



TOWN of  
**THOMPSON**  
MILL SITES REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**MILL SITES REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL MEETING**

Thompson Public Library/Community Center – Room 2

Wednesday, September 27, 2017  
6:00 PM

***929 Riverside Drive (aka The River Mill)  
Conceptual Development Presentation/Discussion***

**MINUTES**

PRESENT: J. Blanchette, Chairman  
B. Davis  
R. Faucher  
J. Hall

ABSENT: S. Lewis  
N. O'Leary

ALSO PRESENT: M. A. Chinatti, Director of Planning & Development  
K. Beausoleil, First Selectman  
S. Donohoe, Property Owner Liaison  
Members of the Public (sign-in sheet attached to these Minutes)

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

J. Blanchette called the meeting to order at 6:08PM.

**2. PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING:**

**a. J. Blanchette, Chairman, MSRAC: Introduction/Statement of Meeting Purpose**

J. Blanchette introduced herself and thanked all for coming. She provided a brief history of the project/public informational meetings/where things are currently (copy of written introduction attached to these Minutes). She then introduced J. Gumpert, Camden Partners, to present his conceptual plan for redevelopment.

Page 1 of 8



# TOWN of THOMPSON

MILL SITES REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

b. John Gumpert, Camden Partners: Conceptual Development Plans Presentation

J. Gumpert explained what his company does, and that it has been involved with renovating historic mills for about 20 years. He then discussed some projects he's done/is in the process of completing.

He then talked about his project in Gastonia, NC, the Loray Mill project, and stated he would like to do a similar project with the River Mill. He presented conceptual plans and described that the project will be done in 2, possibly 3 phases, and that the first phase will include approximately 180 residential rental units. He stated a public event space is also proposed, as well as a brew pub.

He stated his passion is re-doing historic mills, and that the mill is a great structure that you can't rebuild today; he stated the end product would be something that people would like. He stated redevelopment of the mill makes sense, and will be coupled with State and Federal historic tax credits.

He then provided background of how he/his company came to be involved in the project, noting that the property owner had been in discussions with a salvage company and he was called in to look at the mill re redevelopment potential. His opinion was that it could, indeed, be redeveloped, and he is looking to "gauge" the town support for that redevelopment. He stated he's looking for public support and if it's not there the project won't succeed.

He described what his planners have come up with so far, referencing the conceptual plans provided for the meeting (11" x 17" copies attached to these Minutes). He stated parking will probably be relocated to another property across the street and removed from where it is now. He stated the schematics presented represent the basic ideas that he/his company has. He again stressed the importance of public involvement and participation in the process.

He stated, re some of the proposed non-residential space, that the setting is great for the public events space, for weddings, conferences, etc., and it's a great marketing tool as well. He noted that approximately 150 weddings were held in the public events space at the Loray Mill project last year. He stated the goal is to create a unique and cool place to live, and noted that the building itself is cool and it's a real draw.





# TOWN of THOMPSON

## MILL SITES REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

He stated that the parking will be relocated to create more green space. He noted that the existing greenway is already a great asset that has already been created and he intends to just expand on that.

He stated he is not involved in any type of "back-up demolition plan", noting that he does not take buildings down. He stated his only motivation is to see this as a successfully completed project.

J. Blanchette then introduced K. Beausoleil.

c. Ken Beausoleil, First Selectman – Importance of the Project to the Community

K. Beausoleil stated the Town has been working to avert the demolition of the mill, and successful completion of this project will accomplish that. He noted that everyone knows the importance of the structure to the town. He stated the Town has had a lot of conversations with J. Gumpert which were very promising. He stated that another Beldings is not what the Townspeople want.

J. Blanchette then introduced W. Bugden.

d. Wayne Bugden, CME Associates, Inc. – Brownfields - Importance of Revitalizing Historic Mill Sites

W. Bugden stated he was involved with the Belding site, and is currently involved with this site, re environmental work, and that he doesn't often have the opportunity to come into a town and give them good news as far as environmental matters is concerned; however, that is not the case here. He then talked about what could happen if the mill weren't redeveloped and the residents and the Town weren't so interested in, and committed to, seeing it redeveloped. He also spoke to successful projects, referring during the discussion to his powerpoint presentation (attached to these Minutes). He noted that the time is right to do this now, as the mills don't last forever.

He first reviewed his "wall of shame" (mills that have, due to various reasons, been demolished/in process of being removed, and their status today) – what could happen if the mill is not redeveloped.

He then spoke to successful mill redevelopment projects to hopefully inspire and keep things on the right track. He noted that, if the River Mill does become residential, there are other buildings around it that could become



# TOWN of THOMPSON

MILL SITES REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

boutiques, shops, restaurants, art studios, etc., and that nice commercial space is also possible in the River Mill as part of the redevelopment of the site.

He stated some of the advantages, advantages that he doesn't see in a lot of projects, is that the mill is in decent shape, environmentally regulatory issues are relatively minor, noting that CME's preliminary data has revealed that the site is not that contaminated and he doesn't expect an environmental issue to be found that will "dash everybody's hopes". He noted that the mills location, which is right in the center of town and near many amenities. He stated the site is not in a floodplain so there are no floodplain issues, that there is plenty of available parking.

He continued, noting that there are a lot of funding assistance programs that are available now that developers can take advantage of. He stated the Town's interest in the project, the commitment of the Town and the support of this project will make qualifying for the tax credits much easier, noting that the tax credits programs are very competitive. He stated that the project has strong advocates, which is the key, noting that in all of the projects he's worked on in all of the other municipalities and around New England, he's never seen a town, elected officials and a committee made up of mostly the same people who've continued to come to meetings and work toward the goal of revitalization, which he said is extremely rare. He noted that a lot of towns have good intentions and form committees, then have three or four meetings and then interest is lost because the projects aren't ones that are accomplished overnight.

## e. Public Comments/Questions

J. Blanchette offered the floor to Wes Haynes, CT Trust for Historic Preservation, and to M. Lewis, CT DEEP, prior to opening up the floor to public comments/questions.

W. Haynes, CT Trust for Historic Preservation, stated that the mill is one of the finest – one of the top three – that need to be redeveloped. He stated it is one of the best, the "cream of the crop." He continued, stating that this shows really great promise and, of all the mills the Trust has gone through this one scored very, very high in terms of its condition. He stated the Trust is really impressed it's in such good condition. He stated this is a really great project and the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation is willing to work with the Town to do whatever needs to be done to get the project completed.

Page 4 of 8





# TOWN of THOMPSON

MILL SITES REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

He stated the Trust can help with grant application and all needed paperwork. He said he can't say enough how much the Trust supports this project.

M. Lewis, CT DEEP, talked about his role at DEEP/Brownfield Program, and that he works with towns/cities on projects like that being presented to help get the mills cleaned up and put back to use. He stated that, once the decision of what to do is made, his purpose is to help see that it gets done.

He then talked about some of the programs DEEP has that J. Gumpert might be interested in, and about his history with the mill, noting that he'd previously been involved from an enforcement standpoint a number of years ago.

J. Blanchette then opened the floor to comments/questions from the audience.

R. Rooney stated she supports economic development and thanked those responsible for arranging the meeting. She stated the proposal looks like a win/win situation, that the Town is the right location, with the right project, and within one hour of everything. She stated that Thompson does not currently have a town center and, once this development is completed, it is creating a town center. She then talked about the amenities Thompson has that many are unaware of. She stated that what is needed to move forward is support from the people.

M. Polinski asked if J. Gumpert has planned at all to utilize water power, to which J. Gumpert stated he is looking at it. He (Polinski) then asked about the environmental issues, to which W. Bugden responded that CME was in the middle of doing an environmental evaluation following the Town's receipt of a brownfield grant from CT DEEP, and that it is 2/3 complete. He stated the mill was the inspiration for the DECD Brownfield Program. He stated hopes with the new direction the State will say work can again commence on the project.

M. Polinski then asked if units would be rentals or owned, and the price point, to which J. Gumpert responded that they would be rentals and that to qualify for historic tax credits properties must remain rentals for 7 years and then can be converted, but none of his projects to date have been converted. He continued, re the hydropower, that it is a cottage industry and he will definitely look at that and also at putting solar on the roof.



# TOWN of THOMPSON

MILL SITES REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

S. Herbert asked the legal status of the property, to which J. Gumpert responded that he is working with M. Harmon and is ready to sign a contract that will tie up the site for two years. He stated the development completion won't happen overnight, but will take a number of years.

S. Herbert then voiced a rumor he'd heard about Worcester trying to attract Amazon for its expansion, noting that if it occurred, those employees would need somewhere to live.

T. Penn-Gesek asked about the rental units and whether a certain percentage would be required to be affordable housing, to which J. Gumpert stated the apartments would be market rate units. She then asked about a set aside for public space, noting the proposed event space and brewery, to which J. Gumpert responded that residential needs to be completed first, and after that the commercial space will grow. He then talked about the Loray project, noting that it contains 200 residential units, all occupied, but that the commercial space is not currently doing well, noting that it takes time for that to "take off". He stated his preference is to do residential first and small commercial, and that his goal is for those coming into town after him to feed off of the project and redevelop.

V. Iamartino stated she is excited about what she's seen. She asked if the incentives that come from the taxes come from the state or federal government, and if the plan is to bring in a lot of J. Gumpert's own workers or will he hire from the community, to which J. Gumpert responded that the tax credits will be both state and federal and, re workers, he ships in the cabinets and granite countertops from China but mostly uses local people for labor and materials other than that. He stated he can't put a number on how many jobs he's created but noted that there is plenty of local qualified people to do the work.

V. Iamartino then asked, knowing that mill is one of the first huge textile mills in all of New England, if J. Gumpert has contemplated a museum, to which J. Gumpert responded that his Loray project does include a museum, which the State helped with, which is an interactive museum. He stated there's always room in these mills to create the spaces. V. Iamartino responded by talking about the mills in New England and noting that none have museum space, to which J. Gumpert responded that he tries to create activity and, if items are donated and a museum space can be created that people will want to come to, that's an attraction.





# TOWN of THOMPSON

MILL SITES REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

S. Wargo asked what the next step is/what J. Gumpert would like to the townspeople to do, noting the support and motivation. K. Beausoleil stated it's the public support that is needed, such as writing State legislators, etc., in support of the project and asking that they do whatever they can to ensure it is brought to fruition. J. Gumpert stated public support is critical, noting that when he goes to his lenders having the public support makes a big difference. J. Blanchette noted that projects like this will require a lot of local permitting and meetings, that a lot of those meetings will be public hearings at which it will be important for the public to stand up and voice support, and people need to make sure they come out as this goes through the local permitting process.

R. Rooney stated those in attendance should be out talking to their friends and getting everyone excited as well, and it needs to get out to all residents.

B. Craver suggested that MSRAC put together a list of appropriate State legislators/entities to contact to be sure everyone reaches out to the appropriate people.

M. Flexer, Senator for this district, stated she is excited to see such a great turnout. She stated that (Representative) D. Rovero and she will do whatever they need to do to ensure this project happens as long as the residents are behind it.

J. Lenky stated he worked in the mills, and he spoke to the mill redevelopments along the I-95 corridor. He stated he would like to see the project get built and the mill not demolished, noting there is a lot of potential. He stated the property includes the railroad tracks, which add potential, and that he is in favor of the project.

R. Facuher asked what level of tax relief would be needed from Thompson, to which J. Gumpert responded his hope that property taxes would be frozen for some period of time, and that the Town would provide the water/sewer hook-ups. He (Gumpert) continued, stating that he looks for any help the Town can be, and that he "trumpets" that help to his funding avenues.

J. Bibeck asked if the other building was included in the project (915), to which J. Gumpert stated it is, though he doesn't know at this time what purpose it may serve.



TOWN *of*  
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There were no further comments/questions.

