

MAY 15 1989

593

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

Form numbers in this area	Area letter
103	A

SOUTHBRIDGE MASS  
MRA

Town Southbridge

Name of area (if any) Twinehurst American  
Optical Company Neighborhood

Present Use: Residential

General date or period 1904-1925

Condition: Good

Acreage: 1.1 acres

Photo (3x3" or 3x5")  
Staple to left side of form

Photo number \_\_\_\_\_

Sketch map. Draw a general map of the area indicating properties within it. 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)

UTM References

- Ⓐ 18 / 745 520 / 4662 600
- Ⓑ 18 / 745 510 / 4662 480
- Ⓒ 18 / 745 450 / 4662 500
- Ⓓ 18 / 745 450 / 4662 590

USGS Quad rangle,

Southbridge, Mass. Conn.

Scale 1:25,000

Recorded by E. Woodford, S. Ceccacci

ed. S. Ceccacci

Organization Southbridge Historical Com-  
mission

Date May 1986

(Staple additional sheets here)

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

This group of seven shingled three-family houses is clustered around the west side of a circular street at the foot of Paige Hill Road. Euphemistic versions of the three-deckers which were the most popular form of multifamily housing in Southbridge at the time, these houses were intended to give the impression of two-and-a-half story two family residences. As they are situated with their gable ends to the street, their full bulk is somewhat disguised. Also, the high pitched roofs and long continuous dormers on either side provide a full third floor which is not immediately obvious from the main facades. Nevertheless, five or six room apartments were provided on each floor. Each originally had a porch, all of which are now enclosed, on the more southern side. The picturesque curve of the street and the high quality Colonial Revival trim on each house gives more the impression of an up-to-date suburban neighborhood rather than that of a three decker working class neighborhood.

Most of the facades are symmetrically composed with two Colonial Revival style pilaster-pediment entrances. Although the houses appear at first glance to be identical, two in the group have only one facade entrance. Variations in window type and placement also distinguish one house from another. These houses are similar in design and size to another contemporary group of

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

Built as company housing by the American Optical Company, this group of multifamily houses stands only a few hundred yards south of the site of what was probably the first workers' housing project in Southbridge. About 1815 a group of tenements were built on Paige Hill Road possibly by William Sumner, whose mill nearby was a predecessor of the Dresser Cotton Mill. Factory-owned housing was common in Southbridge during the 19th-century. Mills in Globe Village (forms #A-149 and #D-455) and Sandersdale (form #E-502) provided housing for some of their workers during that era in factory-owned tenements. American Optical Company, however, does not appear to have built groups of houses for its workers until the early 20th century. The development of neighborhoods near the company's Mechanic Street factory appears to have been the work of private individuals (form #B-220). At an unspecified date the company acquired houses, not necessarily built by the company, which it rented to employees. During the early-20th century the company built a cluster of single family houses for foremen on Maple Street (form #B-210) and another group of three-family houses at North Street and Windsor Court (form #B-203). These developments were apparently inspired by progressive planning theories for industrial villages which were popular during the early years of this century. By providing ample, good quality housing for employees, it was hoped that workers would be happier, more efficient and produce high quality work.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

maps  
American Optical Company, Housing Card File, J. Edwards Library  
Southbridge . Quinebaug Historical Society Leaflets, Vol. II, p. 143

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:	MRA	Form No:
Southbridge		A-103
Property Name: Twinehurst American Optical Company Neighborhood		

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

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (cont'd)

American Optical Company three-family houses on North Street and Windsor Court.

Some alterations have changed the appearance of the houses somewhat. All were originally sided with wood shingles closely laid. The original shingles have been replaced by wider shingles or covered by synthetic shingle or synthetic clapboard siding. In most cases the trim has been left intact but the original surface texture has been altered as a result. Also, facade entrances to upper floors were originally open as were a second story window above that entrance and the porches which were located on the side of each house. These have all been closed.

