STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
S9 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
(203) 566-3005
HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM
For Buildings and Structures

IDENTIFICATION
1. BUILDING NAME: Common: Middlesex Cabinet Shop Historic: Starr Mill;
2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: Staddle Hill COUNTY: Middlesex
3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): Beverly Heights; northwest corner of Middlefield Street
4. OWNER(S): J.J. Vinci PUBLIC X PRIVATE
5. USE: Present: Industrial Historic: same
6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: X yes no
Interior accessible: X yes, explain with owner's permission no

DESCRIPTION
7. STYLE OF BUILDING: 19th Century Industrial
8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):
   __clapboard __asbestos siding __brick
   __wood shingle __asphalt siding __fieldstone
   __board & batten __stucco __cobblestone
   __aluminum siding __concrete: type: __cut stone: type: brownstone
   __other: __foundation
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
   X load bearing masonry __structural iron or steel (interior framing, with wood)
   __gable __flat __other:
   __gambrel __shed __hip __round __monitor __sawtooth
   material: __wood shingle __roll asphalt __tin __slate
   __asphalt shingle __built up __tile __other:
10. ROOF: type:
    X gable __flat __gambrel __shed __hip __monitor __round __sawtooth
    __material: __wood shingle __roll asphalt __tin __slate
    __asphalt shingle __built up __tile __other:
11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 3½ APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS:
12. CONDITION: Structural: X excellent __good __fair __deteriorated
    Exterior: X excellent __good __fair __deteriorated
13. INTEGRITY: Location: X on original site moved, when:
    Alterations: no X yes, explain: Sheds, heating plant added; sliceway
14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:
    __barn __shed __garage X other landscape features or buildings: pond, dam
    __carriage house __shop __garden (See #18)
15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:
    __open land __woodland __residential X scattered buildings visible from site
    __commercial __industrial __rural __high building density
16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: These two 19th century factory build-
    ings are sited on a bank beside Starr Mill pond on Beverly Heights just off Middlefield Street.
    Each building is 3½ stories tall, and overlooks a picturesque pond and woods to the west; a
    parking lot packed with trucks and industrial equipment on the south; and nineteenth century
    housing on Beverly Heights to the north.
17. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior):
   Corbeled, denticulated cornice
   Brownstone arch for sliceway below eastern building
   Late 19th century turbine attached to building
   Monitor on powerhouse adjacent to dam
   1927 pony-truss bridge constructed by Berlin Construction Company

SIGNIFICANCE
   Architect:       Builder:       

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: Nathan Starr, Sr., a scythe manufacturer, purchased land on the West (now Coginchaug) River in Stadle Hill in 1799. Joined by his son, Nathan, Jr., in 1812, Starr began the first of a long series of government contracts to produce swords, pistols, and eventually, rifles. They constructed a factory here, c. 1812, which is probably the easternmost building sited by the pond. After Nathan, Sr's. death in 1812, his son carried on the business until 1845. During this period some 70,000 arms of varied kinds were made here, as well as a number of commemorative swords for national heroes.
   From 1845 to 1864 the factory was relatively inactive. In the latter year the Russell Manufacturing Company bought the property; in 1865 they erected the building immediately to the west of the original plant in a similar height, scale, material, and style. This was an auxiliary operation, complementing the main South Farms factories; Russell conducted manufacturing here for some ninety years. A plumbing products firm and then a lighting fixture company ran short-lived manufacturing operations here; the facilities were vacant in the late 1960s. Joseph J. Vinci bought the property in 1971. Several

PHOTOGRAPH
   photographer: Roger Sherman
   date: 9/78    view: east
   negative on file: Roll 38, #6

COMPiled BY:
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   date: 12/29
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20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:
   _X_ none known    _ ___ highways    _ ___ vandalism    _ ___ developers    _ ___ other: _ ___
   _ ___ renewal    _ ___ private    _ ___ deterioration    _ ___ zoning    _ ___ explanation: _ ___
small businesses currently operate here, including a cabinetmaker, garment shop, and a welding outfit.

The Starr Mill is an archetypical nineteenth century mill: a tall, many-windowed brick building beside a mill pond. There have been few major exterior alterations. Round-arched brownstone sluiceways (now bricked up) run beneath the building. On each end of the building three gable end chimney stacks terminate in the attic. Artifacts from former functions of the mill abound. A late 19th century turbine lies in the water near the southeastern corner of the earlier building.

This complex is a well-preserved and significant industrial site which has been successfully adapted to light manufacturing uses.