**(M/S/C Faucher/Davis)** to adjourn at 7:10PM. Carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
M. A. Chinatti, Director of Planning & Development

3. ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Ann Chinatti  
Director of Planning & Development



# MILL SITES REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SPECIAL MEETING, Wednesday, September 27, 2017

SIGN IN SHEET (Voluntary)

NAME (Please Print)	EMAIL/PHONE	AFFILIATION
Megan Whitesell	mwhitesell@emergineering.com	CME Associates
Linda Tarmolowski		
Brian Yacino	brianyacino@aol.com	EDC
Ed Taylor	Edie.Taylor@Chastanet.net	
Deanne R. Lick	jlick68@aol.com	
John E. Biber	jack.biber@aol.com	
Marie Hoff	windy-nurse@mid.com	WTHNY
Jim Shope	JShope@aol.com	EDC / Fire Chief.
Wes HAYNES	weshaynes@outlook.com	CT TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
Marc SNEY		Trampon Residents
Quillie Rangherio		Thompson Island
Matthew Polster	captmatt_98@yahoo.com	Thompson Resident

MILL SITES REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SPECIAL MEETING, Wednesday, September 27, 2017

SIGN IN SHEET (Voluntary)

NAME (Please Print)	EMAIL/PHONE	AFFILIATION
Bob + Carolyn WERGÉ		
Bates Craver		
Brook Roney		
John B. Locky		
John Hall		
Dennis Hawkins	<del>606.29</del> @hotmail.com	
Brianna Delino	briannadelino@gmail.com	Congressman Courtney
Scott Anderson		
Salim LOFFERO	661.99@me.com	TRAILS committee
Randy Blockner		P + S
Kathy Donald Morin		
Donna Rondero		



MILL SITES REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SPECIAL MEETING, Wednesday, September 27, 2017

SIGN IN SHEET (Voluntary)

NAME (Please Print)	EMAIL/PHONE	AFFILIATION
Valentine Tammam	threelfoldresearch@gmail.com	resident
SUZANNE + DOUGLAS WAGG	SUZANNE66@gmail.com	resident
ALFRED D BONAVENTURA	AR22@rocketmail.com	RESIDENT
Ken Brissette	brissette948@charter.com	life long resident
Yvette Brissette	yvette3448@hotmail.com	" "
Mark Lewis	Mark.Lewis@ct.gov	CT Dept. of Energy Environmental Protection
JANET BLANCHETTE		
Missy Derachens	mvdl86@charter.net	resident
Mike A. LaJeunesse	MikeinThompson@charter.net	resident
Tyana Pau-Cetin	tyanapenn@hotmail.com	united member EDC/Brunswick
Charlene Langlois	Elcanglois@hotmail.com	resident & mill owner

Conceptual Development of River Mill, 929 Riverside Drive,  
Public Meeting September 27, 2017

J. BLANCHETTE  
INTRODUC-  
TION

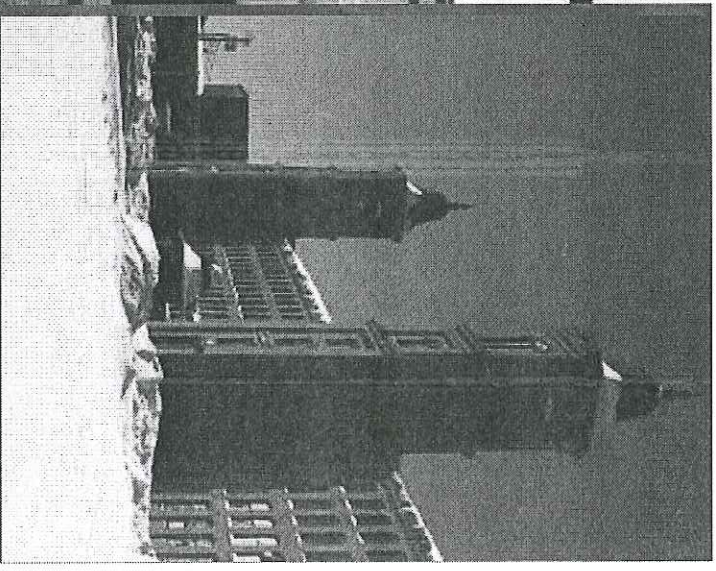
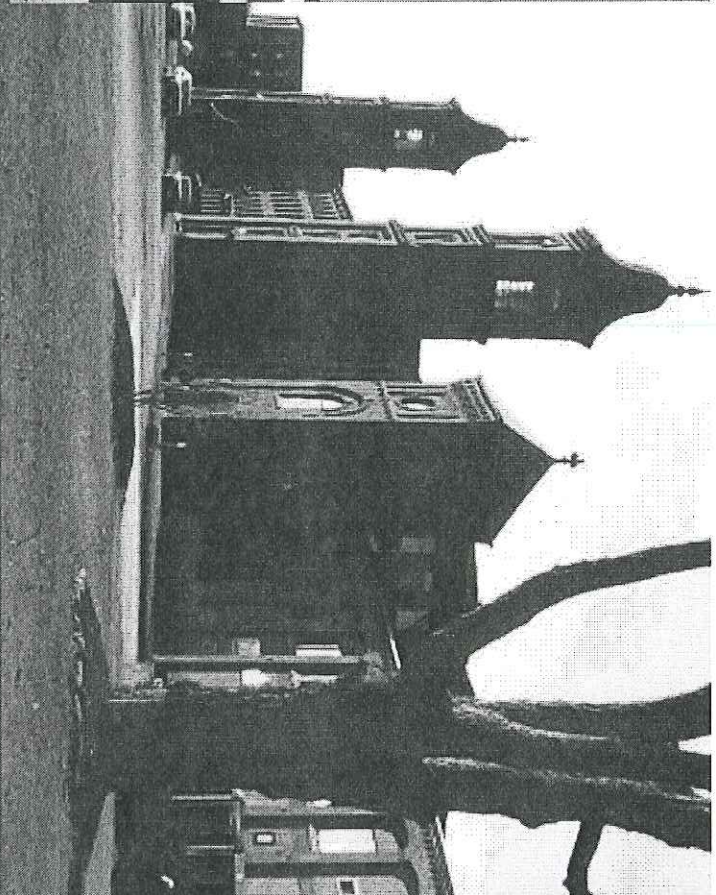
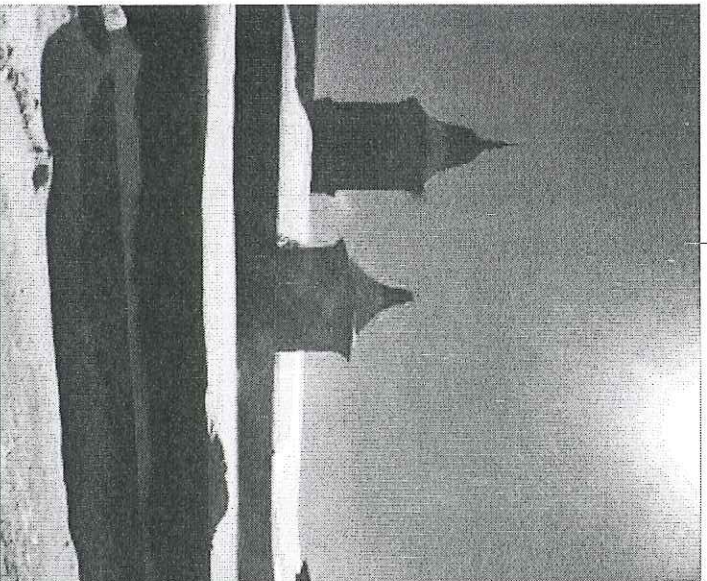
- I. Thank you for coming to this important meeting regarding River Mill, one of the most significant mills in New England and most iconic structure in Town
- II. Introductions – will introduce speakers at end – WAIT UNTIL THE END
  - a. Introduce myself as chairperson of Mill Sites Redevelopment Advisory Committee
  - b. Staff
- III. History of Project
  - a. 3<sup>rd</sup> public information meeting – many familiar faces but would still like to summarize events regarding the future of the mill
  - b. Fall of 2016 Town became aware of potential contractor seeking to demolish the oldest and most visually striking section of the mill
  - c. In January held a well attended public information meeting where the community consensus was to encourage redevelopment of the mill instead of demolition.
  - d. In March 2017 the paperwork was recorded at town hall where the owner granted rights for 5 years to a third party to “deconstruct” the mill
  - e. Town reached out to CT Trust for Historic Preservation. In April they wrote a letter opposing demolition to the State Historic Preservation Office SHPO and requesting CEPA action.
  - f. CEPA is the CT Environmental Protection ACT. Has a provision stating that a National Register building can't be demolished or destroyed if there are feasible and prudent alternatives.
  - g. June 1 public info meeting - Todd Levine from SHPO explained that there was a CEPA intervention process where the state could request the attorney general place a temporary injunction to stop demolition until an agreement could be made to save it.
  - h. At this time the state has conducted the hearing to discuss the injunction hasn't taken place yet but the company that intends to perform the demolition sent a letter stating that wouldn't demolish or salvage the building until after October 4, 2017. Rescheduled?



IV. Statement of purpose

- a. There is overwhelming support for preservation and redevelopment vs demolition. BOS and MSRAC adopted resolutions opposing demolition for the purpose of materials salvage and focusing on redevelopment and revitalization. CT Trust, SHPO and Last Green Valley oppose demolition.  
>800 ??? people have signed a petition calling for the Rehabilitation and re-use of the Mill.
- b. The more community support for working with owner to preserve this historic structure the more likely it is to attract potential developers and financing.
- c. Other state agencies such as DECD and CT DEEP have made themselves available and have been describing various state assistance programs for developers to access to assist in redevelopment of brownfields, historic structures, tax credits, etc.
- d. What the Mill needs is a feasible and prudent viable plan for redevelopment. The project needs some concrete ideas and development alternatives and a developer with vision and financing to bring dreams into reality.
- e. We are excited tonight to introduce John Gumpert from Camden Partners who has a conceptual development presentation for the Mill.





WHY IT'S THE RIGHT TIME TO  
SAVE AND REUSE THE RIVER MILL

Wayne Bugden, LEP, CME Associates, Inc.





**SAVING THE RIVER MILL:  
IMPORTANT for THE TOWN OF THOMPSON and the REGION**

- 1. What Happens When Mills Are Not Saved**
- 2. It's the Right Time to Save and Reuse  
Thompson's River Mill...**  
**.... a Few Advantages**



