

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	CHI.K
Historic Name:	Fisk Rubber Company Complex
Common Name:	U. S. Rubber Company - Uniroyal
Address:	
City/Town:	Chicopee
Village/Neighborhood:	Chicopee Falls
Local No:	
Year Constructed:	
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	
Use(s):	Industrial Complex or District
Significance:	Architecture; Industry
Area(s):	
Designation(s):	
Building Materials(s):	



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

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CH1.K

Form numbers in this area	Area letter
K	288A



2108

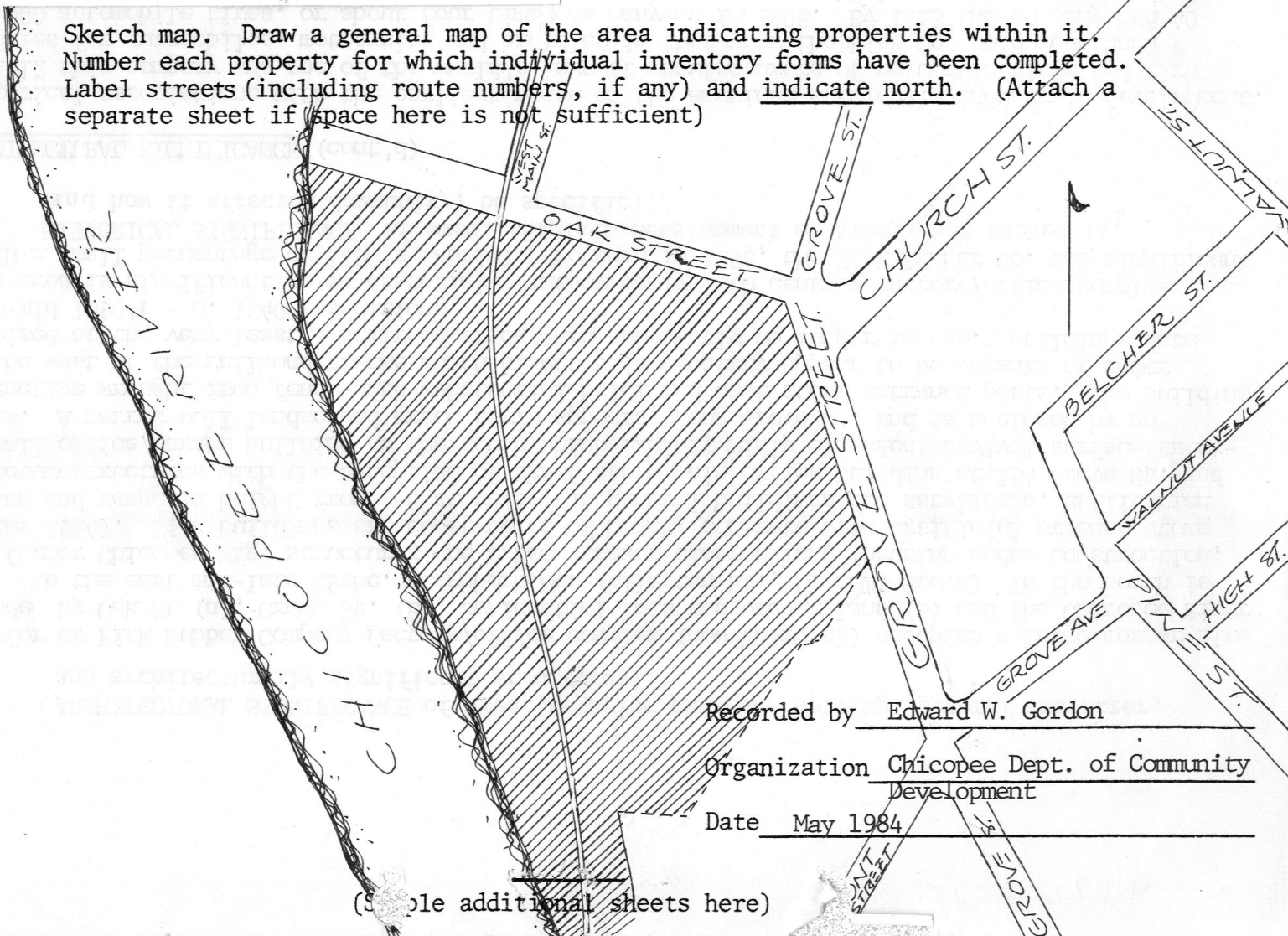
Town Chicopee, MA

Name of area (if any) Fisk Rubber Co.

Complex _____

General date or period 1895-1940

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)



Recorded by Edward W. Gordon

Organization Chicopee Dept. of Community Development

Date May 1984

(Sample additional sheets here)

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

The former Fisk Rubber Company factory/office complex (now Uniroyal) occupies a large corner site bounded by Oak St (n), Grove St. (E), residential lots and vacant land (S) and the Chicopee River (W). To the east mid-late 19thc. neighborhoods (Ellerton St., Lincoln Grove) To the north is the former Chicopee Mfg. structurer and urban renewal-cleared land (housing under construction, winter 1984). Fisk buildings are constructed of brick, concrete with artificial or cast-stone facing and range in height from 1-6 storeis. In general buildings are astylistic, utilitarian structurestructures with the exception of the 6 story main office building at 154 Grove St. and a small office/garage building to the south which exhibit midly classical revival surface treatments. A narrow well landscaped green strip appears along Grove St. and is enclosed by an attractive wrought iron fence with substantial brick and cast stone entrance posts. The building to the west of the railroad tracks which bisect this property appear to be vacant, or under utilized at the very least - railroad tracks are apparently no longer in use. Buildings date from mid 1890's - c. 1940's additions.