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT

The Twinehurst District is significant as an example of housing constructed for the workers of the American Optical Company. During the growth of the town's eastern section late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Wells family and their company built a variety of housing. The three-family houses built here are variations on the triple-decker, and results in a particularly dense housing cluster constructed by the company. It meets National Register criteria A and C at the local level and retains integrity of setting, location, workmanship, design, feeling, and association. The boundaries indicated on the attached assessors map are those of current ownership and historically associated with the properties.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

Name Southbridge MRA  
State Worcester County, MASSACHUSETTS

- | Nomination/Type of Review                            | Date/Signature   |
|--|--|
| 71. Tapin, Eugene, House                             | Entered in the National Register <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keeper <u>Melores Byers 6/22/89</u><br>Attest _____ |
| 72. Tiffany--Leonard House                           | Entered in the National Register <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keeper <u>Melores Byers 6/22/89</u><br>Attest _____ |
| 73. Twinehurst American Optical Company Neighborhood | Entered in the National Register <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keeper <u>Melores Byers 6/22/89</u><br>Attest _____ |
| 74. Upper Chapin Street Historic District            | Entered in the National Register <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keeper <u>Melores Byers 6/22/89</u><br>Attest _____ |
| 75. Vinton--Boardman Farmhouse                       | Entered in the National Register <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keeper <u>Melores Byers 6/22/89</u><br>Attest _____ |
| 76. Vinton--Torrey House                             | Entered in the National Register <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keeper <u>Melores Byers 6/22/89</u><br>Attest _____ |
| 77. Wells, George B. and Ruth D., House              | Entered in the National Register <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keeper <u>Melores Byers 6/22/89</u><br>Attest _____ |
| 78. Wells, H.C., Double House                        | Entered in the National Register <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keeper <u>Melores Byers 6/22/89</u><br>Attest _____ |
| 79. Wells, John M., House                            | Entered in the National Register <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keeper <u>Melores Byers 6/22/89</u><br>Attest _____ |
| 80. Wheeler, Albert H., House                        | Entered in the National Register <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keeper <u>Melores Byers 6/22/89</u><br>Attest _____ |

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Twinehurst American Optical Company Neighborhood  
NAME:

MULTIPLE Southbridge MRA  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Worcester

DATE RECEIVED: 5/15/89 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/31/89  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/16/89 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/29/89  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 89000593

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 6/22/89 DATE

Entered in the  
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_  
REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_  
DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

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CLASSIFICATION

count       resource type

---

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

---

FUNCTION

historic       current

---

DESCRIPTION

architectural classification  
 materials  
 descriptive text

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SIGNIFICANCE

Period      Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates      Builder/Architect  
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

summary paragraph  
 completeness  
 clarity  
 applicable criteria  
 justification of areas checked  
 relating significance to the resource  
 context  
 relationship of integrity to significance  
 justification of exception  
 other

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

acreage       verbal boundary description  
 UTM's       boundary justification

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ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

sketch maps       USGS maps       photographs       presentation

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OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



Twinehurst American Optical Co. Neighborhood  
Southbridge, MA ~~MA~~ NRA

Southbridge Historical Commission, 1986.

Roll # 5



Twinehurst American Optical Co.  
neighborhood (A-103)

