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

IDENTIFICATION
1. BUILDING NAME: Common: P&H Bliss Company
   Historic: Sanseer Mill, Russell Manufacturing Company
2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown
   VILLAGE: ____________________________
3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 215 East Main Street
4. OWNER(S): Harry W. Dickerson
   PUBLIC x PRIVATE
5. USE: Present: Office and Storage
   Historic: Industrial
6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: yes x no
   Interior accessible: yes, explain: __________

DESCRIPTION
7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Late 19th Century Industrial
   DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: c. 1885
8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):
   __ clapboard
   __ wood shingle
   __ board & batten
   __ aluminum siding
   _x brick
   __ fieldstone
   __ cobblestone
   _x cut stone: type: brownstone
   __ other:
   __ asbestos siding
   __ asphalt siding
   __ stucco
   __ concrete: type: __________
   __ other:
   __ wood frame; _x post and beam __ balloon (interior framing)
   _x load bearing masonry __ structural iron or steel (tie rods)
   __ other:
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
   _x gable __ flat __ mansard __ monitor __ sawtooth
   __ gambrel __ shed __ hip __ round __ other __________
   __ material:
   __ wood shingle __ roll asphalt __ tin __ slate
   _x asphalt shingle __ built up __ tile __ other __________
10. ROOF: type:
    _x gable __ shed __ garage
    __ gambrel __ roll asphalt __ garden __ other __________
    __ material:
    __ wood shingle __ roll asphalt __ tin __ slate
    _x asphalt shingle __ built up __ tile __ other __________
11. NUMBER OF STORIES: __3½__ APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 74' x 40'
12. CONDITION:
    Structural: __ excellent __ good __ fair __ deteriorated
    Exterior: __ excellent __ good __ fair __ deteriorated
13. INTEGRITY:
    Location: _x on original site __ moved, when:
    Alterations: _no __ yes, explain: __________
14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:
    _x barn __ shed __ garage
    __ carriage house __ shop __ garden
    __ other landscape features or buildings: adjoining
    _x other landscape features or buildings: __________
    __ brick building, south; large wood building, east (See Form #95A)
15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:
    _x open land __ woodland __ residential
    __ woodland __ industrial __ rural
    __ scattered buildings visible from site
    _x high building density
16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: This large brick structure is one of
    three industrial buildings that share a secluded, well-kept site in the South Farms district.
    Separated from Main Street by trees and undergrowth, the landscaped grounds
    are behind a row of East Main Street buildings. This, the largest structure, adjoins a brick
    building south; nearby to the east is a large barn-like structure.
17. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior):

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: This large brick building was constructed probably a short time after the Russell Manufacturing Company obtained the property in 1834. The site, formerly developed by the Sanseer Manufacturing Company, includes a brick building which had been that company's main shop. (See Form #95A). The Russell Manufacturing Company, established in 1834, produced a great variety of cotton and elastic woven goods. By 1894, it was the nation's largest manufacturer of suspenders, employing 900 workers in the company's seven groups of mills. This mill, powered by steam, probably housed weaving looms as did the other two buildings nearby. These structures formed the company's Sanseer Mill complex. In 1937, Phillip Bliss purchased the property. Since then, the building has been primarily used for office and storage space by the P & H Bliss Company.

The structure has two dominant vertical elements: a four-story stairwell extends from the middle of one side and a tall rectangular stack stands closeby. The main entrance displays a small wooden portico. Its columns and plain entablature, painted white, contrast with the building's brick walls.

This structure, one of the least altered early mills in the area, reflects the substantial
(see continuation sheet)

19. SOURCES: Middletown Land Records; History of Middlesex County (New York: J.B. Beers, 1884);
H.F. Donlan, Middletown Tribune: Souvenir Edition (Middletown: 1896); 1859 Walling Map; 1874 Beers Atlas; 1877 Bailey Perspective View Map

20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:
   - none known
   - highways
   - vandalism
   - developers
   - other:
   - renewal
   - private
   - deterioration
   - zoning
   - explanation:
#18

development South Farms underwent following the Civil War. During the late nineteenth century, the district experienced marked industrial and residential growth, primarily influenced by the success of the Russell Manufacturing Company.