

FORM A - AREA

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 294 Washington Street, Boston, MA. 02108

Form numbers in this area	Area letter
152-160	. E



Newburyport

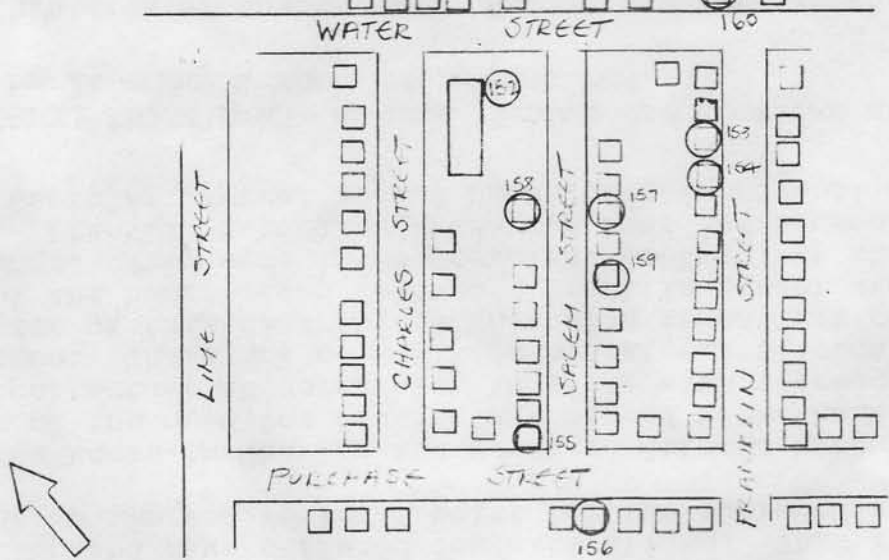
of area (if any) James Steam Mills

istrict

l date or period mid-nineteenth

ctury

Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets (including route numbers, if any) and indicate north. (Attach a separate sheet if space here is not sufficient)



Recorded by Mary Jane Stirgwolt
 Organization Office of Community Development
 Date 11-1-80

(Staple additional sheets here)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Describe physical setting, general character, and architecturally significant structures).

The James Steam Mill is a fine nineteenth century textile mill. It is the only surviving textile mill in the city. The buildings are in excellent condition and have suffered few alterations. This industrial complex remains an impressive focal point for the surrounding residential district.

The homes on Charles and Purchase Streets were built largely as a result of the need for housing associated with the mill. The resulting domestic architecture is vernacular in style with a predominantly Greek Revival influence. There are no striking architectural gems yet the overall character of this district is that of a modest yet comfortable mill community. Some of the homes along Salem and Franklin Street are earlier Georgian dwellings. They were later occupied, however, by those associated with the mills. Franklin Street had numerous boarding houses. Salem Street's finer Georgian gambrel roofed homes were in several cases occupied by agents
(cont.)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Explain development of area, what caused it, and how it affected community; be specific).

This area of Newburyport, sandwiched between the South End Historic District and the Joppa Historic District is primarily residential in nature. Originally, this area was an integral part of the water-side settlement on the banks of the Merrimack River. Many of the homes in this area were built during the eighteenth century when Newburyport's economy centered on the trade on the banks of the Merrimack River. The neighborhood which now focuses on the James Steam Mill complex changed with the economy of Newburyport. Originally oriented to the river, the economy became more reliant upon industry as the nineteenth century progressed.

The cotton mills were the first industry to become firmly established in Newburyport. Several large mills were built, generally in residential areas, during the 1840's. The James Steam Mill is the only textile mill remaining in existence in the city. After the construction of the mill in 1842, the adjacent residential streets housed people associated with the mill and the services that they needed.

Speculative Greek Revival row housing was built in the area as a result of the pressure the mill put on the housing market. Examples of this housing can be seen at 163-169 Water Street and 3-9 Charles Street. Vernacular cottages were also built during this period. They were Greek Revival or Victorian in style. The houses at 13 Purchase Street and

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

(cont.)

Assessor's Records

1851 Plan of Newburyport, Mass. H. McIntire

1872 Map of the City of Newburyport, Mass. D. G. Beers and Co.

1851 City Directory

P. Malloy, editor, The Lower Merrimack River Valley: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites, Historic American Engineering Record, Washington, 1976.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Newburyport	Form No: E
Property Name: James Steam Mills	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (CONTINUED)

of the mill. The house at 8 Salem Street was actually owned by the mill for many years.

The James Steam Mill district is an impressive nineteenth century industrial neighborhood.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (CONTINUED)

20 Franklin Street are illustrative of this housing type. The earlier homes near the mill were occupied by agents and workers in the mills. The Georgian gambrel-roofed homes along Salem Street, specifically 8 Salem Street, were owned or occupied by agents of the mill. Franklin Street had several boarding houses as many of the millworkers could not afford homes.

Small businesses also existed in the neighborhoods. They were, for the most part, grocers providing food to the residents. The building at 22 Purchase Street, always a store, is still partly commercial in use and the Cook family had a grocery store adjacent to their home, now 20 Franklin Street.

Today, the streets around the James Steam Mill, still an industrial complex, retain much of the character created during the industrial boom in the economy of Newburyport between 1840 and 1880. It is the only such area in the city that retains the original textile mill as well as the nineteenth century housing that was associated with it.

The mill's prosperity declined during the late nineteenth century. Shoe manufacturing firms occupied the James Mill after the decline of the textile industry. Today the mill buildings are partially vacant although there are several industrial tenants still in residence.

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