

# FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

17C-135 Easthampton NTH.93

**Town:** Northampton

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*) Florence

## Photograph



**Address:** 16 Bardwell Street

**Historic Name:** Florence Furniture Company

**Uses:** Present: factory

Original: factory

**Date of Construction:** 1873

**Source:** Atlas of 1873

**Style/Form:** 19<sup>th</sup> century utilitarian

**Architect/Builder:**

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: brick

Wall/Trim: brick and metal shingles

Roof: not visible

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

Chimney; storage shed

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*): additions on south at various times; mansard roof replaced 1920.

**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no | x | yes | | **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acreage:** 1.29 acres

**Setting:** Building is located on the north east side of former railroad tracks that now serve as a rail trail.

## Topographic or Assessor's Map



**Recorded by:** Bonnie Parsons

**Organization:** PVPC

**Date** (*month / year*): March, 2010

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

[NORTHAMPTON]

[16 BARDWELL STREET]

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

NTH.93

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

*Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.*

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

*Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.*

Typical of many 19<sup>th</sup> century factories this building has a complex plan that is the result of numerous additions over time. It is composed of three main blocks: a two-story, red brick block with a metal-sided third story (originally a mansard roof), followed on its west elevation by a slightly recessed second block of two stories in brick and a third story metal-sided. The metal siding is composed of metal shingles. The third block is an ell that extends 10 bays from the north side of the main block. It has the same height and of the same materials although its third story retains more of its mansard roof shape than the other two blocks and retains dormers on its west roof. On the south elevation in the angle between the blocks are several one-story brick additions along with a square brick chimney and metal air filtering structures connected to the processing of the factory by metal ductwork. The main block of the factory has predominantly retained its segmentally arched windows with rough granite sills that contain 6/6 sash, but on its north façade the windows of its five bays have been replaced by steel casement windows. Two of those windows are full length and have 35 lights with center hoppers. Three are shorter, narrower versions. Windows elsewhere in the building are segmentally arched with 6/6 and 1/1 sash. The building has a prominent corbelled cornice between second and third stories. The main entry to the building on track side is sheltered by a shed roof and reached by stairs as the basement is exposed on this elevation.

East of the factory is a one-story brick shed four bays long. Three of its bays have been filled in with cement blocks on the track or south elevation so that the building can serve as a secured lumber shed. The building on north, east and west is covered with a dense growth of ivy.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

*Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.*

From the Form B of 1980, "The 1860 map of Florence depicts a village located on a bend in the Mill River and extending northwards up the terrace and along the plateau to Main Street, which had served as the old Boston and Albany stage route. At that time there was no development between Main Street and Bridge Road. The establishment of the Williamsburg division of the New Haven and Northampton Railroad in 1867 changed that. The line connected the mill villages of Williamsburg and Northampton (including Florence) to the main north-south line which ran through the center of Northampton. In Florence the tracks ran parallel to, and just north of Main and North Main Streets. North Maple Street, a continuation of Maple Street became the locus for railroad-oriented industry and a depot. The Florence Furniture Company was organized in 1873 by several prominent Florence industrialists, including Samuel Hill, Alfred Lilly and George Burr, and a brick factory erected just north of the railroad tracks on Myrtle Street (now Bardwell Street) Additions were made to the plant in 1880 and 1888, while the mansard roof was replaced with a more vertical, tin-covered third floor early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Company manufactured "all grades of wood and cloth covered burial cases and undertakers' supplies" and shipped them throughout New England. During the 1920s the name of the firm was changed to the Florence Casket Company, a name more descriptive of the business, and the business continues to this day."

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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Hales, John G. Plan of the Town or Northampton in the County of Hampshire, 1831.

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Walker, George H. and Company. Atlas of Northampton City, Massachusetts, Boston, 1884.

Walling, Henry F. Map of Hampshire County, Massachusetts, New York, 1860.

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Northampton Directories of 1922, 1930 and 1965.

Sheffield, Charles (ed.) History of Florence, Florence, 1895, pp. 239-240.

Hollay, Agnes. "A Chronicle of Industry on the Mill River", Smith College Studies in History, vol. 21, 1935-1936.

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**National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form**

Check all that apply:

- Individually eligible     Eligible only in an historic district
- Contributing to a potential historic district     Potential historic district

Criteria:       A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations:     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Statement of Significance by Bonnie Parsons

*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

The Florence Furniture Company complex is historically significant for its long and important manufacturing history in the village of Florence. One of its founders, Samuel Hill, was instrumental in the development of the Northampton Association of Industry and Education, a utopian community known for its progressive social and political principles, while its other founders were part of the cultural and economic development of Florence. The company employed many Florence residents who occupied surrounding neighborhoods, some of whom went on to form their own wood-working businesses. The building is still operating as it has been since ca. 1873 with additions over time to reflect its long manufacturing history.

Architecturally, this building is representative of the attention the 19<sup>th</sup> century gave to its utilitarian buildings with substantial materials, scale, and design. Its setting in a residential neighborhood adjacent to the former railroad line was a setting cultivated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the distinctions between industrial and residential had not been yet made.