## InterRoyal Mill, Plainfield, CT, 2004





## InterRoyal Mill, Plainfield, CT, 2005



### Public money spent so far:

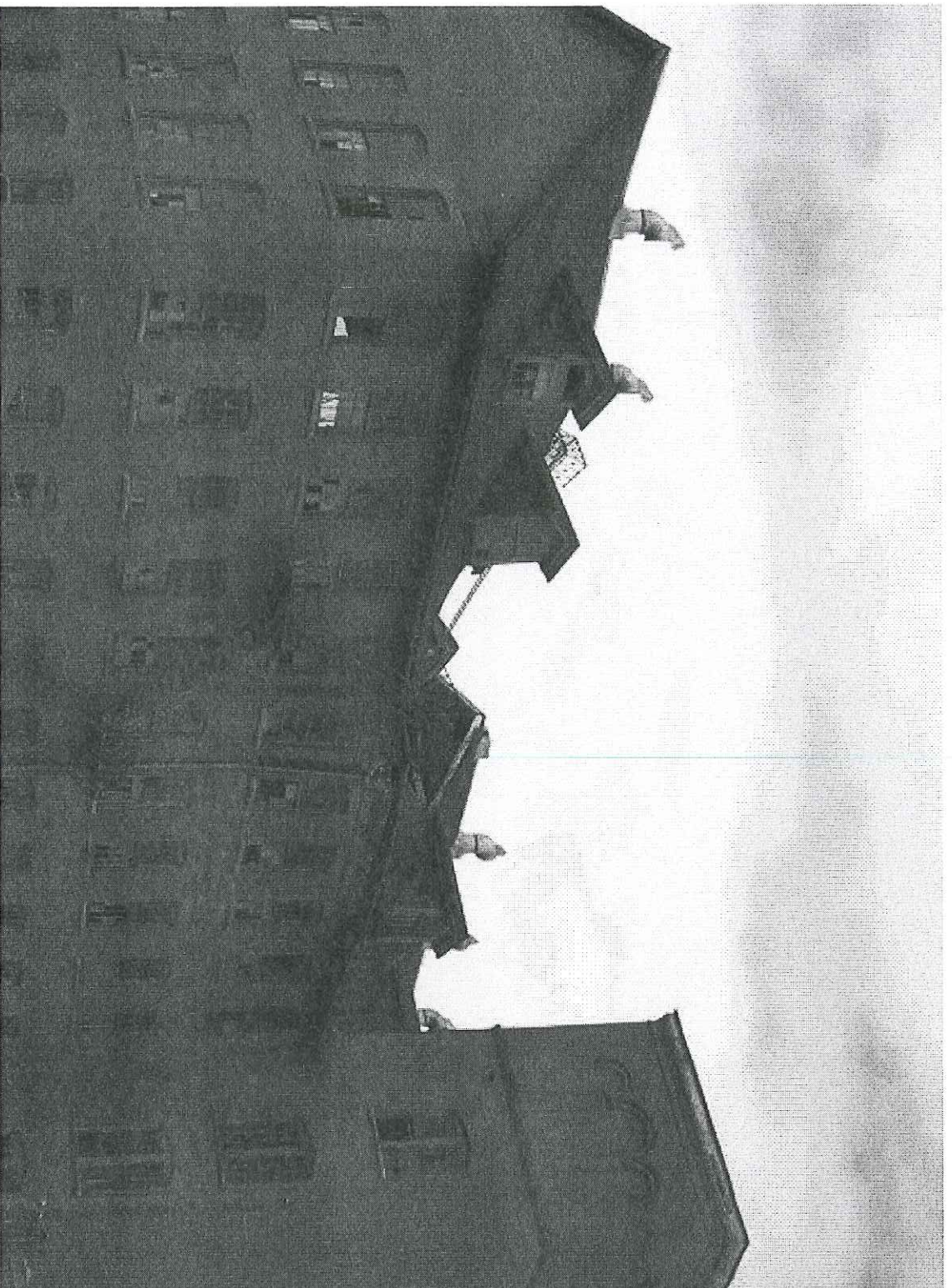
- \$1.3 million in chemical cleanup before the fire (EPA)
- \$2.0 million cleanup from fire (EPA)
- \$284,000 Taxes Owed \$800,000 back taxes/interest owed
- \$200,000 ongoing federal brownfields studies



InterRoyal Mill, Plainfield, CT  
12 Years After Fire - \$3.5 Million spent to date; no soil or  
groundwater cleanup yet



