left to right: New warehouse, Boiler House and chimney, and east addition to Pearce Brothers Woolen Mill
7. View looking southwest showing from left to right: east addition to Pearce Brothers Woolen Mill, Pearce Brothers Woolen Mill, and Tailrace wall in foreground
8. View of Upper Pump House looking west

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9. View of Pearce Pond Dam looking southeast
10. View of Lower Pump House looking northwest
11. Interior view of Finishing Room looking east
12. Interior view of New Warehouse looking south
13. Interior view of New Office looking northwest

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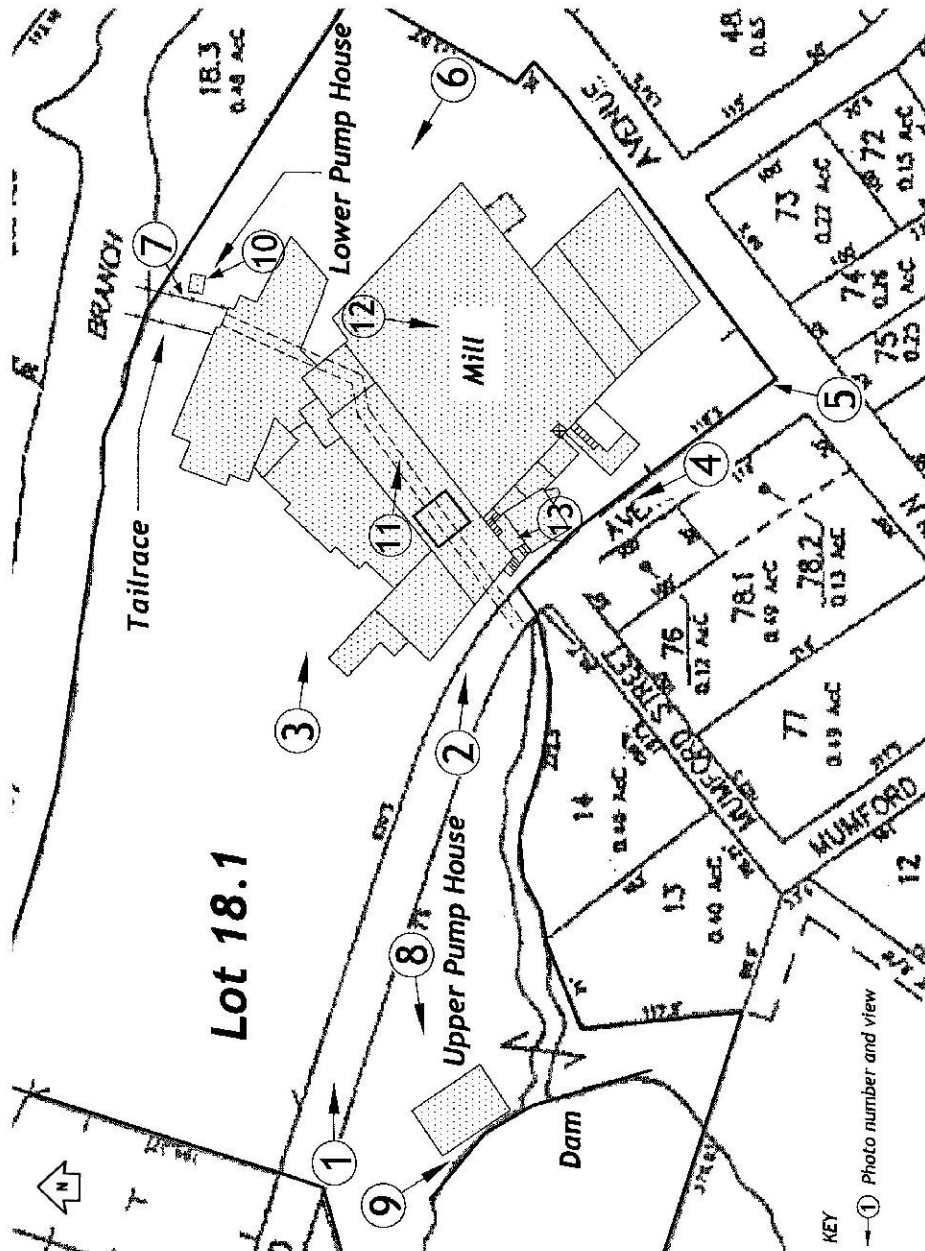
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## Photo Key Map



