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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

APR 25 1988

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Dobson Mills
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 4001-4041 Ridge Ave.; 3502-3530 Scott's Lane N/A not for publication
city, town Philadelphia N/A vicinity
state Pennsylvania code PA county Philadelphia code 101 zip code 19129

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>19</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>2</u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>2</u>	<u> </u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>23</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related, multiple property listing:

N/ANumber of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this
☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date

Dr. Brent Glass, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Dobson Mills

Section number 3 Page 1

In counting resources for the purposes of Section 3, each building that was originally constructed before 1929 as free standing is counted as one contributing building. Building 1 is the only building counted as non-contributing for the reasons outlined on page 7/6. Additions to a free standing building and in-fill between two free standing buildings are noted as contributing or non-contributing additions in the Building Inventory in section 7 and on the historic district map. However, these additions are not counted in section 3. Each free standing structure or ruin is counted as a structure or site in section 3.

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Industry/Manufacturing Facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Industry/Manufacturing

Commerce/Warehouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Vernacular Mill

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Stone

roof Asphalt

other Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Dobson Mills complex stretches over nearly twenty acres between the river bank and palisade at the point on the Schuylkill River where the first natural falls created an industrial village named "Falls of Schuylkill" or simply East Falls. (Fig. 4, 10, 57) Set back beyond the flood line, and connected to Manayunk on the west and Philadelphia on the east by Ridge Avenue, the Dobson's Mills complex became one of the largest in the city. By 1900 it provided employment in 500,000 square feet to nearly 11,000 of the residents of East Falls. The site was organized around six clusters of buildings that were usually described by number (eg. Mill #1, Mill # 2) which generally referred to construction sequence. Mills 1, 2, 3 and 4 which were devoted to blanket and overcoat materials and wool yarn production were erected on the Scott's Lane side of the site beginning in the 1850s. The carpet mill was erected in the 1870s in the center of the property, while the Plush Mills were erected in the 1880s on the west side of the property along Crawford Street. Though built as separate complexes, their relationship was one of proximity based on the manufacturing process and common management resulting in a dense maze of U shaped multi phased buildings that is unified by scale and construction materials.

Although the buildings of the complex were built over three quarters of a century between 1858 and 1928, they share a common palette of local stone quarried on the site and with few exceptions share a common construction character of slow burning heavy timber framing within load bearing masonry walls with arched window heads. (Fig. 14,15,30) Low pitched gable roofs are typical for the nineteenth century mill buildings as well. The buildings were usually from two to five stories in height to avoid the necessity of passenger elevators, and were narrow enough to permit work by natural light. It is the mass of buildings, the uniformity of scale and material, and the enclosing character of the complex which gives it identity. (Fig. 5) In the sixty years since the Dobson's sold their mill, the site has been subdivided and later users have rented individual buildings. Maintenance has been deferred on the majority of structures resulting in the ruinous condition of several of the buildings. Despite these losses the nineteen contributing buildings, the water tank and the tall boiler house smokestack are impressive, and retain a sufficient degree of integrity to communicate the immensity of nineteenth century manufacturing in Philadelphia.

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Dobson Mills

Section number 7 Page 2

Description: (continued)

Organization, Chronology and Site Design

The organization of the site was largely a response to motive power, causing the early buildings to be constructed near Dobson Creek. (Fig. 57,58) The creek, which ran roughly along Scott's Lane, has since been culverted over. Dammed to the east of Scott's Lane, and again to the west to form reservoirs at regular intervals that stabilized its flow, it remained a focal point of the site until the late nineteenth century when it was replaced by steam power. Mills numbered 1,2, 3 and 4 were all constructed adjacent to Scott's Lane and the mill race beginning in 1858 with the buildings of Mill Number 1, which produced wool cloth for overcoats, a product much in demand by the military resulting in major additions during the Civil War. (Fig. 15,16,17,19,21,22) It was also the war which stimulated construction of Mill Number 2 across Scott's Lane in 1864 where Civil War blankets were made. (Fig. 14) Though the military markets ended with the war, the Dobsons were able to maintain production such that the cloth and blanket mills were significantly enlarged in the 1870s.

Mills Number 3 (to the south of Scott's Lane and the first to use steam power, Fig. 25) and Number 4 to the north of Mill 1 (Fig. 42,43,48) were constructed shortly after the Civil War to produce beaver cloth and yarn respectively. Together these buildings and Mills 1 and 2 created a cluster of complexes which produced a variety of finished cloth products and were generally referred to as the Woolen Mills. All of these early mills were essentially complete by 1880 with minor additions and alterations being made into the twentieth century.