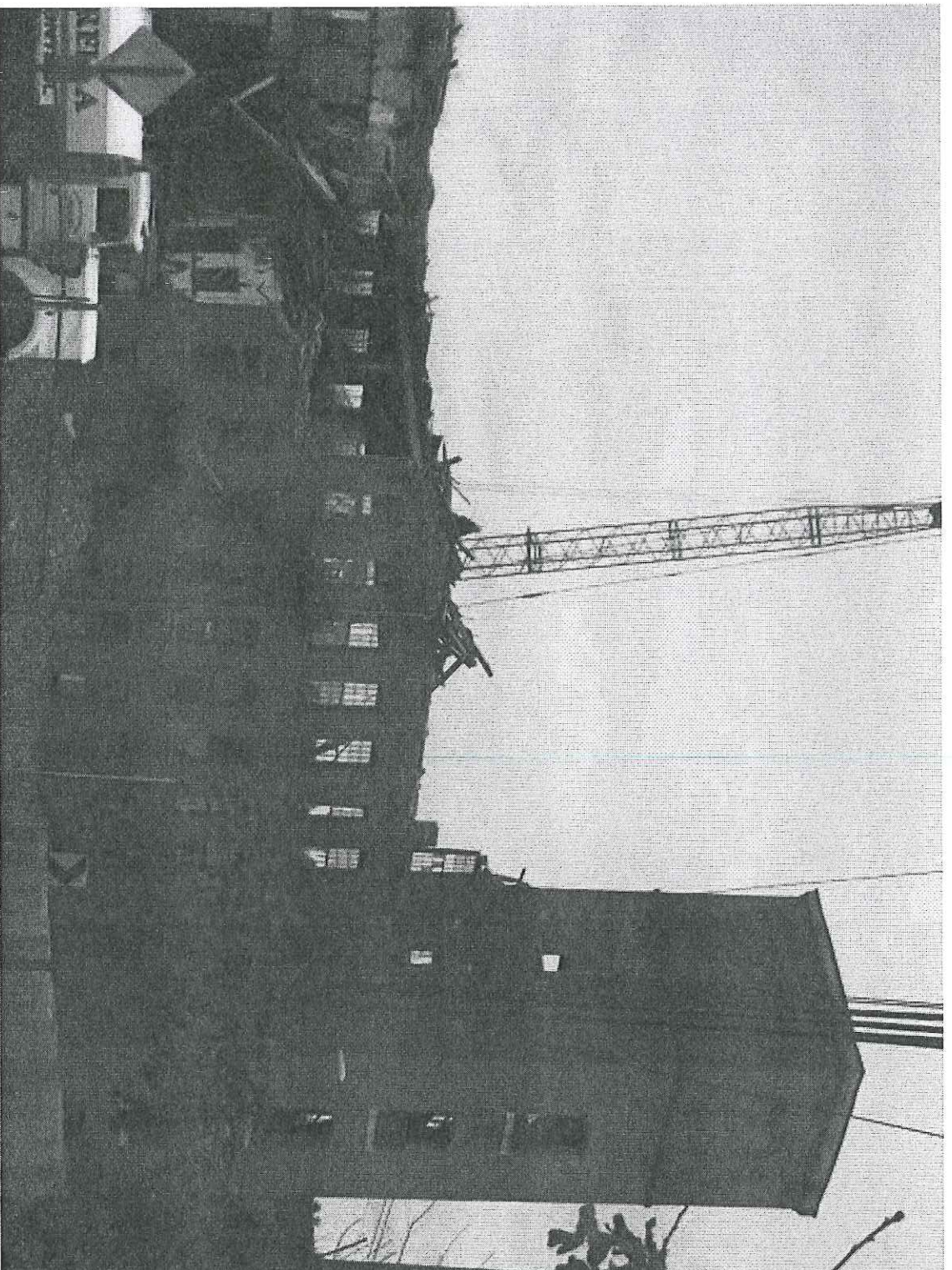




Dayville, CT  
2010



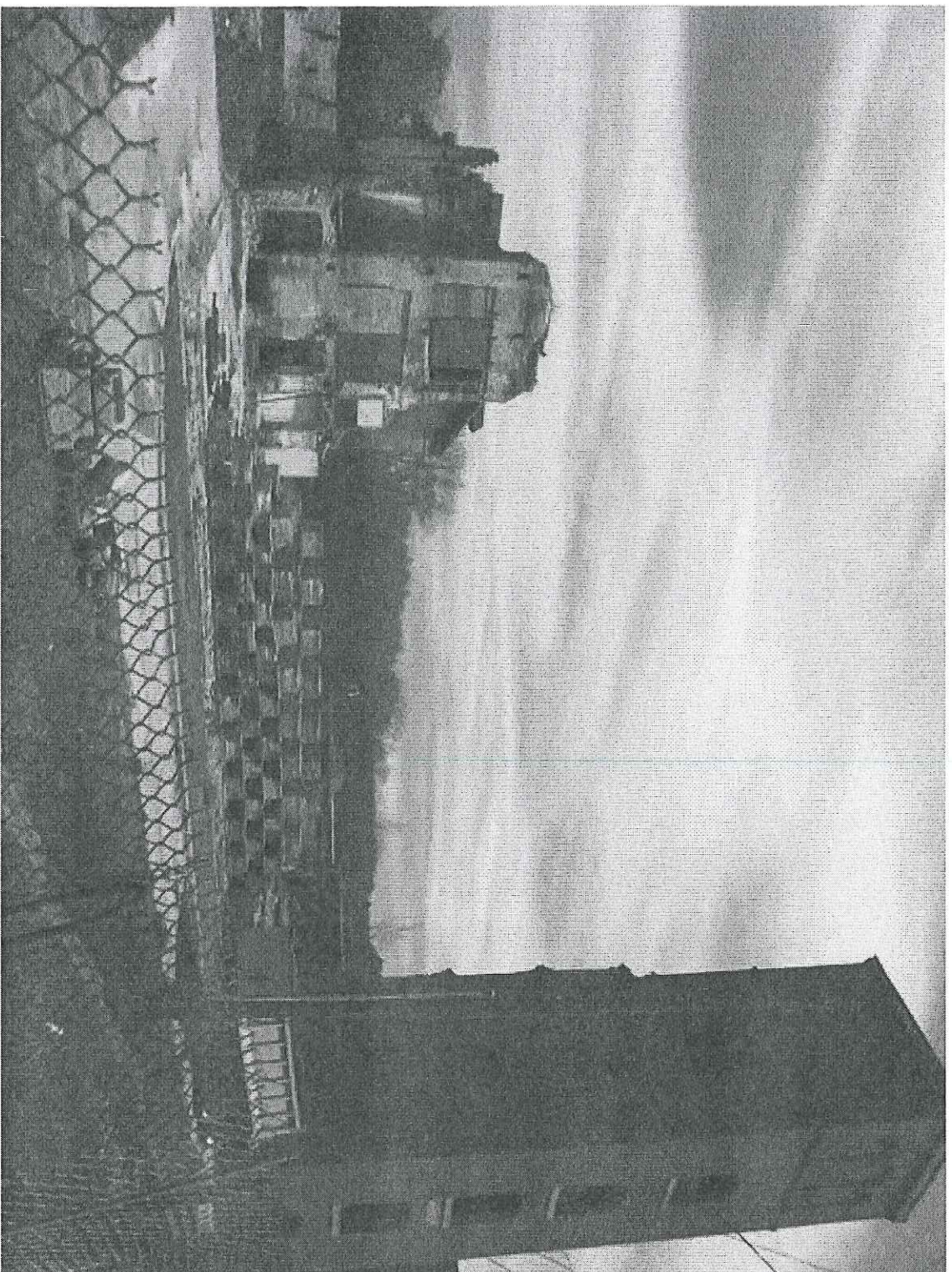




Dayville, CT  
2012



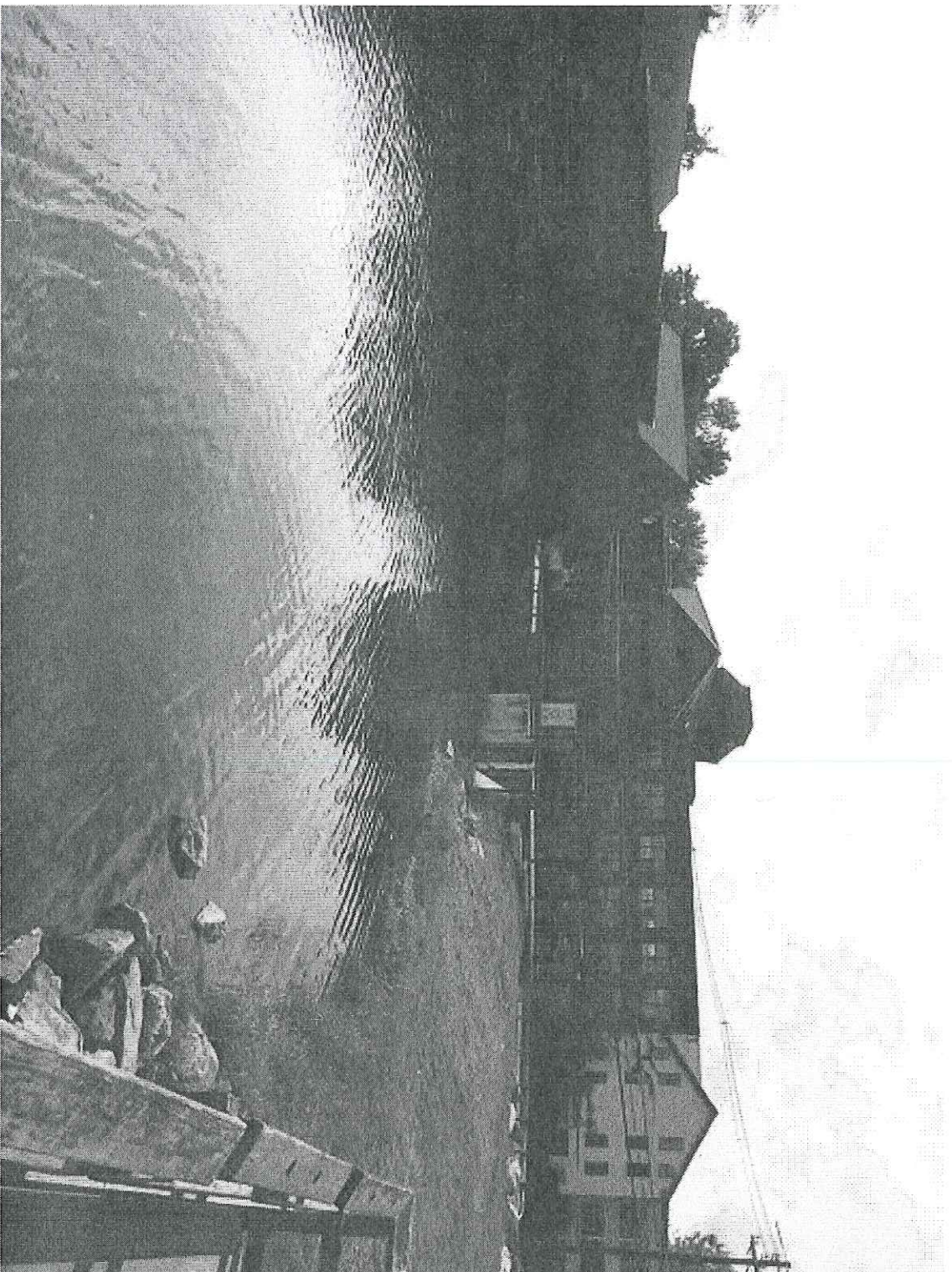




Dayville, CT  
2015

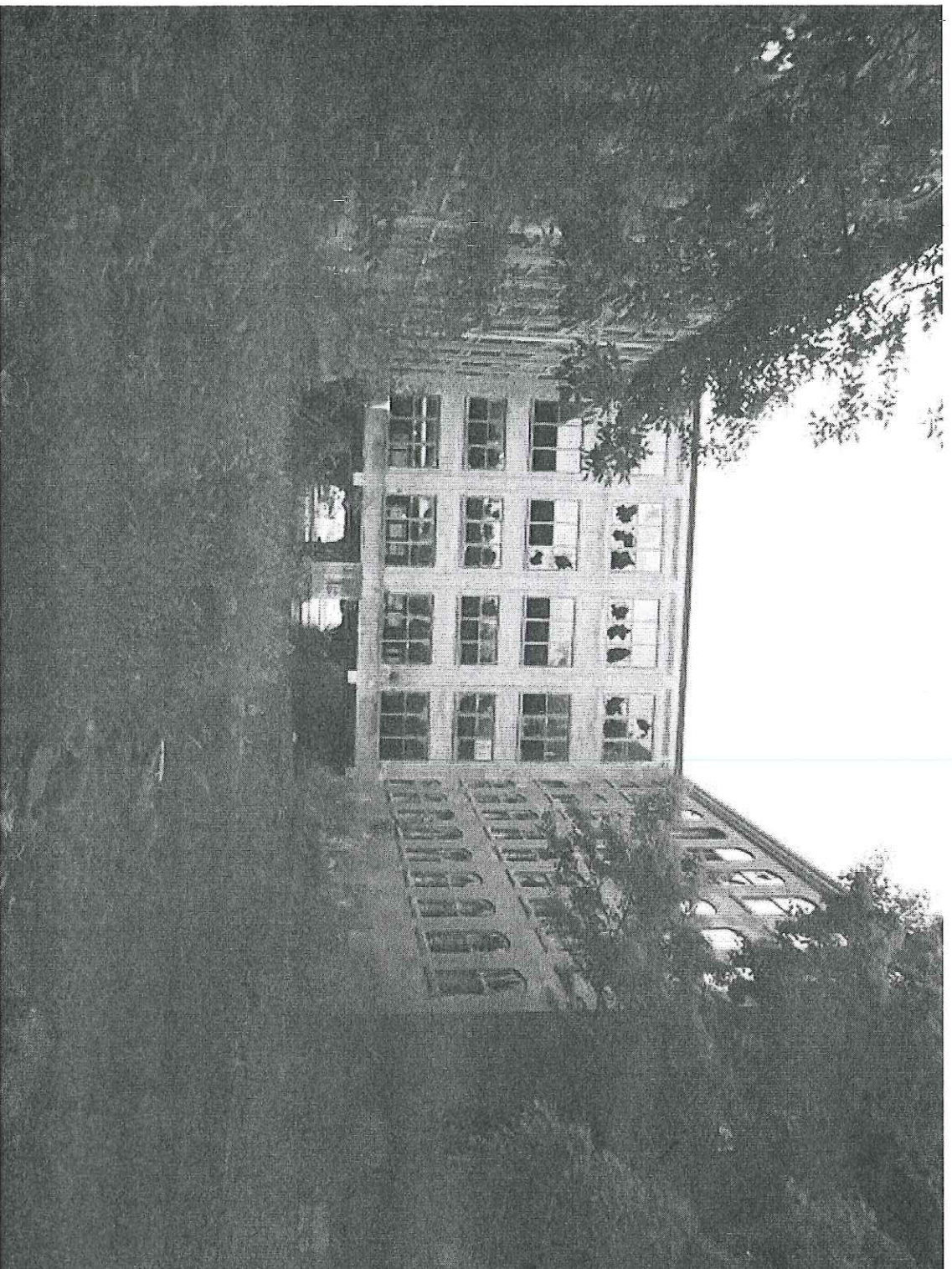






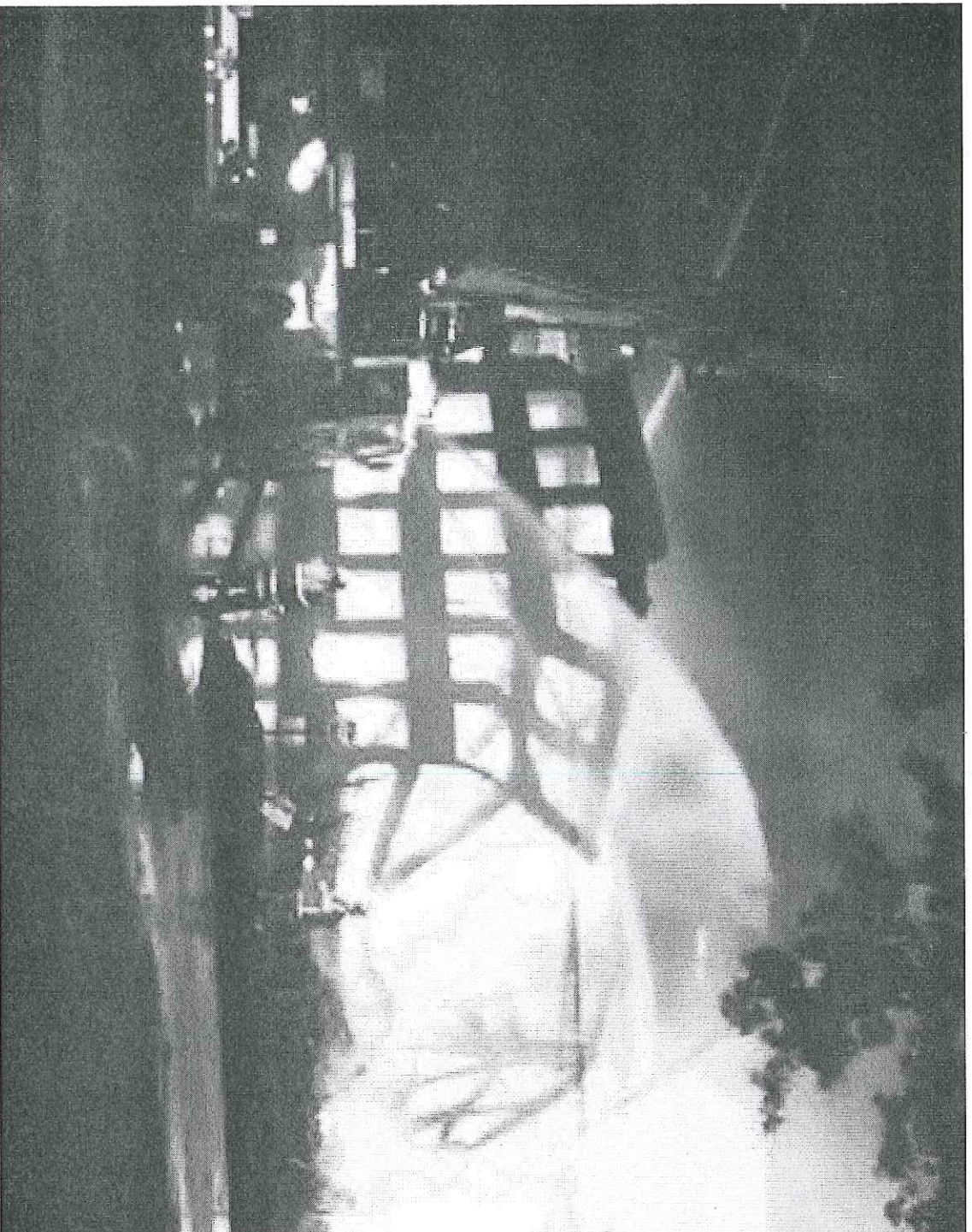
Somersville, CT  
June, 2012





Somersville, CT  
June, 2012



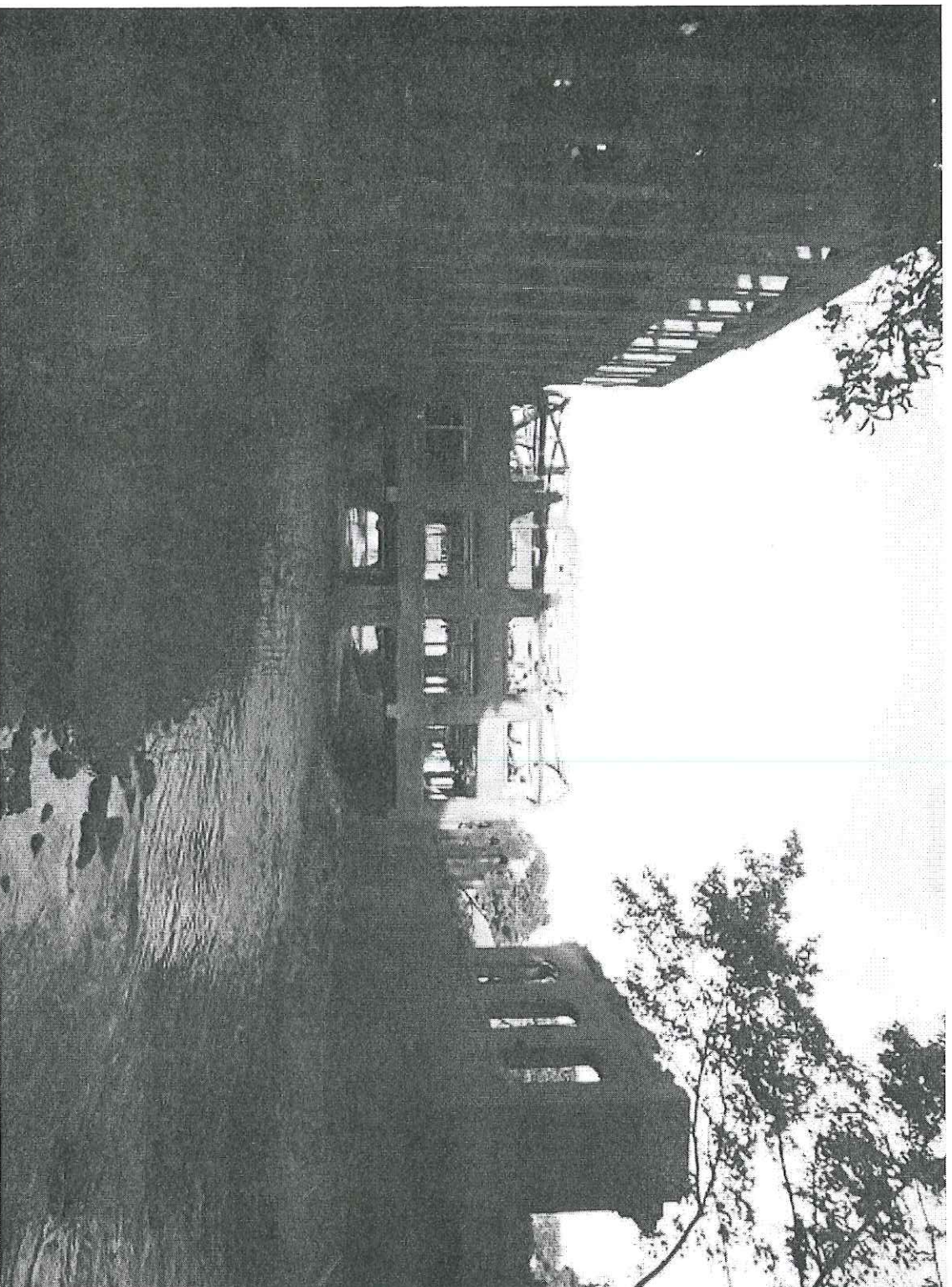


Somersville, CT  
June, 2012





Somersville, CT  
June, 2012

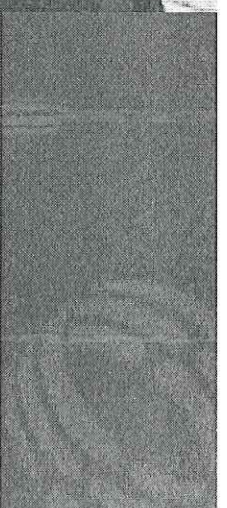