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### SIGNIFICANCE

The Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing Company mill complex is significant as an intact representative expression of the industrial history and architecture of the Pawtuxet River valley, one of Rhode Island's most heavily industrialized areas, and as an embodiment of several distinctive characteristics of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century textile mill architecture and engineering in Rhode Island. Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing includes three contributing buildings and two contributing structures associated with the development and operation of the mill, which was used variously for manufacturing woolen yarn, textile soaps and sizings, and for dyeing and finishing yarn and piece goods. The period of significance begins in 1859, when the Pearce Brothers acquired the property, and ends in 1955, the 50-year National Register eligibility cutoff date.

#### *The Pawtuxet River Valley, Coventry, and Harris Village*

The Pawtuxet River, the major watercourse in eastern Kent County, Rhode Island, is a heavily industrialized waterway that supplied power and process water to numerous industrial enterprises along its route. The river rises to form two branches, with the North Branch that passes by Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing rising from the Scituate Reservoir in Scituate, Rhode Island, and the South Branch, which rises from the Flat River Reservoir in Coventry. The two branches served several increasingly large historic textile mills on their routes east through Scituate and Coventry, to their confluence at the village of Riverpoint in West Warwick, and on the Main Stem including large mills at Natick in West Warwick, and Pontiac in Warwick. The valley is a cohesive cultural and physical landscape, with political boundaries in some cases invisibly dividing the continuous, densely developed mill villages along the river. This is certainly the case for the village of Harris, which is bisected by the north-south boundary between Coventry and West Warwick, and blends into the adjacent downstream village of Phenix in West Warwick.

The Pawtuxet Valley's most heavily urbanized and industrialized community was West Warwick, which was originally part of Warwick, and was incorporated as a separate town in 1913. The area set off as present day West Warwick, and the east section of Coventry, is mostly underlain by resistant crystalline rock, and is hillier, creating the numerous cataracts on the North Branch and South Branch of the Pawtuxet River that were developed as mill privileges, fostering

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an industrial economy in the area. The area that remained after the separation, now Warwick, is underlain by softer sedimentary rock and consists of flatter land that supported an agricultural economy. By 1900, longstanding issues over the widely different economic bases and land use of the two areas led to a local movement for separation. After incorporation, West Warwick grew into a cosmopolitan, ethnically diverse community. The village of Arctic on the South Branch emerged as the commercial center of West Warwick, while the village of Phenix, just downriver from the village of Harris, where Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing is located, became a smaller, secondary commercial center serving the North Branch (Jones 1981:17–18, 22, 39, 66; Nebiker 1987:10, 19, 24).

Coventry was also originally part of Warwick, but was incorporated as a separate town much earlier, in 1741. The town remained a sparsely settled agricultural community until the early nineteenth century, when numerous small cotton mills sprang up on Coventry's brooks and rivers in response to the Embargo Act of 1807, which cut off supplies of imported fabrics. Small villages sprang up at mills along the two branches of the Pawtuxet River, including Anthony in 1806, Arkwright in 1809, Washington in 1810, Quidnick in 1811, and Harris, in the extreme northeast corner of the town, in 1821. These villages drew a workforce housed in company-owned dwellings, and included company stores, farms, and churches. Harris is now the most intact of these villages, and retains its stone and brick mill buildings, dense mill housing, and elaborate mill superintendents' homes (Lasky 1978:2–8).