After the Civil War, the Dobson's began a new enterprise in the center of the block bounded by Ridge, Crawford Street and Scott's Lane - the manufacture of carpets. The buildings referred to as the Carpet Mill were begun in 1872. Like the later mills it relied on steam rather than water power and thus could be constructed at a distance from Dobson's Creek. As new parts of the carpet manufacturing process were integrated into the mill, additional buildings were constructed so that by 1894 this complex was essentially complete. (Fig. 5,27,28,30,31) It was the Falls of Schuylkill Carpet Mills which utilized the low lofts as carpet weaving rooms along Ridge Avenue and the major four story gable roofed buildings in the center of the site. Though the five story central building of this mill was demolished and replaced with a one story bakery after World War II, the water tower of the original building and the carpet and wool manufacturing and weaving mills of the complex mark the location of this major complex.

One last post Centennial mill complex was erected in the 1880s along Crawford Street and consists of the four and five story mill buildings with adjacent dyehouses and yarn making lofts which were utilized in the manufacture of

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Dobson Mills

Section number 7 Page 3

Description: (continued)

plush upholstery fabrics. (Fig. 1,37,38,53,54) Tool shops (Fig. 51,52), toilet buildings (Fig. 39,40,41) and offices which served the entire Dobson Mill complex were scattered in the available open space between the individual mills. Despite obvious connections between buildings which represented work sequence and process, the site retained a haphazard appearance with few attempts to organize buildings and vistas.

The early twentieth century saw the same haphazard patterns of site development continuing, though in the larger scale permitted by concrete and steel technology. Though the railroad had always been significant as a means of bringing raw materials and shipping finished products, there had been few buildings directly adjacent to it. Between 1915 and 1925, most of the new construction occurred near the tracks, including the mineral cloth weaving mills that extended along the railroad tracks at the south east corner of the site on the old blanket drying area. The vocabulary of rubble stone walls was retained linking the appearance of the new buildings to the other buildings of the site, while long span roofs mark their modernity. Another of this group is building 15-16 which served as the new receiving building. The other important building is Building 18, which is now one of the principal landmarks of the main "yard". Taller and with its concrete skeleton clearly apparent on the exterior, it is the work of a prominent New England mill firm, Lockwood, Greene and Co. Smaller structures such as the boiler plant and the giant brick smokestack were inserted where they were functionally needed within the complex. Work largely ended at the site in the late 1920s, with a few demolitions and extensions of existing structures into the 1950s.

The utilitarian attitude towards the buildings is reflected in the site as well. Open space, rather than being planned with vistas and axes simply occurs as un-built land. Though the site has been continuously utilized for a century and a quarter, the modern asphalt parking that covers most of the vacant land is a recent phenomenon. It dates from the era after World War II when workers no longer walked to work, but rather drove automobiles and thus required parking. At that time, grassy yards with dirt paths, which had characterized the site since the earliest known views were paved, leaving only a few fragments of rubble retaining walls and plantings. The 1884 view in Scharf and Westcott shows trees scattered in open land, especially around the five register center hall plan Federal House which became the offices of Carpet Works. (Fig. 57) It apparently had plantings around it, some of which survive in the form of yucca plants and iris beds. Such plantings were common in mills in the Philadelphia region, and aerial views from the 1930s confirm the grassy yards and paths of the Dobson complex. (Fig. 59,60)

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Description: (continued)

The Buildings

The earliest buildings which are concentrated in Mills 1 and 2 are simple gable roofed structures with walls of schist, with radially laid schist arches, which were largely covered with mortar in the fashion of barn dashing to protect the low grade masonry. Because of the softness of clay-lime mortars, much of the pointing has now washed out, leaving only the schist and the eroded joints. (Figs. 14,15,20) The stone was presumably obtained at the site. A zone between Mill No. 4 and the Falls of Schuylkill Carpet Works was designated as a "Stone Quarry" on the 1877 Hexamer Insurance Atlas, and other areas, including the reservoirs, are likely sources of building material as well. Buildings of the sort described, with stone voussoirs include the L shaped structure (Building 31) on the south side of Scott's Lane and, across the street, the severely damaged Building 22 and the long narrow Building 19 which is attached to it by an vault over a walkway. These buildings had been erected prior to 1871, establishing a general date for the monochromatic grey rubble type of construction.

