

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Harris Warehouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 61 Railroad Street

CITY, TOWN Woonsocket

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF #1 Hon. Fernand J. St. Germain

STATE Rhode Island

CODE 44

COUNTY Providence CODE 007

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Cayer Construction Company

STREET & NUMBER 61 Railroad Street

CITY, TOWN Woonsocket

STATE Rhode Island

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. City Clerk's office - City Hall

STREET & NUMBER 69 Main Street

CITY, TOWN Woonsocket

STATE Rhode Island

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Woonsocket, Rhode Island Statewide Preservation Report P-W-1

DATE 1976

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

CITY, TOWN Providence

STATE Rhode Island

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Harris Warehouse stands on a gently sloping site surrounded by parking lots in a section of Woonsocket characterized by a mix of commercial and industrial land uses. The warehouse rises abruptly from the sidewalk edge and faces south to Railroad Street and, across the street, to the Providence & Worcester tracks. Rising north of Railroad Street and the warehouse is Cato Hill, a mid-nineteenth century working class residential neighborhood which is also being nominated to the Register.

The masonry walls of the warehouse are laid up in stuccoed stone rubble approximately two feet thick. The slate roof is a simple two-pitch gable, and the dentilated cornices are brick. The building has a full basement and stands 3½-stories tall above grade. Its most unusual feature is its form. It is arc-shaped or, more precisely, in plan it is a sector of an annulus, with a central angle of about 23° and radii of 200 and 244 feet. This curved form repeats the line of a railroad spur (now gone) which ran into the building; the spur was designed for a maximum speed of approximately ten miles per hour.

Fenestration is irregular on all elevations save the rear (north) face; the original 12/12 double hung sash remain in some window openings, but many openings are boarded up. Most windows on the east and west elevations are in the third story. Entrances to the building are on the south facade. Here, at the ground level, are a small personnel doorway, and a large roundheaded archway with brick voisoirs, fifteen feet high and fourteen feet wide, designed as the railroad freight car entrance. The archway is now partially filled in and has been fitted with a modern, roll-up, garage-type paneled door. Above the personnel entrance at the second and third story levels are small freight doors, and over a garret window was a projected beam to which tackle was fastened. The only other entrance is a wide basement-level opening on the east side, now filled in and only two feet in the clear above grade.*

The warehouse is approximately seventy-four feet long and forty-four feet wide, with 3600 square feet of floor space on each level. Interior spaces were apparently left open originally, and the only major usurpation of available space was a simple, winding staircase located in the southeast corner. As befits a warehouse, the interior was very plain. The walls were plastered over and whitewashed, the floors were thick plank, and the ceilings were nothing more than the exposed undersurface of the floor above. The heavy post and beam wood frame supporting the floors is divided into nine structural bays along the longitudinal axis of the building and is secured laterally by tie rods and tie plates running through the masonry walls.

*The purpose of this opening is presently unknown; it may have been created when part of the building was used for coal storage.

(See Continuation Sheet 1)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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ITEM NUMBER

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The interior has been altered in the twentieth century. A brick chimney stack against the rear wall was closed up, the ground floor was subdivided with wood partitions, and a freight elevator was installed at the south end of the building. Basic electrical service, plumbing, and heating were also introduced before the Second World War. Presently, the warehouse is being converted for office and shop use by the Cayer Construction Company. Cayer created offices on the second floor, installed improved systems and added a fire escape at the rear of the building. In making these changes the owners have respected the character of the structure, preserving original materials and finish wherever possible.

The Harris Warehouse has suffered from past neglect and, though basically in sound condition, needs considerable repair to put it back into prime condition. However, the alterations which have been made over the years are either of minor importance or could easily be removed at some future date.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1855

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Harris Warehouse is significant both locally and at the state level to the history of transportation, industry, engineering and architecture. Edward Harris, Woonsocket's premier industrialist, erected the building in 1855 to handle freight for his woolen mills. According to a contemporary newspaper account, a railroad spur led into the building so that cars could discharge their freight from inside. The curved form of this rugged, utilitarian structure was dictated by the configuration of the rail spur, and its straight-forward construction, combining masonry walls and heavy timber framing, was designed to respond to the need for great load-bearing capacity and fire safety. No building better expresses the aphorism, "form follows function."