The Harris Mill, built in 1851, stands across the North Branch from the Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing Company. The mill was built by the Harris Manufacturing Company, and produced heavy cotton sheeting until the twentieth century. The mill's design has been credited to Providence architect James Bucklin by architectural historian Henry Russell Hitchcock, who considered it one of the finest mills in the state (Lasky 1978:30–31). Harris village is now a dense, mixed industrial, commercial, and residential area.

The mills of the North Branch of the Pawtuxet River did not receive railroad service until 1874. Rail service on the South Branch began in 1854 with the completion of the Hartford, Providence & Fishkill Railroad. This railroad linked Providence with central Connecticut and the Hudson River valley. For the mills on the upstream section of the North Branch, the nearest practical trip to a railhead was east along the North Branch to Riverpoint, as a trip south to the depots at Anthony or Washington would have required tackling the steep hill dividing the two watersheds.

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This challenge was overcome in 1874, when the Hartford, Providence & Fishkill completed the Pawtuxet Valley Railroad, a 3-mile-long, dead-end branch from Riverpoint to Hope in Scituate. The line was absorbed by the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad in 1892. Passenger service ended in 1922. Freight service on the outermost mile of the route, between Arkwright and Hope, was abandoned in 1951, and the entire line east past Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing to Riverpoint was abandoned in 1965 (Karr 1995:83–89, 135–137).

### *Industrial Activity at the Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing Property*

The buildings, occupants, and processes associated with the Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing Company property are representative of several general trends in Pawtuxet Valley and Rhode Island textile manufacturing history.

The earliest component of the Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing Company complex is the remaining portion of the Pearce Brothers Woolen Mill building at the north edge of the Mill. The date of construction for this building is not known, but it was standing in 1859 when it was acquired by Joseph W. Pearce (1829–1905). Pearce was born in Trowbridge, England, in 1829, one of 14 children. He came to the United States in 1847, at the age of 18, and worked at mills in Janesville (Otter River) and Nasonville, Rhode Island, where he became an overseer of weaving. In 1859, he moved to Rhode Island and purchased the stone mill building, presumably already part of a complex including what became known as Pearce Pond and the Pearce Pond Dam. He operated this mill alone and in conjunction with his two brothers for more than 30 years (Pawtuxet Valley Gleaner 1905).

The Pearce Brothers operation was a woolen yarn spinning operation. Sanborn fire insurance maps for 1898 and 1903 show the mill containing carding operations on the first floor, spinning on the second floor, and spooling on the third floor. Raw wool was taken in at the mill, washed, scoured, and dried. After drying, the wool was then carded by feeding it through a series of paired, opposed, rotating, wire-studded drums, loosening the fibers and recombining them in a homogenous mix, and giving them some parallel orientation. The wool was drawn from the carding drums in strands, which were then spun into yarn on a mule spinner, which simultaneously drew and spun the loose wool into tighter, narrower yarn on bobbins, ready for weaving. Once the yarn was spun onto the bobbins, it was respun onto spools holding the warp

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fibers. This yarn was then sold to other concerns for the subsequent dyeing, weaving, and finishing processes (Brooks 1906:2–13, 22–23, 34–35; Cole 1926:284–302).

The pre-twentieth-century U.S. woolen industry can be divided into three periods of development. The first period spans from settlement to the American Revolution, and was characterized by importation of woolen fabrics from Europe, supplemented by household spinning and weaving of domestic wool.

The second period, from the Revolution to the Civil War, includes the early years of operations at what became the Pearce Brothers Woolen Mill. This period was characterized by a gradual production shift from home workshop to factory, with fully integrated production mills and associated villages emerging by the early 1800s. Importation of Merino sheep allowed higher volumes of finer product, and early-nineteenth-century trade restrictions encouraged domestic production. Skilled English woolen operatives fled the disruption of English wool manufacturing in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars and many settled in Rhode Island. This led to rapid technical advances, including power looms and spinning. High wool import tariffs boosted the industry, which thrived to the Civil War.