A later cluster of buildings, from the mid 1870s, called in the Hexamer Surveys, Mill No. 4, is found to the north up a slight incline. (Figs. 42-47) These are smaller, lower and simpler, suggesting a less involved line of production, apparently the re-manufacture and spinning of threads, probably for the blanket business -- but, unlike Mill No. 1, Mill 4 is largely intact. These buildings, according to the Hexamer Survey, date from 1874-75 and, though listed as a separate mill, seem to represent the third phase of growth of Mill No. 1 which had evolved from one large building in the 1860s to a U shaped group in the early 1870s. Now denoted as Building Nos. 24 and 25, they are two-story gable roofed structures with regularly spaced segmental arched windows, most of which have been infilled with cement block. It is on these buildings that brick was first used to make the arches over the windows, establishing a system that would be used on most of the remaining buildings of the site, and providing a means of dating the structures. This system became the norm into the early twentieth century, being replaced then by frame and infill panel systems of modern design. Like the earlier buildings, these structures of the 1870s, 1880s and 1890s continued to use the simplest possible construction with square posts crowned by wood impost blocks supporting rectangular section wood beams. (Figs. 44,46) Wooden trusses carry the roofing, which was originally tin, but which has been replaced with a variety of materials.

Several twentieth century buildings complete the design history. At the northern limit of the site is an early twentieth century mechanical shop (Building 12) which is impressive for the daring of its wood span. Like the nineteenth century buildings, it relied on wood columns subdividing the interior into four broad aisles which carry girders, in turn carrying roof

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Description: (continued)

beams. (Fig. 52) At the outer row of columns, the roof is elevated creating a continuous clerestory around the entire building. Brick arches in rubble stone walls suggest a continuation of the early building practices, but all windows (probably originally wood) have been replaced with steel windows crudely set into cement block infill. (Fig. 51)

At the southwest corner of the complex, a building numbered 15 and 16, but visually a single structure marks the shift to the vocabulary of the twentieth century. (Figs. 34-36) No. 15, was erected on the foundations of a one-story wool storehouse, and now rises four stories to a flat roof. Iron sash and the flat roof signal a separate period in buildings of the mill, ending the era of the gable and marking the conversion to modern construction methods. Though it has a flat roof, it was still constructed of the old rubble masonry, with massive wood posts carrying the wood floor framing.

The last major building of the complex, Building No. 18, was the first largely modern construction, with an armature of reinforced concrete carrying exterior curtain walls infilled with the schist rubble of the site and interior pine beams and floors on concrete columns and girders. (Figs. 49,50) Designed by the great mill architects of nineteenth-century America, Lockwood Greene and Co. of Boston and Providence, it still conformed to the rubble stone construction of the original complex, but its greater height, flat roof, steel lintels and steel windows mark the triumph of modern design. Like so many of the early concrete buildings, the wood texture of the framework is still very much in evidence. In the past generation, the original steel windows were reduced by an infill at the lower third of the opening.

Alterations

Over the past half century, the buildings of Dobson's Mill have been minimally modernized as an extension of maintenance. Skylights which remained on most roofs into the 1930s have been removed, and tin roofs have been replaced with asphalt. Wood windows, which were the norm until the twentieth century, were replaced by steel windows similar to those first used in new construction in Building Nos. 15 and 16 in 1914. That change occurred after the 1930s, for most of the views of mills to that date show wood frames and sash, and the few remaining wood windows provide evidence of the type. Frames and sills were largely removed, and modern sash were cheaply mortared into place, causing extensive damage to walls.

Other alterations had greater impact on the architectural volumes and forms. For example the monitor roof of the weaving shed was replaced with a saw-toothed roof prior to 1894. In the twentieth century, the northern monitor roofed weaving shed along Ridge Avenue was given a new reinforced concrete

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Dobson Mills

Section number 7 Page 6Description: (continued)

structure which was inserted into the old building. It was presumably at that time that the broad window openings spanned by steel lintels were constructed, and iron sash were inserted. These have since been reduced in size by masonry infill in order to fit low grade wood replacement sash.

A third group of alterations have occurred in the last generation, principally on the buildings of Mill 3 on the east side of the site beyond Scott's Lane. These have been continuously altered for truck traffic with major loading docks constructed around the perimeter of the building. Smaller scale loading docks with light metal canopies are scattered around the site. While large in plan, these are typically one story and mostly constructed of modern light steel with cinder block or corrugated metal infill and are only minimally attached to the buildings.