This area is significant as an essentially intact early 20th century factory/office complex (with a small percentage of 1890's fabric). Founded in 1898, the Fisk Rubber Co. has significant HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Explain development of area, what caused it, and how it affected community; be specific).

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (cont'd)

historical associations with the earliest phase of the American Automobile industry's development. By 1912 this company was one of the world's largest manufacturers of pneumatic tires and tire sundries for automobiles, motorcycles and bicycles in that year the Fisk Co. sold more than 221,000 automobile tires, or about four times as many as in 1908. By 1913 the company had 40 branch stores throughout the U.S. By the 1920's this plant, was the largest in Chicopee (not to mention the largest tax payer) in the city), employing over 4,000 people. By 1930 this site encompassed 31 buildings, having a total floor space of 40 acres and covering ground area of 21 acres.

The 1857 Atlas indicates that the Fisk site was owned by the Chicopee Mfg. Co. and was bisected by a branch of the B & M railroad (which lined Boston and Springfield area beginning in 1839). During the 1870's the house lots of T.C. Page and E. Blake were located here. In June 1895 the story of this property as an industrial site began in that year the Spaulding and Pepper Co. opened a small plant for manufacturing bicycle tires and small rubber goods on the section of the property which borders Oak St., the railroad tracks and the Chicopee River. The Atlas of 1896 indicates that an L-shaped "Machine Shop and Calender Room" building occupied the site of the building labeled #2-6 on the 1915 Atlas --apparently this mid 1890's building has been incorporated as part of the present building on this site. (See Form #). In addition a 90' brick chimney and a wood storage shed were here in 1896. To the east of the tracks was the lumber yard and house of D.B. Griggs and Son a small frame office bordered Oak St. (mid point) and long wooden carpenters and lumber shops were located here. No Grigg's related structure have survived.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- Maps/Atlases - 1857, 1879, 1894, 1896, 1912
- 1915 Sanborn Atlas
- Chicopee Library Files "Industry"
- Springfield Library Photo File
- Massachusetts Industries - Ora Stone, 1930, p. 633
- Western New England Magazine 1913 Vol. 2
- History of Chicopee (scrapbook) article by Bessie Warner Kerr

Original yellow form: Eligibility file
Copies: Inventory form
Town file(w/corresp.)
Macris
NR director _____

CHL. K

Community: Chicopee

MHC OPINION: ELIGIBILITY FOR NATIONAL REGISTER

Date Received: Date Due:

Date Reviewed: 5/17/2000

Type: ☐ Individual

☒ District (Attach map indicating boundaries)

288

Name: Fisk Rubber Company (aka US Rubber Company; aka Uniroyal)

Inventory Form: CHI.553-556, K

Address: 154 Grove Street (also Grove and Oak sts)

Requested by: TSD

Action: ☐ Honor ☐ ITC ☐ Grant ☒ R & C ☐ Other:

Agency:

Staff in charge of Review: TD

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

☒ Eligible - possibly
☐ Eligible, also in district
☐ Eligible only in district
☐ Ineligible
☐ More information needed

DISTRICTS

☒ Eligible
☐ Ineligible
☐ More information needed

CRITERIA: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

LEVEL: ☒ Local ☐ State ☐ National

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE by Michael Steinitz

The former Fisk Rubber Company complex of several industrial buildings is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C at the local level as a representative industrial complex retaining examples of industrial architecture representing several eras of industrial building technology from the late 19th through mid-20th centuries, and as a national producer of tires and the largest industry in Chicopee in its peak era of the second quarter of the 20th century. Rubber manufacturing on this site began with a small bicycle tire plant established by Spaulding and Pepper in 1895. Fisk Rubber took over in 1898; by 1912 it was one of the world's largest manufacturers of pneumatic tires for automobiles, motorcycles and bicycles. By the 1920s it was the largest industry in Fitchburg. By 1930 the complex included 31 buildings on 21 acres. The Fisk "Time to Re-tire Boy" was a nationally-known trademark. In 1940 Fisk was bought by United States Rubber and the complex continued to expand for war production in the 1940s. The earliest core of building of the complex are at the northwest corner of the site along Oak Street, consisting of 3 and 4 story brick buildings with crenellated roofline and segmental arch windows with components dating mostly from 1896-1904. Immediately to the south are connected vulcanizing and storage buildings from ca. 1911-14. An administration building and garage from this period are located along Grove Street. The central part of the complex is occupied by two parallel tire plant complexes, mostly built in two phases (1928, 1944) by the industrial building engineering firm of Lockwood and Greene. Other architects and firms associated with the design of the complex included: George Allen (NY), (Guy) Kirkham and Parlett, George Alderman Co, and Fred T. Ley Co (also associated with hydropower and industrial sites statewide).

Proposed Project Area

