

MAY 15 1988

596

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

Form numbers in this area	Area letter
204	B

SOUTHBRIDGE MASS  
MRA

Town Southbridge

Name of area (if any) Windsor Court District

American Optical Company Neighborhood

Condition: Fair

General date or period 1904-1925

Acreage: under an acre

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

- Ⓐ 18/745 640/4662 320
- Ⓑ 18/745 620/4662 220
- Ⓒ 18/745 560/4662 240
- Ⓓ 18/745 560/4662 330

USGS Quadrangle

Southbridge, Mass-Conn.

Scale 1:25,000

Recorded by E. Woodford, S. Ceccacci

ed. S. Ceccacci

Organization Southbridge Historical Com-  
mission

Date May 1986

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

Like another group of houses built nearby on Twinehurst (form #A-103) at about the same time by the American Optical Company, these three-family residences were built to look like two family houses. The somewhat ungainly narrow three story proportions of the typical three-decker house have been avoided here by disguising the third floor in the high-pitched facade gable of what appears to be a two-and-a-half story house. Long dormers have been added to both sides of the roof to provide a full story on the third floor.

Less imposing than the Twinehurst houses, these houses are of a similar size and silhouette. In their original states the houses were all identical. Sheathed in wood shingle they had a porch on each of the three floors at the center of the facade. They were flanked by a door and a window on the ground floor and windows on the second floor. ~~8-10~~ Windsor Court still retains its original facade conformation. In other houses in the group some or all of the porches have been permanently closed in. Nevertheless, the group still retains much of its original feeling.

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

Although the eastern section of North Street was quickly developed in the 1870's and 1880's with housing for American Optical Company workers, the end near Central Street remained undeveloped until after the turn of the century as the land was held by Central Mills. It seems likely that American Optical Company bought the land on which these houses were built sometime shortly after Central Mills built its storehouse building to the east, probably after 1908.

During the early 20th century, the American Optical Company built three housing clusters for its workers. One was a group of single family houses for company foremen on Maple Street (form #B-210). The other two were groups of three-family houses. The more imposing of the two was on Twinehurst (form #A-103). The other group was at North Street and Windsor Court. These developments were apparently inspired by progressive planning theories for industrial villages which were popular during the early years of this century. It was believed that by providing ample, good quality housing for employees, they would be happier, more efficient and thereby produce quality work.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

maps  
American Optical Company Housing Card File, J. Edwards Library

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community:

Southbridge

Form No:

B-204

Property Name: Windsor Court District

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

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

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT

The Windsor Court 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 nineteenth century the Wells family and their company built a variety of housing. The three-family houses built here are variations on the triple-decker, which resulted in the most dense of the housing clusters constructed by the company. It meets National Register criteria A and C at the local level and retains integrity of setting, location, materials, 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

81. Windsor Court Historic District  
Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper *Melanie Lyons* 6/22/87  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_

Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

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Attest \_\_\_\_\_

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Windsor Court Historic District  
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: 89000596

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

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STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

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FUNCTION

historic       current

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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  
 UTMs       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 \_\_\_\_\_



Windsor Court H.P.

Form # B-204

1986 photo

Southbridge

MRA, MA

Windsor Ct. AO Neighborhood

Roll # 5



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

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000294