Integrity of the District

One modern building has been erected within the past fifty years that differs in construction character, materials and appearance from the site- the one story concrete frame, Building No. 1 which stands on the site of the original main building of the Carpet Works. (Figure 28 lower right) The original Building Number 1 was demolished in 1936-7 and a new building was constructed on the site in the 1940s. It is so tenuously connected to the other rubble masonry buildings that it should not be counted with them. This is the principal non-contributing building within the overall complex. There are a number of post-1928 additions to several other buildings, such as the infill roof over a courtyard that forms building 9a, and several of the additions at the rear of Mill 3. Still, these additions are in keeping with the industrial character of the contributing buildings, and do not detract greatly from the integrity of the overall district.

Structures and Sites

There are on the property in addition, two structures, the giant partially truncated brick smokestack adjacent to the boiler house in the center of the site, and the masonry water tower formerly attached to Building 1; which form important aspects of the industrial character and contribute to the district. Both the water tower and stack fulfilled important functions during the district's period of significance, and are therefore counted as contributing structures.

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Description: (continued)

Two sites are included as contributing, because the buildings on them are ruins. They are described below as Building 13 and Building 22 and 22a. Of these, the former has been affected by earth pressure to the rear and is in danger of imminent collapse, while the latter was damaged by fire which destroyed the roof of 22a and exposed the wood structure of 22 so that it is in the process of collapsing.

Building Inventory

BUILDINGS NORTH OF SCOTT'S LANE UNDER SINGLE OWNERSHIP

The building numbers are those assigned by the Ridge Industrial Properties ownership but are correlated with the original mill numbers and uses. Where the building served the entire complex it is listed as Dobson Mills, General.¹ For purposes of the resource count, many of the buildings in the inventory are additions, and because they are joined together are noted below as additions to contributing buildings.

Building 1 (Post Dobson) One story stucco clad bakery erected c. 1945 on site of earlier six story rubble mill. Modern steel frame with cinder block walls. Though minimally attached to Building 2 and 1b, Building 1 is a separate, independently framed and constructed structure using modern materials that are different from the other buildings of the site, and that exists independently.² (Fig. 28, lower right)

Building 1 does not contribute to the district.

Building 1b (Carpet Mill Complex) Six story and tank stair and water tower, stuccoed rubble stone tower with brick voussoirs over window openings capped by wood, metal reinforced tank. Segmental headed windows on three sides and un-fenestrated infill on side originally attached to building. Part of the original building Number 1 erected 1872-3 and surviving as a fragment.³ (Fig. 27) It is now a free standing structure and is counted as one contributing structure.

Building 2 (Carpet Mill Complex) Building 2 is a rubble wall four story transitional structure erected in 1872 between Building 1 and Buildings 3 and 4. It continues the roof lines and volume of Building 4. (Fig. 28 to right of water tower) Constructed as an addition to Building 4, this is a contributing addition.

Building 3a (Carpet Mill Complex) Irregularly shaped rubble stone walled machine shop. Evidence of continuous changes suggests modifications as the boiler was continuously enlarged. First construction 1887 with additions c. 1900 and c. 1920. (Fig. 32 center) Constructed as a free standing building, this is counted as one contributing building.

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Description: (continued)

Building 3b (Carpet Mill Complex) Irregularly shaped two story, rubble walled boiler house, with flat steel framed roof. Contains original boilers and is surrounded by catwalks through space to provide observation. Erected on site of earlier boiler house c. 1920. (Fig. 33) Built as in-fill, this is a contributing addition.

Structure 3c (Carpet Mill Complex) 15 story brick smokestack originally inscribed with Dobson name on side. Subsequent demolition has resulted in the loss of the top portion and the D. Nonetheless a significant landmark in the region. Erected c. 1920 to replace earlier square section stack.⁴ (Fig. 32) Built as a free standing structure, it is counted as a contributing structure.

Building 4 (Carpet Mill Complex) Building 4 was erected in 1872 as the first extension of the carpet mill. It has three stories above its grade level basement and is constructed of rubble schist with brick segmental window arches and a gabled roof. Originally constructed with small paned wood sash, most have been replaced with early twentieth century steel sash. Portions of the south elevation have been altered and stuccoed but the major features survive. The original wood structure has been reinforced with steel.⁵ (Fig. 28,29) Built as a free standing building, it is counted as a contributing building.