Somersville, CT  
June, 2012



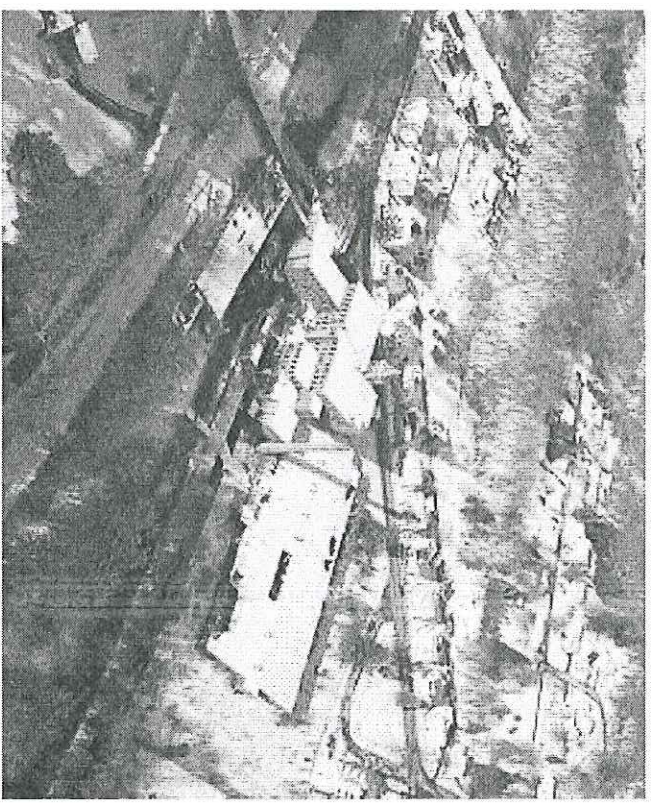
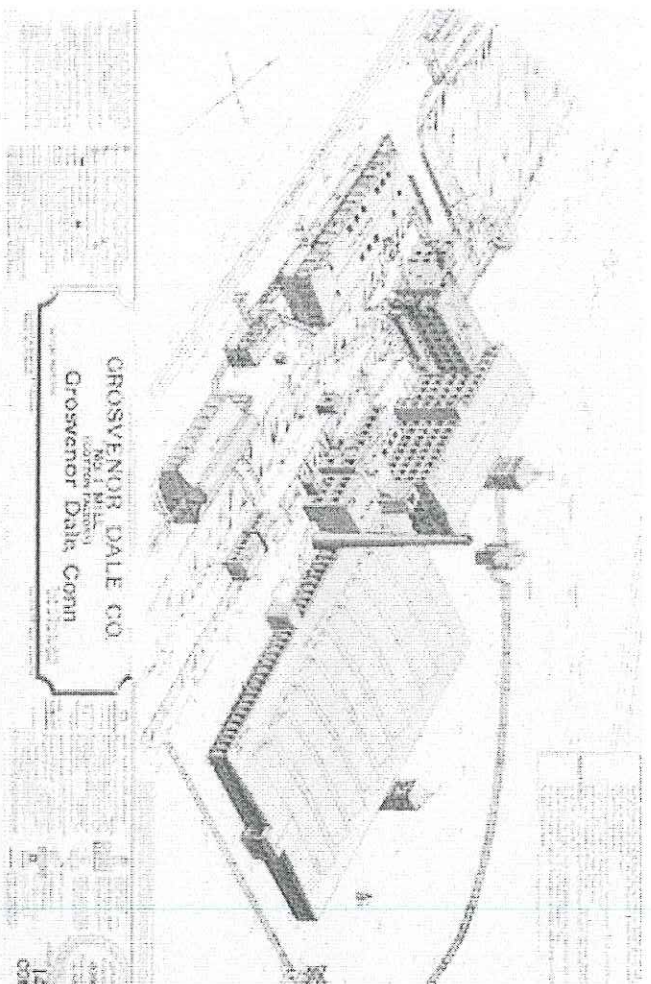


Somersville, CT  
January, 2017  
\$2Million State  
Funds Being  
Used to Clean  
Up Vacant Lot



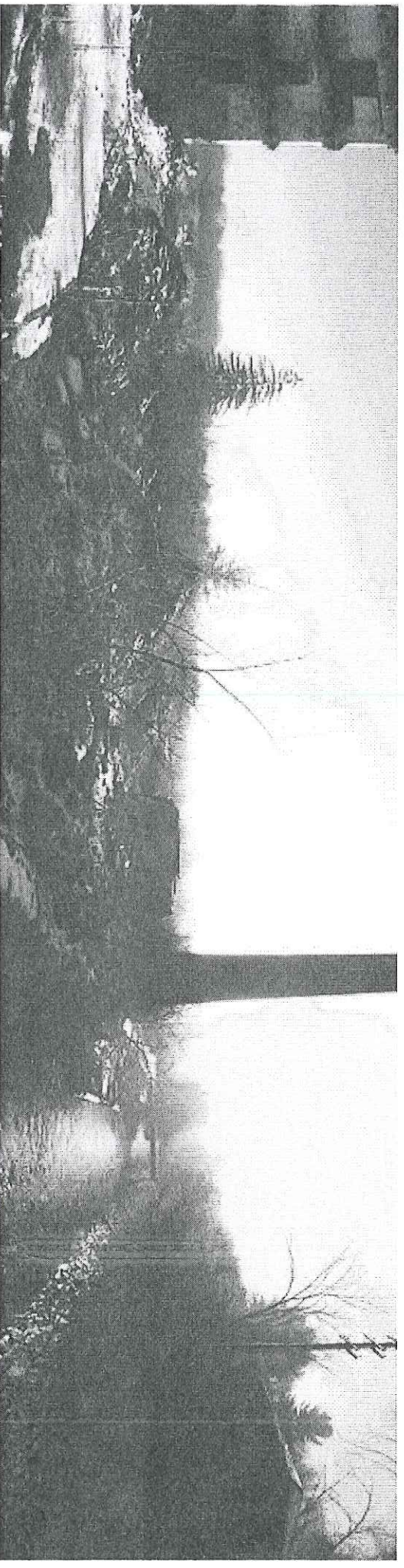


# Former Belding Mill, Grosvenordale, CT, 1908 and 2000





Former Belding Mill,  
Grosvenordale, CT, 2016



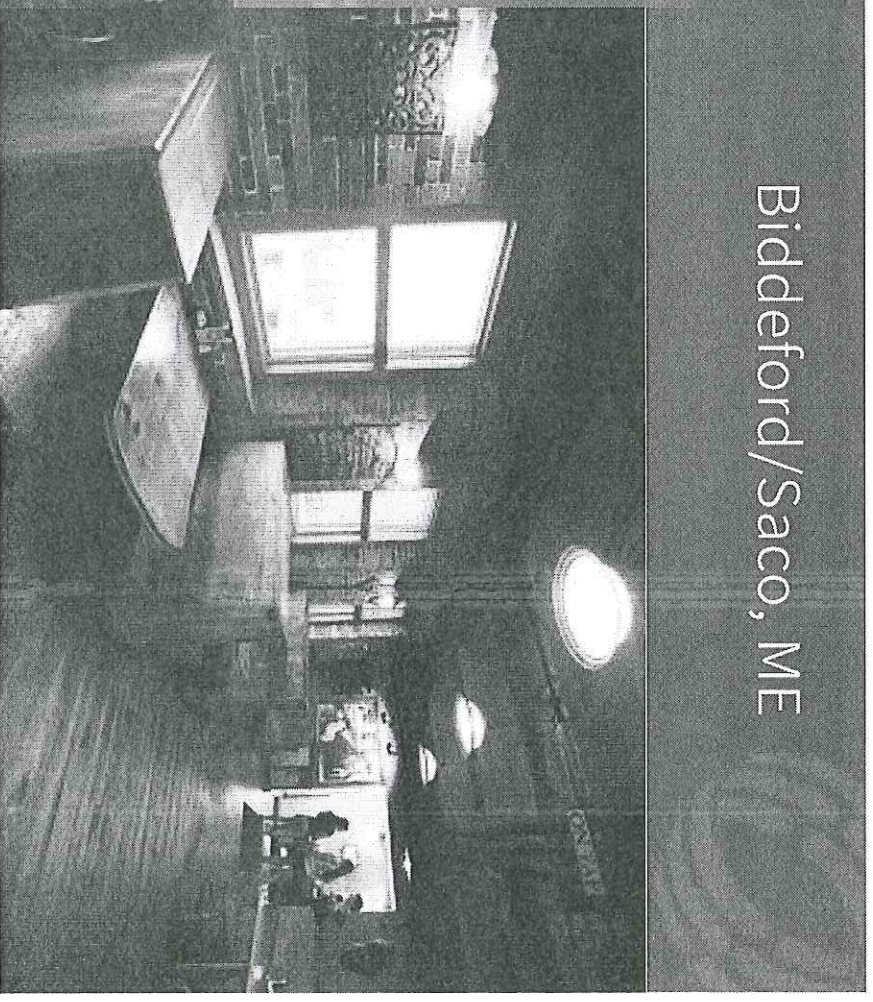


But it Doesn't Have to Happen:

With Some Dedication and Hard Work...