The third period began with the enormous expansion to satisfy military demand during the Civil War, and ended with the prosperity enjoyed in World War I. After the post-Civil War collapse in demand, the industry consolidated and concentrated with fewer, larger mills in a handful of cities in the Northeast, notably Providence, RI, and Philadelphia, PA, which were closer to style centers, sources of imported dyes, patterns and fibers, and skilled labor. During this period, several large woolen operations were established in Rhode Island, including the Providence and National Worsted Mills on the Woonasquatucket River in the Olneyville section of Providence, founded in 1876 and once considered the most extensive single worsted plant in the world (listed in the National Register of Historic Places 7/11/2003). By the end of the nineteenth century the industry had reorganized to reduce competition, with a few large companies such as American Woolen and United Woolen emerging to dominate the industry.

Rhode Island became the biggest woolen/worsted producing state in the U.S. in 1890, and in 1900, woolen production outstripped cotton in the state. The consolidation forced many smaller operations out of business. The 1903 Sanborn fire insurance map for the Pearce Brothers

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Woolen Mill shows the operation as closed (Carroll 1936:866–868; Kulick and Bonham 1978:174; Providence Community Research Center 1940:11–13; Sanborn map 1903).

In early 1907, the former Pearce Brothers property at Harris was purchased by the Royal Chemical Company, which had its post office address at nearby Phenix. According to a 1907 *Providence Board of Trade Journal* article,

The Royal Chemical Company is a new firm, recently incorporated under Rhode Island laws, with a capital of \$25,000. The firm manufactures chemical specialties, and is adding additional equipment and making plans for manufacturing special lines of products which are imported from England, Germany and France. Their products consist of sizing and finishing compounds, softeners, soluble oils, soluble grease, sizing, tallows, mordants, color developers, transparent starches, and gums, printing gums, glue sizings, bleacher's blues, solvents, weighting compositions for warps, carpet yarn sizings, rubber cement substitute, shoe pastes, adhesives, etc. etc. This concern promises to be one of the best, if not the leading firm, of its kind as the officers are capable and practical men in these special lines of chemical products. The officers of the company are Arthur Parkinson, president, and Charles W. Hess, treasurer (*Board of Trade Journal* 1907:90).

Despite its ambitious proposed product line, Royal Chemical appears to have been primarily a manufacturer of materials including soaps and sizings for the textile industry. The 1911 Sanborn map indicates that soaps, sizings, and softeners were manufactured on the first and second floors, and soap powder was made on the second floor. The building had been expanded by that time, with an addition holding three round tanks on the east side of the original stone building, and an angled enclosed bridge leading to a railroad freight house to the east.

Special soaps were consumed by the textile industry for washing, scouring, fulling, and felting raw wool; cleaning, bleaching, dyeing, finishing, and printing cotton fabrics; and degumming silk. Soaps were made from natural animal and vegetable fats and oils boiled with caustic soda or potash. Scouring raw wool of its natural fatty deposits and dirt required a chemically neutral, simple curd soap made by boiling the fat and alkali in shallow iron pans fitted with steam heat coils. Soaps for cotton goods were ideally slightly alkaline and generally made from tallow

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(Hurst 1921:1–9, 32–43). Sizings are liquid coatings applied to yarns to improve their handling characteristics and to withstand the strain and abrasion during weaving operations, and also to impart certain characteristics to the finished fabric. The simplest sizing compounds were various types of grain flour and water paste with additives such as clay to give them body, boiled in a series of pans and dried and sold as a powder. To these were added softeners made from vegetable oils, tallow, and wax (Monie n.d.:1–13, 32–45; Nesbitt 1912:1–9, 48–63).