Building 5 (Carpet Mill Complex) Gable roofed four story mill building of rubble schist walls with segmental headed brick arches above windows. Attached to Building 4 and originally through it to building 1 framing a central courtyard. Massive timber framing carries the floor joists. Most of the original 15 over 20 wood sash have been modified or infilled. Erected c. 1875. (Fig. 30,31) Constructed as an addition to building 4, it is a contributing addition.

Building 7 (Carpet Mill Complex) Brussels Carpet Weaving room erected 1875 as a one story monitor roof rubble building with brick segmental headed windows along side. It has been re-roofed in 1894 with a Philadelphia saw tooth industrial roof with glazed north facing windows and angled built up roofed surfaces.⁶ (Fig. 7,8) Constructed as a free standing building, it is counted as a contributing building.

Building 7a (Carpet Mill Complex) Two story rubble stone walled building attached to Building 7 which served as winding and sizing room for the Brussels Carpet building. Altered in early twentieth century with large colonial revival doorway and second story added replacing original gable roof. (Fig. 9) Constructed as an addition to Building 7, it is counted as a contributing addition.

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Description: (continued)

Building 8a,b,c,d (Carpet Mill Complex) Spooling and starching rooms; fourteen bay two story rubble stone building with later additions along Ridge Avenue and modernized in the twentieth century with reinforced concrete structure;⁷ soldier courses of brick set off windows which are also from the early twentieth century. A monitor roof restructured in the concrete frame lights the interior. The first portions were erected in 1877, alterations were made enlarging it in 1879, 1883, 1887, and in the early twentieth century. Begun as a free standing building, it is counted as one contributing building. Parts to the north along Ridge Avenue functioned as separate sections of Building 8a, b, c, d and included starching rooms, steam chests and a boiler house which has since been replaced with infill. (Fig. 5,6)

Building 9 (Plush Mill) This was the location of finishing and shearing mill for the plush process in a four story building which was erected in 1884 and enlarged in 1887. It continues the 1870s system of rubble stone with brick arches over the windows. In 1889 it was enlarged by nearly fifty percent, but that has been demolished in this century. Most of the original 12 over 12 wood sash have been replaced with industrial iron sash. This was one of the buildings modernized in the early twentieth century when modern fire towers were added. (Fig 53 left) Constructed as a free standing building, it is counted as a contributing building.

Building 9a (Post Dobson, c. 1960) This is an infill building erected by roofing over an existing courtyard, and adding an end facade. (Fig. 55) Constructed as an addition, it is a non-contributing addition.

Building 10 (Plush Mill) The triangular four story dye house of the plush mill side of the Dobson complex was begun in 1894 as a two story structure of rubble with brick window arches. Two additional stories were added around 1900, continuing the heavy timber framing of the original building. A handsome triangular stair forms one of the few architecturally distinguished spaces of the entire complex. (Fig. 1,2,3) Constructed as an addition, it is a contributing addition.

Building 11 (Plush Mill) The longest building of the site began as a two story rubble batting and power loom space for the plush mill in 1883. Four years later it was enlarged with a three story addition to the south and in 1910 it was enlarged with three additional stories on the top in the same rubble that made the entire building five stories (including a partially submerged basement).⁸ Sash were originally of wood but were replaced, probably in 1910 with steel sash. Shortly after, brick fire towers were added to bring the buildings up to current standards. The typical framing is of heavy timber, but some reinforced concrete has been added in the center. (Fig. 53,54) Constructed as a free standing building, it is counted as a contributing building.

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Description: (continued)

Building 12 (Dobson Mills general) The one story machine shop is roughly trapezoidal in footprint, with a one story rubble wall and heavy timber framing carrying a clerestoried gable roof. It is one of the few imposing spaces in the complex and dates from 1914.⁹ (Fig. 51, 52) Constructed as a free standing building, it is counted as one contributing building.

Building 13 (Plush Mill) Erected in 1888 as a part of the plush mill operations, Building 13 continues the vocabulary of gable roofed, rubble walled buildings with brick window arches. Heavy timber framing is typical throughout its five stories. Unfortunately, modern dirt access ramps at the east side have pushed the building so far out of vertical as to make it unsafe. (Fig. 37,38) It is counted as one contributing site.