Using \$2,500 he had saved and another \$1,000 he borrowed, Harris came to Woonsocket in 1831 to open a small satinet manufacturing operation in rented factory space. By 1850 his woolen goods were known throughout the country for their high quality, and he was the wealthiest man in town. His production was worth \$275,000 annually and he employed 340 hands in several mills. Harris was Woonsocket's leading citizen, active in local business and civic affairs as well as state politics, where he was identified with the anti-slavery movement. He had a keen interest in the development of the community and promoted it in a public-spirited fashion by donating land for a high school, promoting the establishment of the first free library in the state, and erecting an imposing block containing stores, a lecture hall and school (which later housed the library), which he gave to a board of trustees to administer for the benefit of the people of Woonsocket.

First and foremost, however, Edward Harris was an industrial entrepreneur, and no well preserved building better reflects Harris' activities as a mill owner than the warehouse on Railroad Street. It is a unique example of a mid-nineteenth century storage facility specifically designed to link a manufacturing operation with the most efficient transportation system available.

(See Continuation Sheet 2)

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Before the railroad came, most freight was carried to and from Woonsocket in wagons, largely over old, unimproved highways, and the lack of better facilities deterred the expansion of industry. The Blackstone Canal, which opened in 1828 and linked Woonsocket to Providence and Worcester, promised great improvements. It never became a major carrier, however, because of conflicts over water rights which embroiled the canal operators with the owners of water-powered mills along its route. As a result, new efforts were made during the 1830's to improve transportation; a series of proposals developed for constructing privately funded turnpikes, but none were ever built. By the late '30's plans were being formulated for a rail line linking Worcester and Providence, with Woonsocket as the major intermediate stop, and finally, in 1847, the Providence and Worcester Railroad opened. 1847 marks a significant developmental threshold for Woonsocket, for from that date onward industrial expansion could continue assured of abundant and reliable transportation for the raw materials required in local factories (cotton, wool and, later, coal), and assured as well of a wide and accessible market.

Woonsocket was Rhode Island's third largest industrial center by 1850, and the only one of the three without a port. Maintaining this position of importance depended upon the railroad. More than any other structure, the Harris Warehouse demonstrates the critical bond between the city's industrial economy and rail transport.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Chase, David W. Woonsocket, Rhode Island -- Statewide Historic Preservation Report P-W-1, Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, 1976.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,9	29,172,0	4,65,30,6,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

David Chase, Chief of Field Services

ORGANIZATION

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

DATE

April 20, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

150 Benefit Street

TELEPHONE

401-277-2678

CITY OR TOWN

Providence

STATE

Rhode Island

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

April 30, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

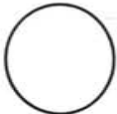
DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