The corporate evolution of the Royal Chemical Company and Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing appear to be intertwined during the first decade of the twentieth century. The 1911 Sanborn map indicates the former Pearce Brothers site as Royal Chemical, however, an item in September of the same year in the *Providence Board of Trade Journal* stated that the Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing Company was “soon to begin operations in winding, dyeing, spooling cotton and worsted yarn, and dyeing of piece goods” at the Harris property (*Providence Board of Trade Journal* 1911). The concern apparently opted to concentrate on the dyeing and finishing side of its business, for in December 1913, an item in the *Board of Trade Journal* stated that Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing planned to “increase output of dyed and wound yarn by enlarging its plant and adding new machines” (*Providence Board of Trade Journal* 1913). It is likely that the additions to and changes in function within the original Pearce Brothers Woolen Mill building, and the construction of the original adjacent freestanding Skein Dye House were built as part of this expansion campaign, with the Finishing Room completed in 1921 as its cast stone plaque on Howard Avenue indicates (Sanborn map 1922). Directory advertisements for the two companies appeared together under the same Harris/Phenix address for several years, however, the main office of Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing had moved to 100 Fountain Street in Providence by 1920. At that time the company president was James McDowell; treasurer, Samuel H. Walsh; secretary, J. Bamford Bennett; and all of the above listed as directors (*Rhode Island Directory of Corporations* 1920:224).

By the early 1920s, advertisements for the Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing Company offered commission scouring, dyeing, winding, and spooling of woolen, worsted and cotton yarns, and commission dyeing of knitted fabric piece goods manufactured off site by other manufacturers. The 1922 Sanborn fire insurance map indicated that all of these processes were accommodated in the buildings, with yarn skein dyeing in the Skein Dye House; skein drying, winding, and spooling in the Pearce Brothers Woolen Mill building; piecework dyeing and drying in its east addition; and unspecified processes in the Finishing Room. The Finishing Room’s location over the Black Rock Brook culvert and the presence of the large concrete tank in the basement over

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the brook suggest that the Finishing Room was the location for at least some of the processes that required large volumes of water, which included wool scouring and washing, and some dyeing and rinsing.

Dyeing of yarns in “hank” or “skein” form is an ancient practice that until the mid-nineteenth-century consisted of simply hand-stirring the hanging yarn skeins in a round cauldron of heated dye. Dyeing yarn in the loose state is generally done if the finished pieces made from the yarn will include yarns of different color. The manual process was replaced by mechanized ones whereby the skeins were hung on moveable racks, and moved through the steam-heated dye, or the dye was circulated through the material by a pump or propeller in a rectangular open wood or stainless steel vat (Bird 1947:173–177; Knecht et al. 1922:697). The largest amount of textile material is dyed in the piece, that is, after it is woven, as this is the cheapest and most convenient method, requiring less labor and materials to produce a consistent shade. Dyeing in the piece was done almost exclusively by machine. The fabric band was sewn at the ends to create a continuous loop. Most machines consist of a variation on the “dye vat and winch” type, where the fabric band is slowly drawn through a bath of steam-heated dye in a rectangular wood or stainless steel vat by a motorized horizontal roller suspended above the vat (Knecht et al. 1922:717–721).

### *Dyeing and Finishing in Rhode Island*

The term “finishing” in its widest sense applies to all of the processes fabrics undergo after being knitted or woven. The goal of finishing fabric is to improve its attractiveness and/or handling characteristics in order to prepare it for the consumer. Finishing processes impart permanent or impermanent changes to the structure and appearance of textile fibers through physical and/or chemical processes, and include the early-stage, “wet-finishing” processes of bleaching and dyeing, as well as more technologically sophisticated, highly mechanized, late-stage, surface-finish operations such as calendaring, mecerizing, waterproofing, etc. (Marsh 1957:1–4). Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing Company’s activities included both processing of raw wool and “finishing” as widely interpreted, as their activities as advertised were confined to the early stages of the process, largely dyeing of yarn and piece goods.