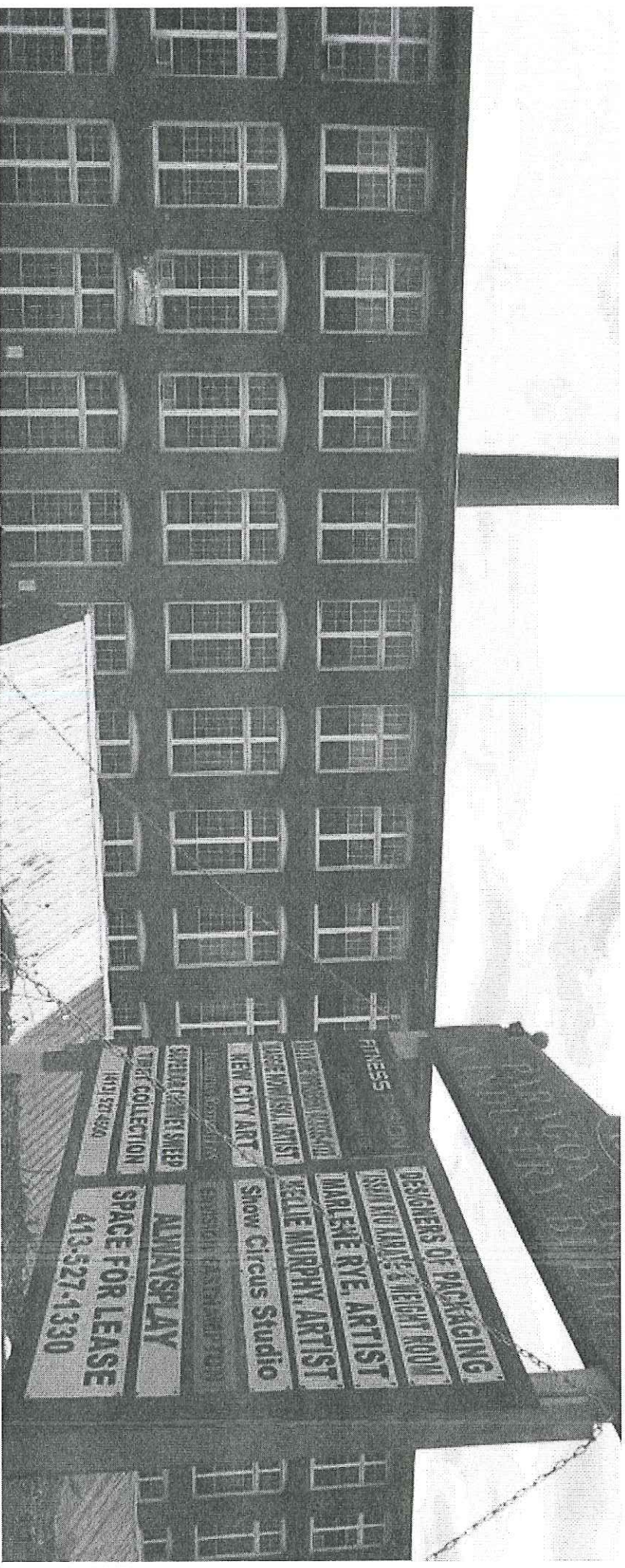




Bidddeford/Saco, ME

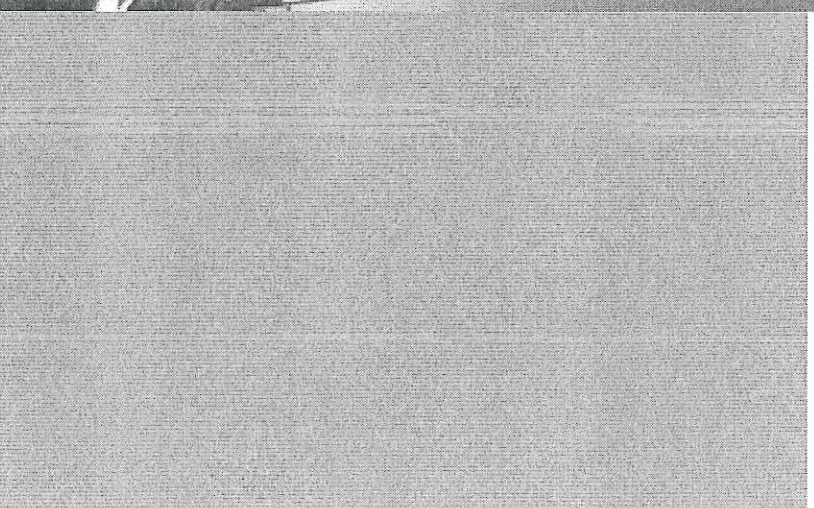
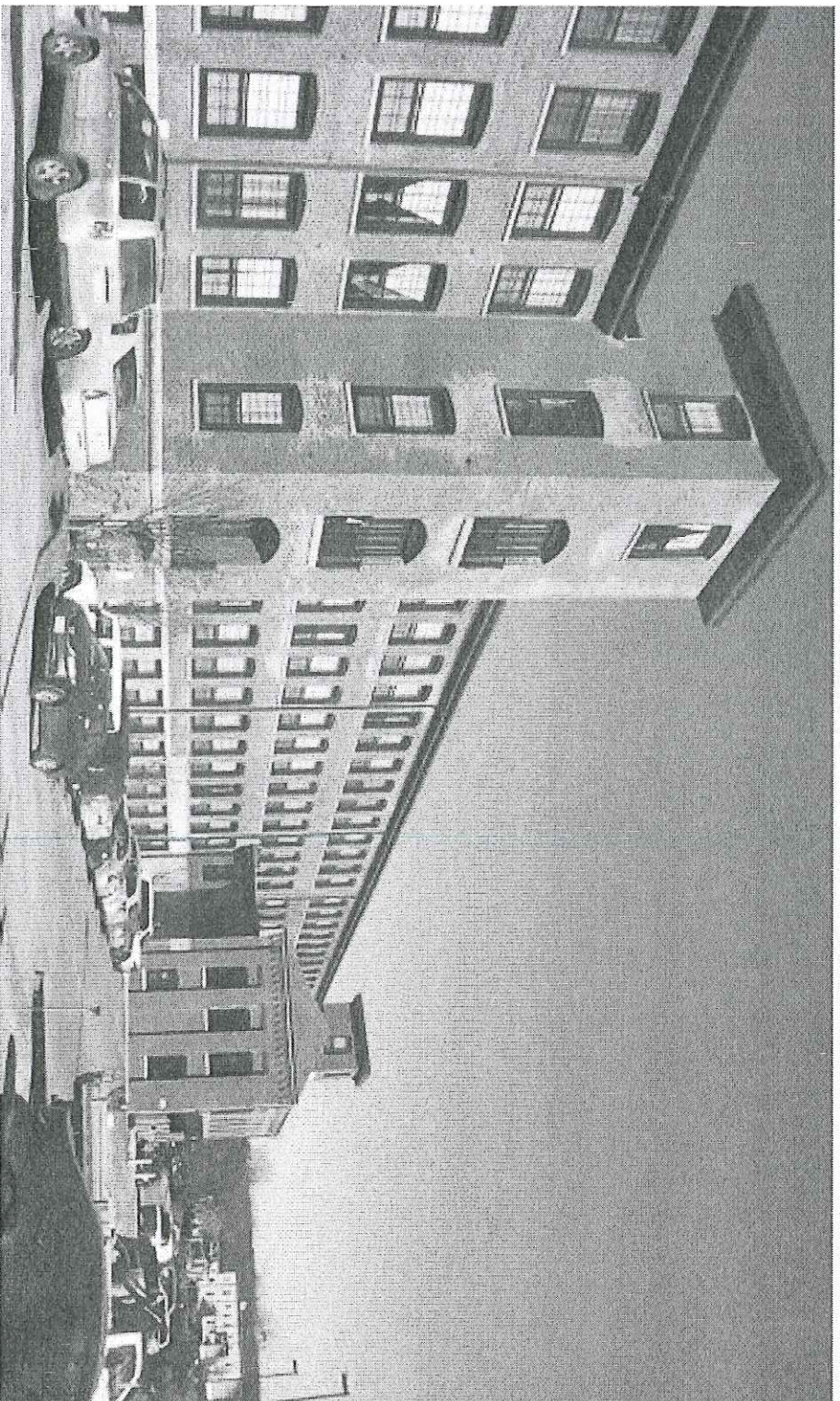