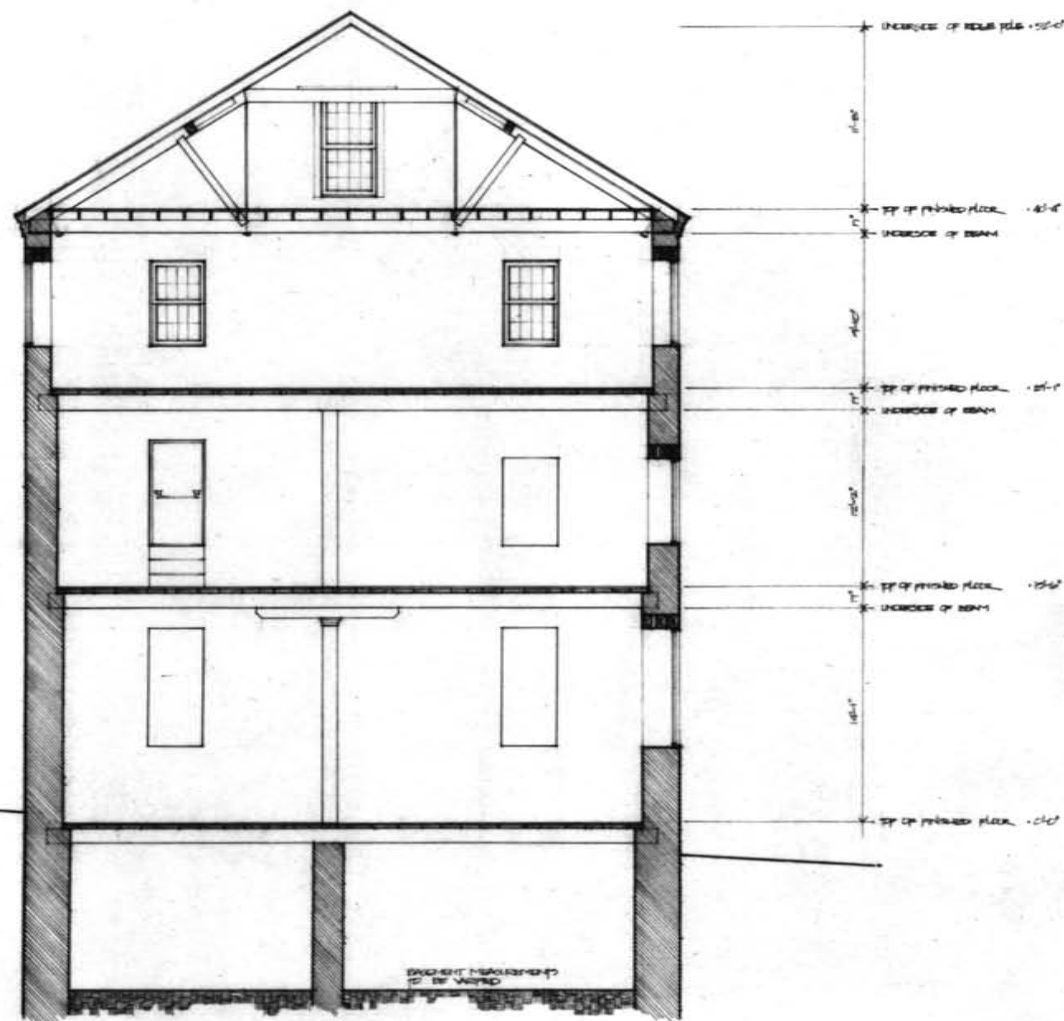
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



GENERAL NOTES



REVISIONS

**HARRIS
WAREHOUSE**
61 RAILROAD STREET
WOONSOCKET,
RHODE ISLAND

**ZANE ANDERSON
ARCHITECT INC.**

PROVIDENCE, R. I.
401-521-2600

DATE 4-16-78
PROJECT NO. 0076
SCALE 1/4"

**TRANSVERSE
SECTION**

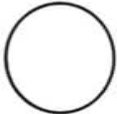


Harris Warehouse
61 Railroad Street
Woonsocket, R. I.

Draftsman: Zane Anderson
April, 1976
Negative: Zane Anderson, Architect
Providence, R. I.