Specialized businesses offering finishing processes emerged simultaneously with the early-nineteenth-century growth of the textile industry. Some of the companies that eventually became

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Rhode Island's largest finishing works were established before the Civil War textile boom, including the Clyde Bleachery and Print Works in West Warwick on the North Branch of the Pawtuxet River in 1828, and the Saylesville bleachery in Lincoln, in 1847 (listed in the National Register of Historic Places 8/30/1984). Later in the nineteenth and especially in the early twentieth century, the practice of finishing cloth in specialized factories grew, with some yarn and cloth mills combining to own or control their own finishing plant, and others relying on independent contract vendors such as Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing.

The period from 1880 to 1900 saw an increase in the number of bleaching, dyeing, printing, and other finishing factories in Rhode Island, and in the value added to the state's textile products, due in part to the fact that Rhode Island finishing factories were converting thousands of yards of cloth woven in the other states, and that much of the product of Southern factories was shipped as gray (unfinished) cloth to Rhode Island to be finished. In Rhode Island in 1890 there were 22 dyeing and finishing establishments employing 3,720 people, in 1900 there were 24 establishments employing 5,942, and in 1930 there were 41 establishments employing 9,375. The largest plants were the U.S. Finishing Company with four plants in Pawtucket and Providence and 2,420 employees, and the Sayles Finishing Co, with four plants at Phillipsdale and Saylesville and 1,700 employees. Finishing concerns employing more than 300 people included the Apponaug Print Works in Warwick, the Bradford Dyeing Association in Bradford, the Cranston Print Works, Franklin Process in Providence, the Greenville Finishing Company in Greenville, Imperial Printing and Finishing in Edgewood, the Lincoln Bleachery and Dye Works in Lonsdale, Providence Dyeing, Bleaching and Calendaring in Providence, and the Slatersville Finishing Company in Slatersville (Carroll 1932:863-866). The Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing Company was part of this early twentieth-century expansion of the regional finishing capacity. It is unknown what specific mills it had business relationships with, but it probably served neighboring mills in the Pawtuxet Valley.

Clean water was also an important aspect of the regional dyeing and finishing industry. At the Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing site, Black Rock Brook was used for power, and a small water wheel appears as late as the 1911 Sanborn map, however, the brook was always of major importance as a source of clean process water. A supply of suitable water was of vital importance to any dyeing operation. Indeed,

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a good water supply is essential in sizing and finishing, as free as possible from organic matter, and iron, and elements that make the water hard . . . as iron will cause discoloration, and a reddish precipitate . . . water should not contain large quantities of calcium or magnesium salts . . . (Seydel 1958:115).

The amount of water consumed was usually quite large, and used for a variety of uses including washing, scouring, dyeing, rinsing, and making steam. Typically dyers and finishers usually owned their own supply of water, particularly as the cost of using a municipal water supply would have been prohibitive. The presence of a dam and process water pond was a common sight at a dyeworks or finishing plant (Bird 1947:147). In finishing cloth Rhode Island had an undisputed advantage, because of large quantities of pure, clear water available and free from both alkali, rust, and other mineral impregnations, and from the vegetable and animal growths that flourish in warmer southern waters (Carroll 1932:865).

A review of the Pawtuxet Valley business directories beginning in the mid-1920s indicates that the property was owned by the Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing Company until 1972, when it was owned by William Heller & Company, fabric dyers and finishers. The building was then vacant until resumption of dyeing under P.V. Dyeing Company and Poly Dye Incorporated in 1978. Since then the buildings have hosted several light industries including Holiday Products, Inc., a manufacturer of textile novelties, a salvaged historic lumber milling operation, and a fabricator of metal dumpsters.

### *Architecture*

Pawtuxet Valley Dyeing contains individual elements representative of more than 100 years of New England textile mill architecture and engineering.