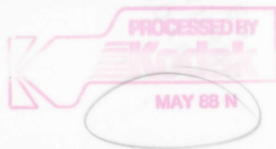
Southbridge, MA NRA

#A-103  
Southbridge Historical Commission

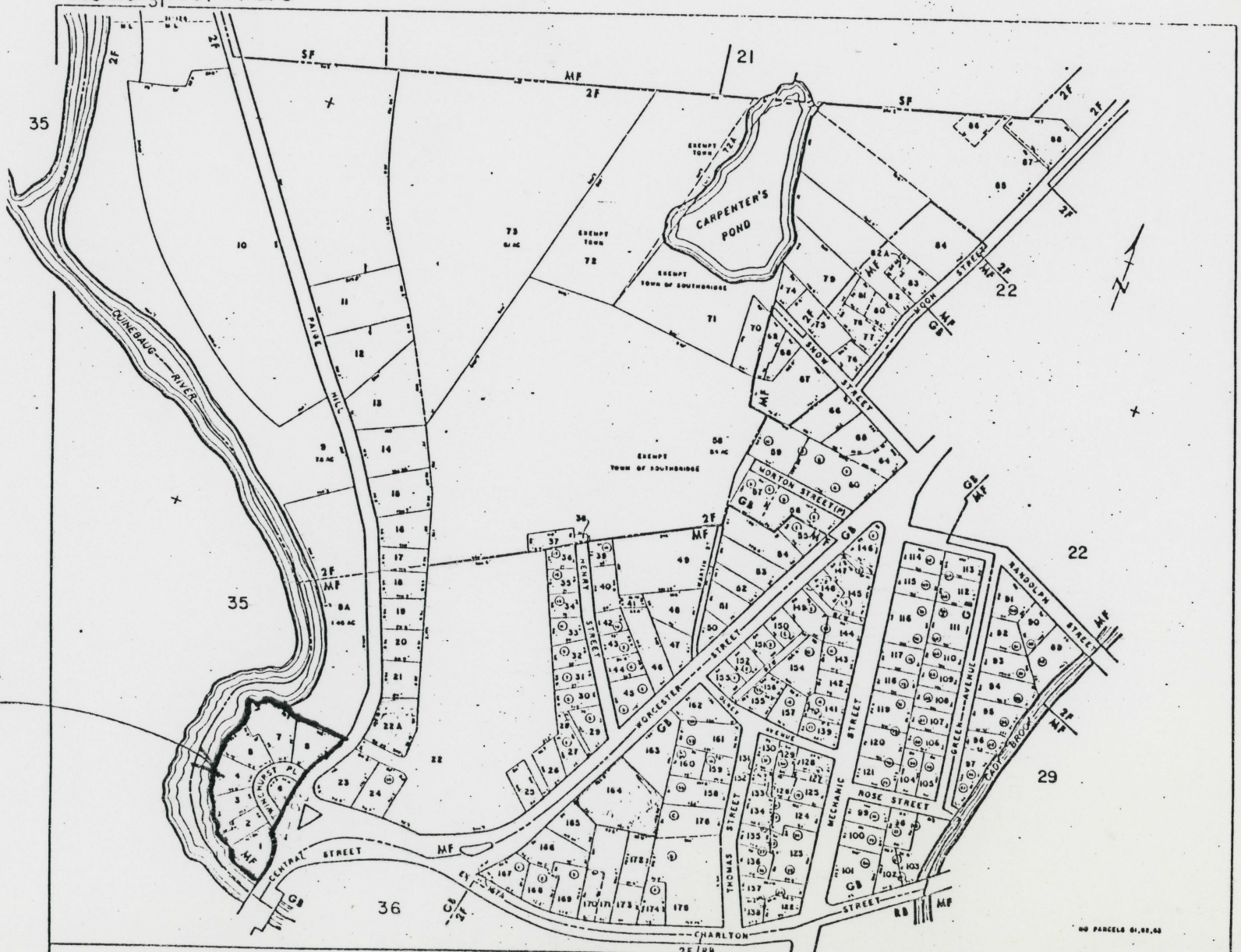
1986 Twinehurst Area

Southbridge

Roll # 5



Twinehurst Area



A-103

SOUTHBRIDGE MASS  
MRA

ARTHUR O'DONNELL & ASSOCIATES  
ASSESSOR, MAINE  
1971

ASSESSOR'S MAP  
SOUTHBRIDGE, MASS.

SCALE IN FEET  
0 100 200

NO PARCELS 61, 62, 63

Please refer to the map in the  
Multiple Property Cover Sheet  
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000294