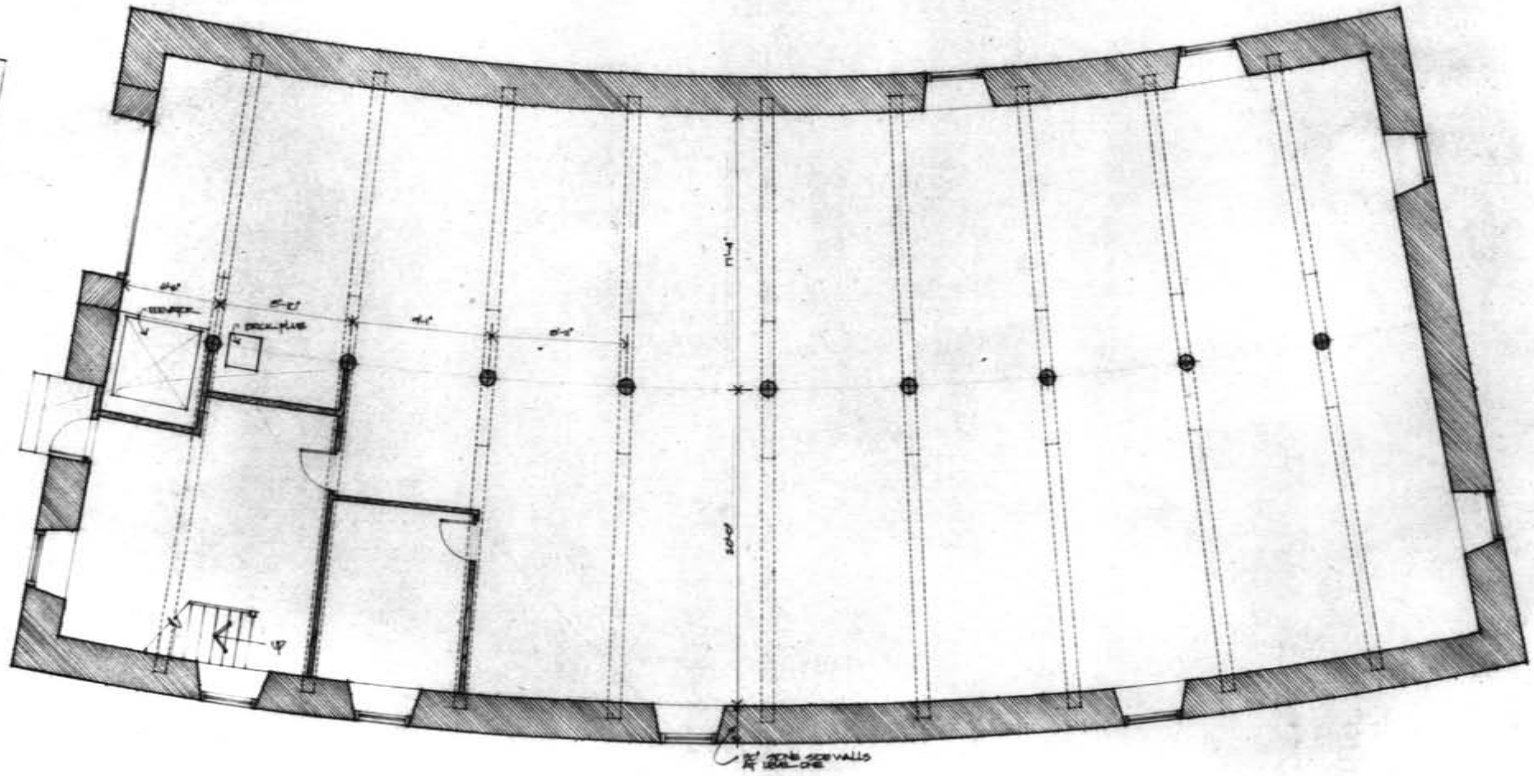
Section, Harris Warehouse

#4



GENERAL NOTES

RAILROAD STREET



BY ARCHITECTS
ZANE ANDERSON

REVISIONS

**HARRIS
WAREHOUSE**
OF RAILROAD STREET
WONSOCKET,
RHODE ISLAND

**ZANE ANDERSON
ARCHITECT INC.**

PROVIDENCE, R. I.
401-521-2600

DATE 4-18-76
PROJECT NO. 0076
SCALE 1/4"

FIRST LEVEL PLAN



Harris Warehouse
61 Railroad Street
Woonsocket, R. I.

Photographer: David Chase

April 1, 1976

Negative: R. I. Historical Preservation Commission
Providence, R. I.