The Pearce Brothers Woolen Mill is an example of the nineteenth-century tradition of the long, narrow, multistory “industrial loft,” a specialized type of building often associated with textile manufacturing, consisting of two or more stories in a long narrow configuration. This shape was originally developed to satisfy the combined needs for interior light and power transmission via lineshafting. Useable floor space was maximized by concentrating vertical circulation in exterior towers. These buildings later employed fire resistive, or “slow-burning” construction, with heavy, self-supporting masonry outer walls. The interior framing system, which supported the

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floor load, consisted of widely spaced, heavy timber (or sometimes cast iron) posts, timber or steel beams, and thick, multilayer plank floors providing limited surfaces for fire to take hold. Like the Pearce Brothers Woolen Mill, early examples of this type of building were built with gable roofs, some with monitors, many of which were replaced with flat roofs because of fire insurance regulations (Bradley 1999:25, 29–34, 93, 117–121, 126–129, 155; Brooks 1906:50, 54–68).

The Pearce Brothers Woolen Mill is a representative example of the nineteenth-century masonry wall mill construction found throughout Rhode Island and adjacent sections of the neighboring states. This mode of construction is notably prevalent in the Pawtuxet River valley, where it dominates over brick construction more typically associated with mid- to late-nineteenth-century New England industrial architecture. This construction typically consists of heavy, thick, gravity masonry walls built of mortared stone, with a range of mortared surface finish and decoration.

The Finishing Room and the Skein Dye House are examples of “production sheds,” distinctive, single-story, industrial buildings enclosing wide bays and high spaces. This type of building evolved to accommodate large or heavy machinery, operations involving high temperatures and/or emanating vapors, and the movement of large objects. Walls were built of heavy masonry construction to withstand vibration and sometimes to carry the weight of traveling cranes. These buildings include distinctive roofs that incorporate monitors that provided both ventilation and light. Often large openings were incorporated for moving large objects or containers between buildings (Bradley 1999:146–149).

The New Office is an example of industrial administrative architecture. Offices were usually integrated into a complex so as to be centrally located, near the main entrance, but separated so as to reduce noise and vibration from manufacturing. They were usually designed as more deliberately “architectural” in effect, often with high style or ornamental features, creating both a public face for the company and a centerpiece that shielded the utilitarian buildings behind (Bradley 1999:35–37).

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### Geographical Data

UTM Coordinates (continued):

E: 19.288757.4621896

F: 19.288625.4622003

### Boundary Description

Beginning at a point at the northeast corner of Map 96, Parcel 18.1 (96/18.1)

-southeast along the south bank of the North Branch of the Pawtuxet River, the north boundary of 96/18.1, to a point on the west edge of Lincoln Avenue

-southwest along the northwest edge of Lincoln Avenue to the corner of Lincoln Avenue and Howard Avenue

-northwest along the north edge of Howard Avenue to a point opposite the corner of Howard Avenue and Mumford Street

-across Howard Avenue to the southwest in a line-of-convenience to the south side of Black Rock Brook

-west along the south bank of Black Rock Brook, a boundary of 96/15, to the northwest corner of 96/13

-south along the west edge of 96/13 to the southwest corner of 96/13

-west across Pearce Pond to the west tip of 96/15 (which lies at the east edge of Map 95)

-northeast to the southwest corner of 96/11

-east to the east tip of 96/16

-northeast across Howard Avenue in a line-of-convenience to the southwest tip of 96/18.1

-northeast along the west side of 96/18.1 to the northeast corner of 96/18.1, the point of beginning.

### Boundary Justification

The boundaries include the full extent of contiguous historic and structural resources associated with the activity in the complex during its period of significance. The boundaries follow legally recorded property lines, road edges, and natural watercourse banks. Lines of convenience cross one public road and cut off one dogleg of one parcel that contains no historic resources.