# Easthampton, MA



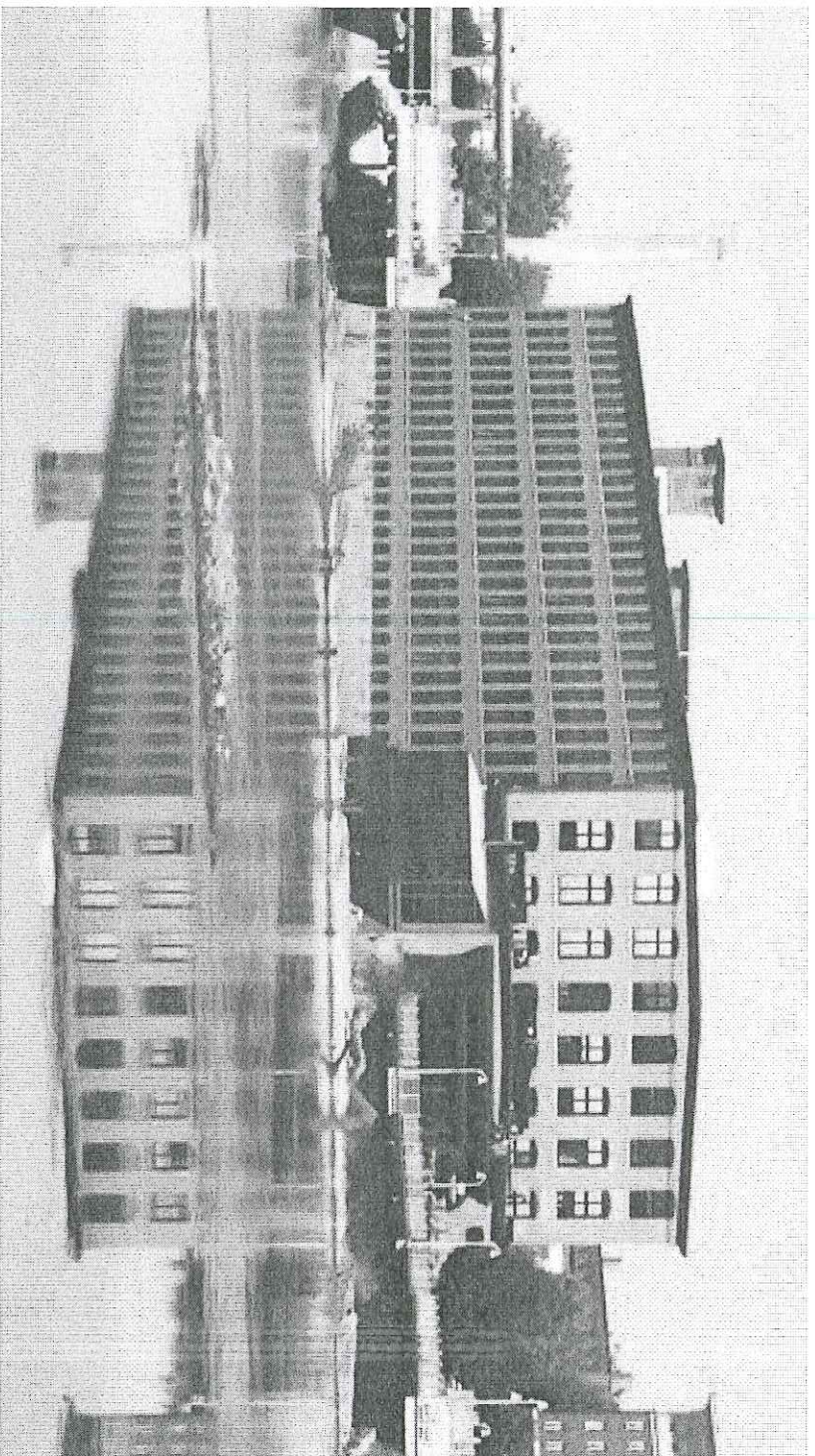


# Fitchburg, MA



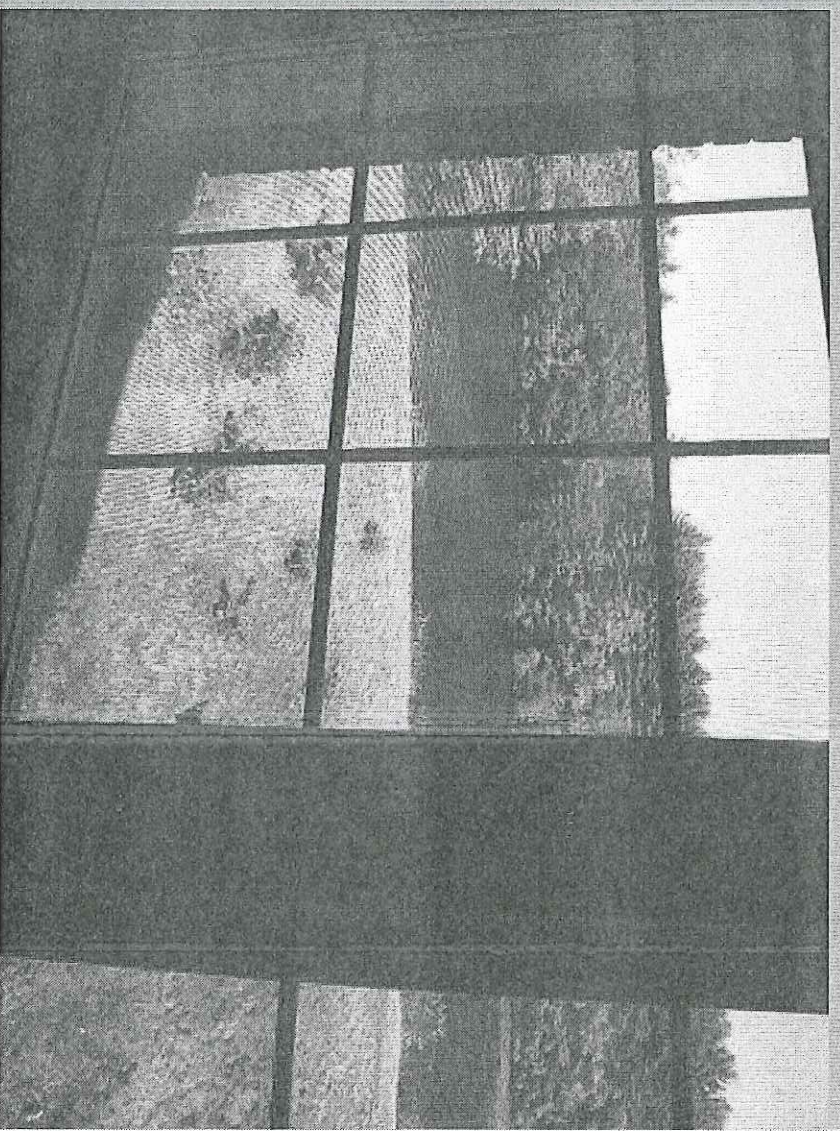


## Winooski, VT





The Mill Works  
Wilmington, CT







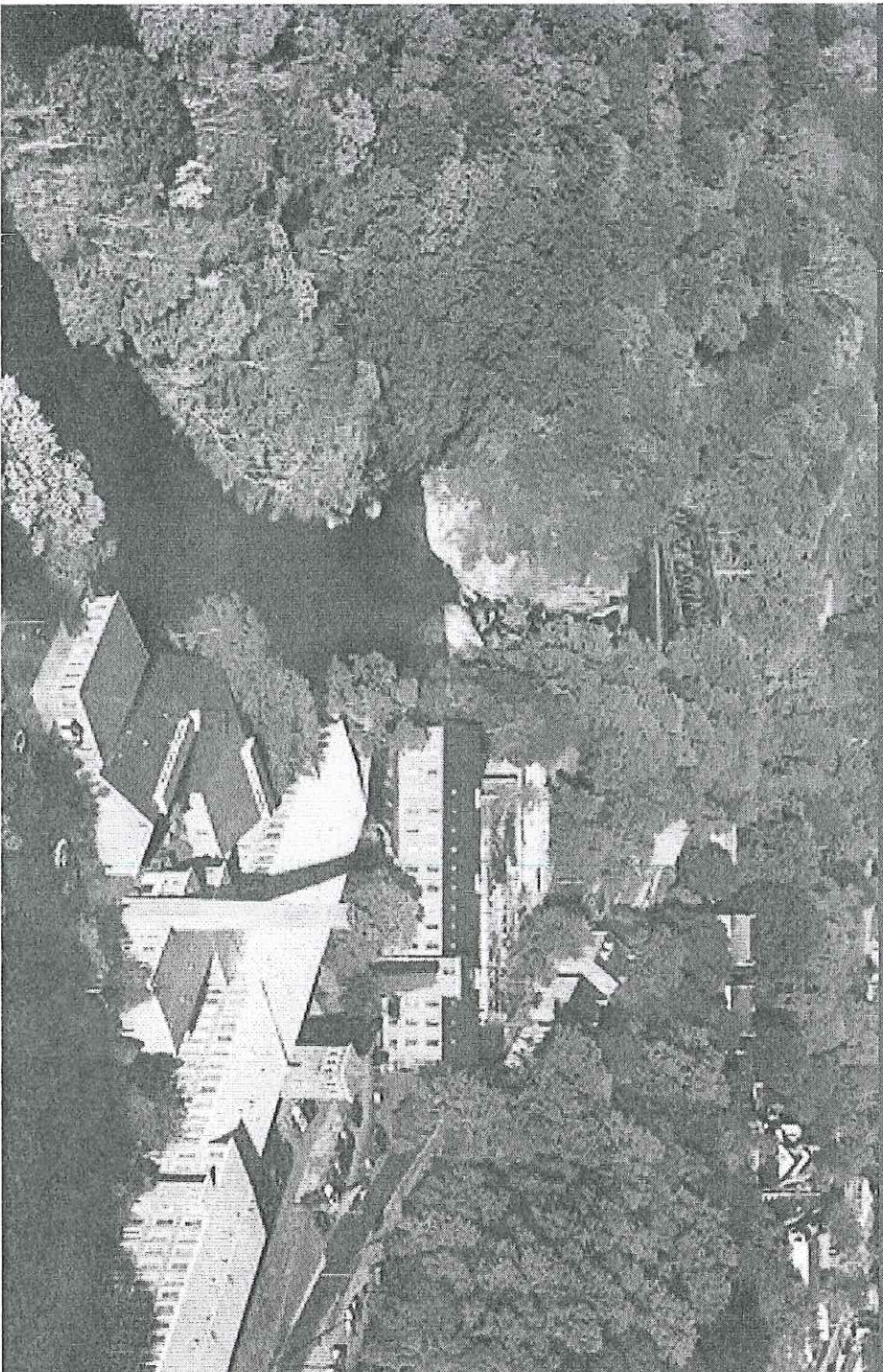
Norwich, CT

Former Thermos  
Factory,  
Integrated Day  
Charter School  
Norwich, CT

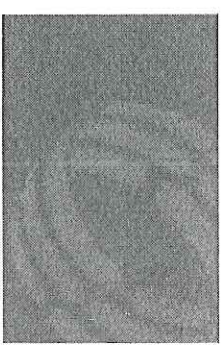




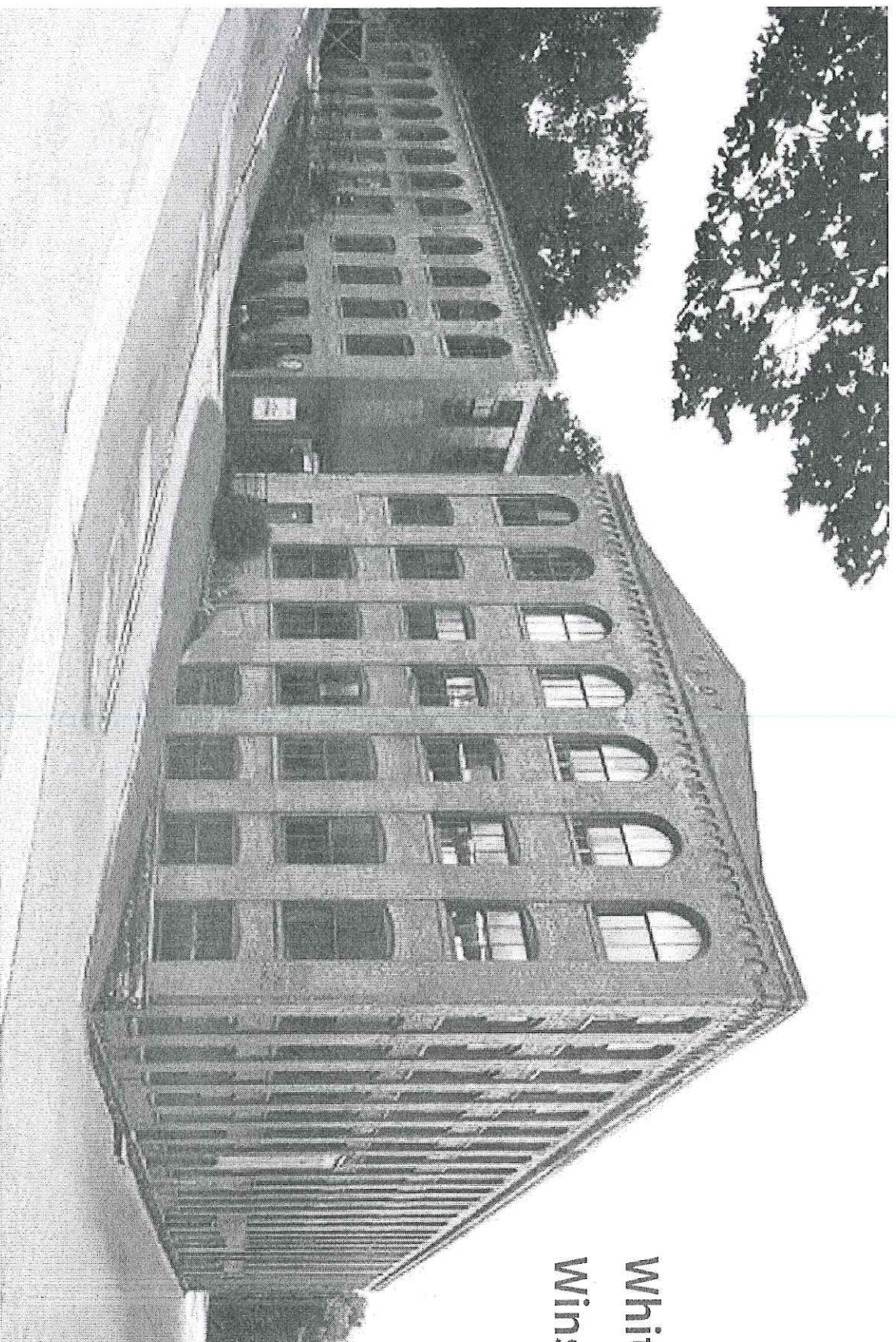
# Norwich, CT





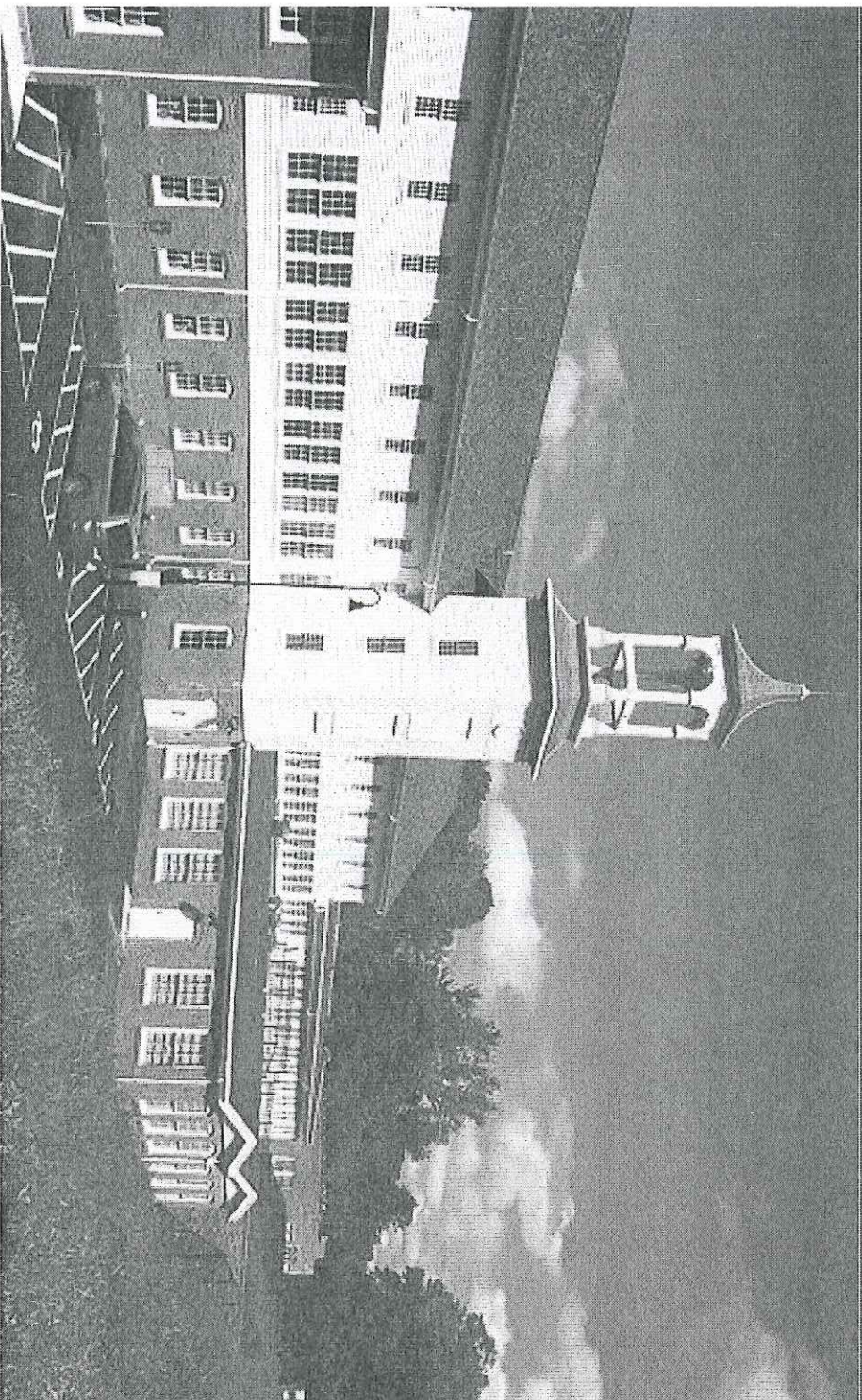


Whiting Mills  
Winsted, CT



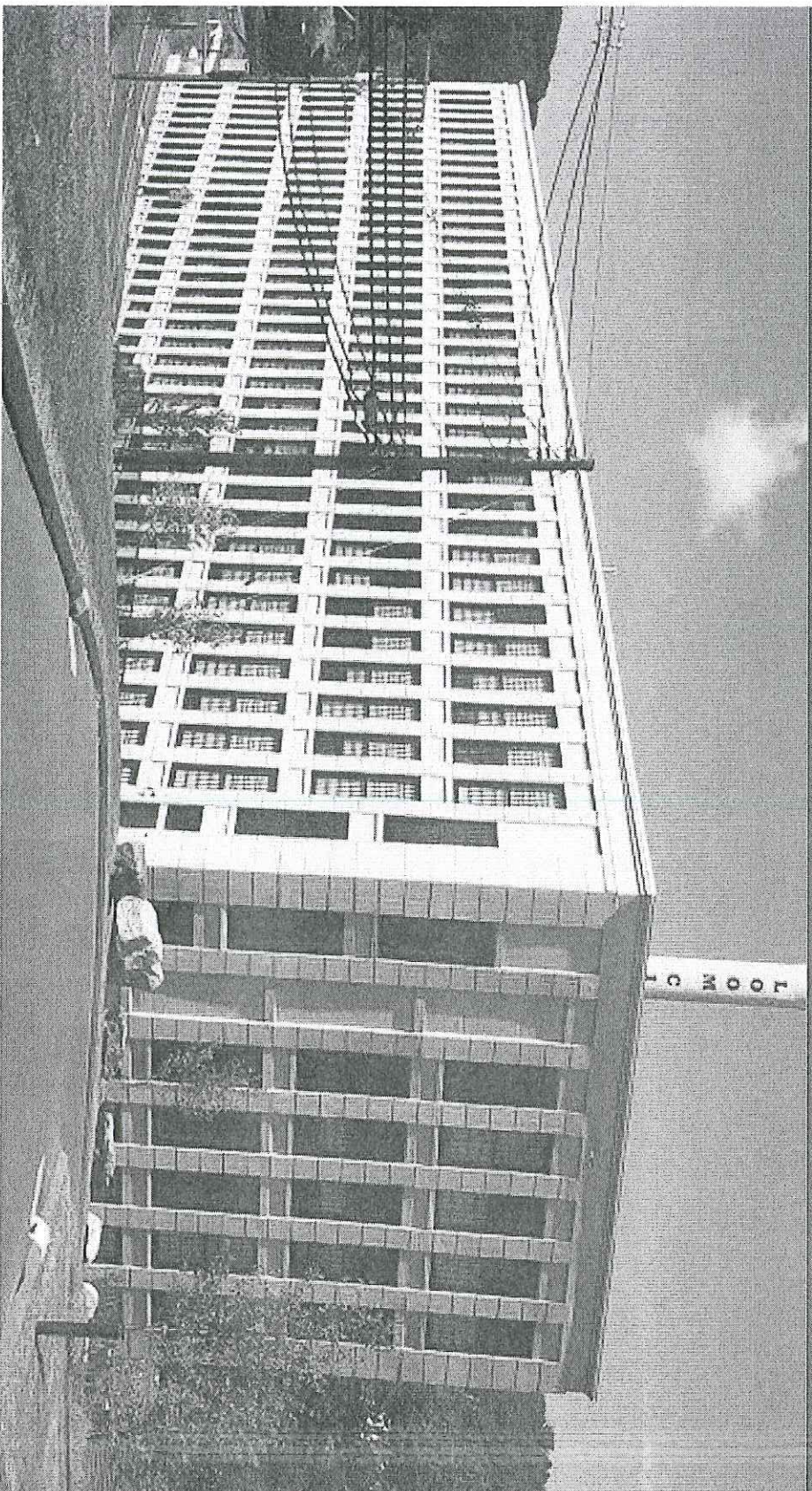


# Vernon, CT

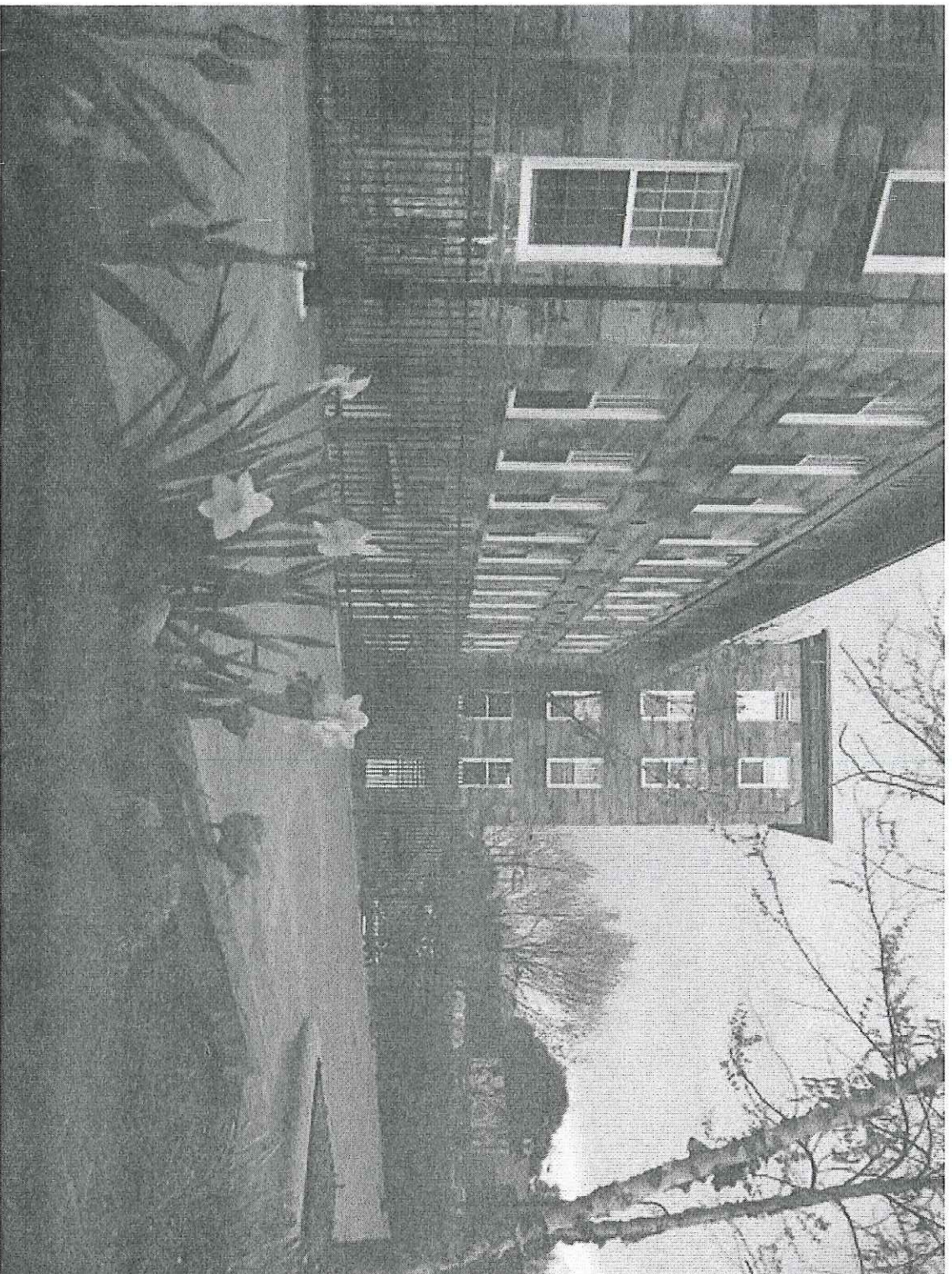




# Rockville, CT







Former American  
Thread Mill  
Willimantic, CT





## The Effort to Save the River Mill Has Advantages

- It's in Decent Shape – Structurally Sound
- Environmental/Regulatory Issues Are Relatively Minor
- In the Center of Town, Close to Amenities and Public Transit
- It's not in a Floodplain
- It has Available Space for Parking
- Robust Funding Assistance Programs are Available
- It has Strong Advocates
  - Local – Well-Organized and Vigilant Grassroots Effort
  - State – DECD, CT Trust for Historic Preservation, DEEP
  - Experienced Private Investors Think it's a Good Investment



CMEF





NORTH GROSVENORDALE MILL  
THOMPSON, CT  
CAMDEN MANAGEMENT PARTNERS  
JOHN GUMPERT  
09.21.2017

AREA PLAN NTS  
STEVENS WILKINSON

*Revised 11/15/2017  
John Gumpert  
Camden Management Partners*





**S&W**  
ARCHITECTURE  
ENGINEERING  
INTERIORS

NORTH GROSVENORDALE MILL  
THOMPSON, CT  
CAMDEN MANAGEMENT PARTNERS  
JOHN GUMPERT  
09.21.2017

GREEN TO NORTH  
GROSVENORDALE POND PARK

STEVENS WILKINSON