Facade, Harris Warehouse,
looking to the northeast

#2



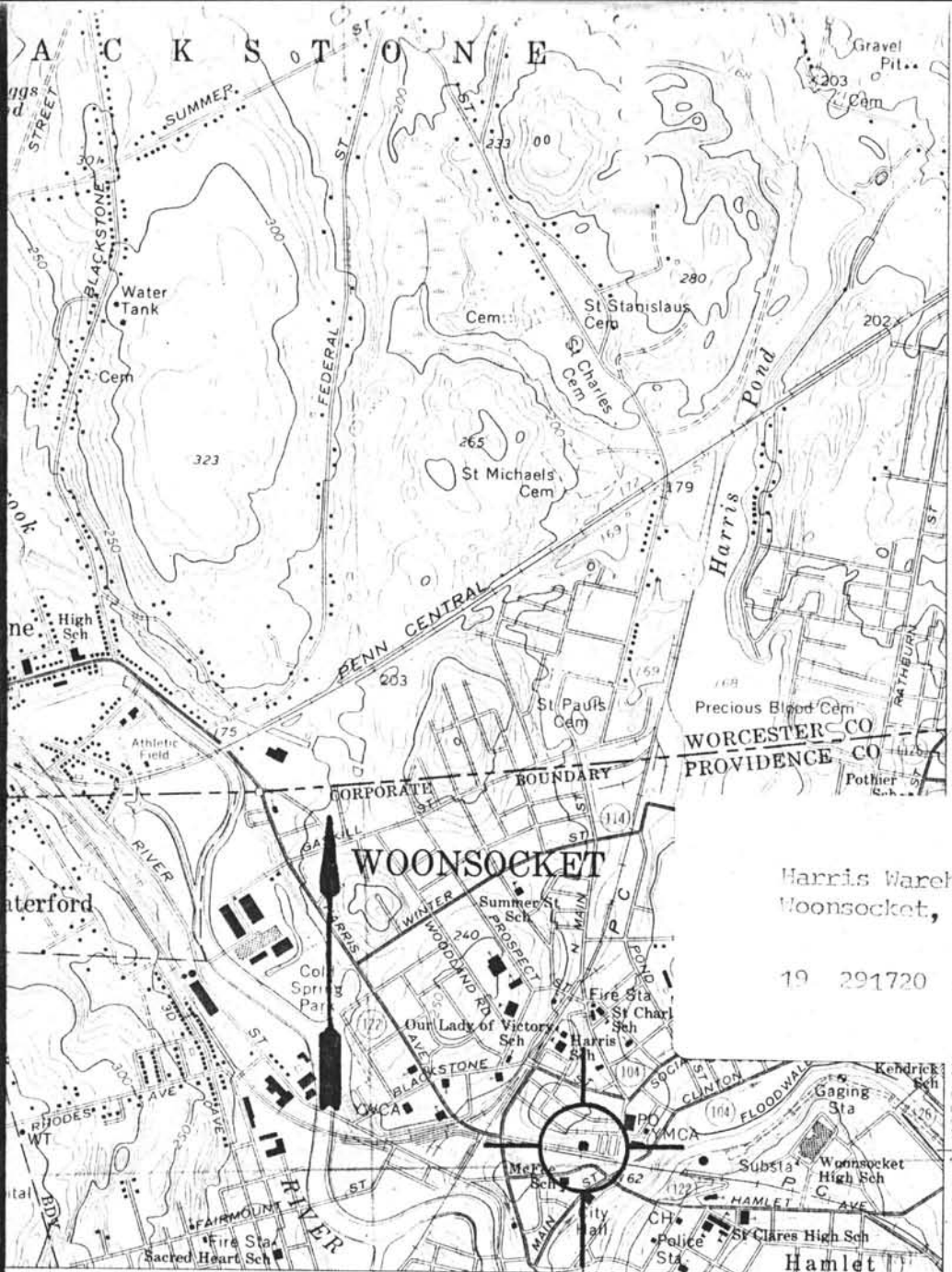
Harris Warehouse
61 Railroad Street
Woonsocket, R. I.

Photographer: David Chase
April, 1976

Negative: R. I. Historical Preservation Commission
Providence, R. I.

General view, Harris Warehouse,
looking to the northeast.

#1



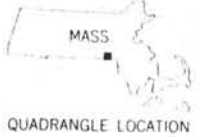
WORCESTER CO
PROVIDENCE CO

Harris Warehouse
Woonsocket, Rhode Island

19 291720 4653060

490 000 FEET (R. I.) 291 ● INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY WASHINGTON D. C.—1971 292 000m E. 42° 00' 71° 30'

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
 Primary highway, all weather, hard surface Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface
 Unimproved road, fair or dry weather
 State Route



BLACKSTONE, MASS.—R. I.
N4200—W7130/7.5

1969

AMS 6668 II SE—SERIES V814