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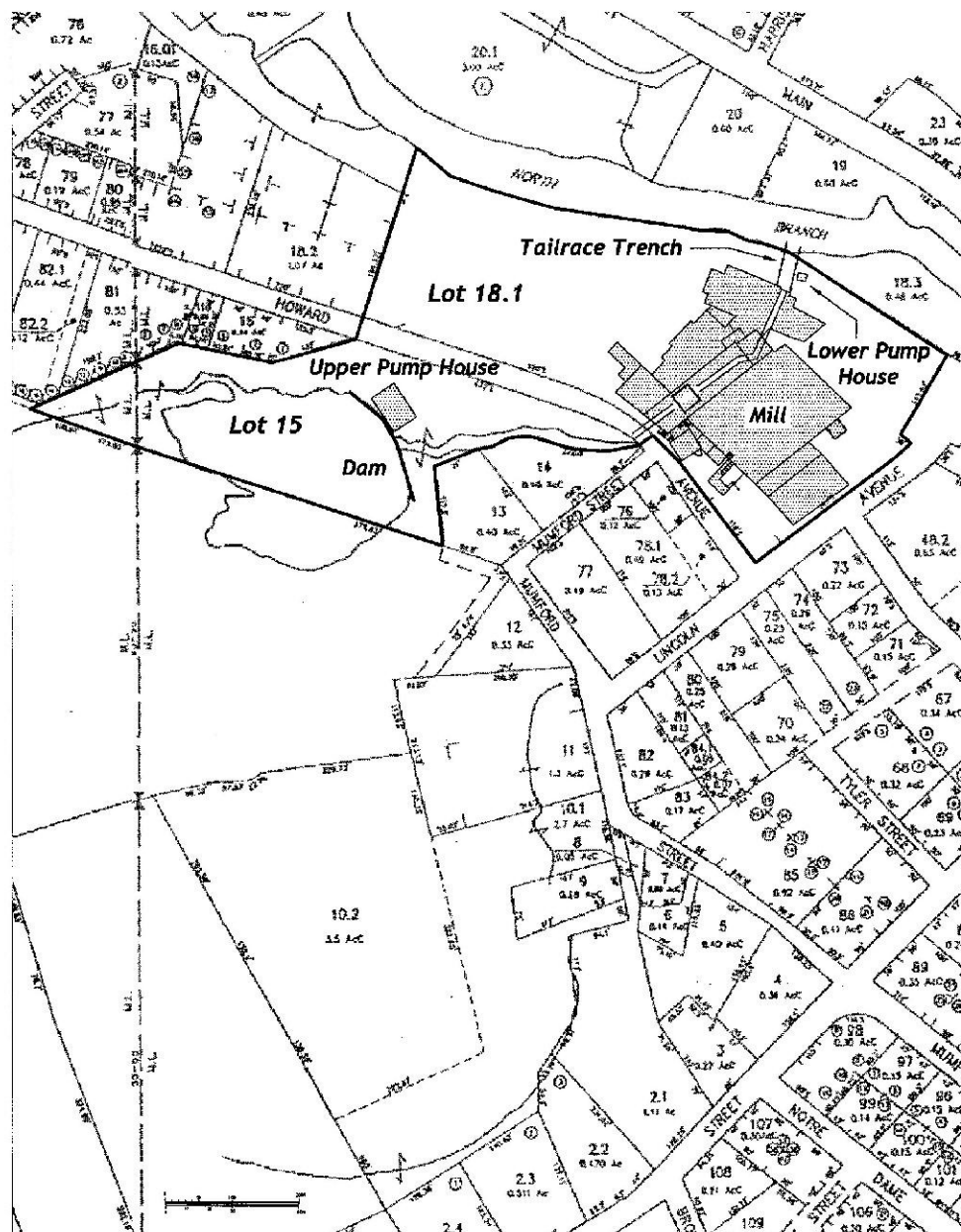
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Town of Coventry Assessor's Maps Number 95/96



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