Building 15 (Dobson Mills, general) Building 15 began as a one story wool receiving building along the railroad in 1879, and was totally rebuilt as a four story rubble wall, heavy timber, flat roofed structure in 1915. It is the first to have a flat roof on the site, and marks the shift to modern architectural forms.¹⁰ (Fig. 34,35) Constructed as a free standing building, it is counted as one contributing building.

Building 16 (Dobson Mills, general) The polygonal Building 16 was erected in 1915, adjacent to and extending Building 15 as a part of the shipping center of the mills. It is also of rubble stone with heavy timber interior framing but is differentiated from 15 by brick arches over the windows. Steel sash are original. (Fig. 34,36) Constructed as an addition to building 15, it is a contributing addition.

Building 17 (Dobson Mills, general) The building located to the side near the Carpet Mills and Mills 1 and 4 served as the common toilet building, and later served additional functions as the stables and work space. It uses the typical palate of rubble stone with brick arches and gable roof in a series of additions that make an L which has since been infilled to make a rectangle. Most of the building is one story though there is evidence that a floor was removed on the southern block. Erected 1879, with later nineteenth century additions.¹¹ (Fig. 39,40,41) Constructed as a free standing building, it is counted as one contributing building.

Building 18 (Dobson Mills, general) The last major building of the site is a five story reinforced concrete frame with heavy timber joists and flooring. Exterior walls are of rubble stone with brick trim, adhering to the norms of the site. Windows were originally steel, filling roughly two thirds

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Description: (continued)

of the opening; these have been reduced in size and infilled with block and replaced with modern sash. Designed in 1919 by Boston's Lockwood, Greene and Co, it is a major industrial landmark.¹² (Fig. 49,50) Constructed as a free standing building, it is counted as one contributing building.

Building 19 (Mill 1) This narrow three story rubble walled gable roofed building was erected in 1870 fronting Scott's Lane, forming a court with the original main mill building to the rear (destroyed by fire) and building 22 to the west. Stone arches over 12 over 12 windows link this to the earlier construction of the complex. The interior is given interest by wainscotting and raised rail paneling.¹³ (Fig. 15,20,21,22) Constructed as a free standing building, it is counted as one contributing building.

Building 22 (Mill 1) Building 22 is a four story irregularly shaped rubble stone walled, gable roofed mill fronting Scott' Lane that formed the first extension of Mill 1 in 1870. Stone arches over windows, and heavy timber interior framing conform to the early norms of the site. Fire damage to the original Mill building damaged the roof of this structure, and the entire building is in the process of collapsing. Early views show that the water tower of the main facade has been removed and most of the windows have been replaced or infilled with block; the original brick cornice has been removed and most architectural features have been altered. (Fig. 15,16,17,19)

Building 22a (Mill 1) One story rubble walled, saw toothed roofed weaving room erected c. 1910. Damaged by fire which destroyed the main mill building of the complex and which removed the roof leaving only the walls and grade level floor, originally had steel sash like other modern buildings of site. Important as a part of the corner of the site visible from Scott's Lane. (Fig. 18)

Buildings 22 and 22a are counted as one connected contributing site.

Building 24 (Mill 4) Two story carding and spinning mill; main building of Mill 4 which produced yarns for Mill 1. Rubble stone walls and brick arches over windows with shallow gable roof. Most of windows infilled with cement block. Erected 1874 and 1875. (Fig.45,46) Constructed as a free standing building, it is counted as one contributing building.

Building 25 (Mill 4) One story rubble stone with segmental brick arched window openings under gable roof building for rag picker and rag store house, erected pre 1877 with c. 1880 two story rubble stone gable roofed extension. Most windows altered; relatively light wood framing of interior,

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Description: (continued)

presumably reflecting absence of heavy looms and machinery in this mill. (Fig. 42, 43, 44) Constructed as a free standing building, it is counted as one contributing building.

Building 33 (Mill 1) Two story rubble stone mill building, c. 1880; roof line altered to flat roof pre 1926. Constructed as a free standing building, it is counted as one contributing building.

BUILDINGS ACROSS SCOTT LANE

Formerly in the ownership of Ridge Industrial Properties and continuing the numerical sequence.

Buildings 28, 29, 30, and 32 were constructed in the early twentieth century along railroad tracks on the site of the old blanket drying racks of Mill 2.

Building 28 (Mineral Cloth Weaving Mill) One story trapezoidal plan rubble stone wall, flat roofed mill with industrial steel sash on perimeter erected 1923 as a part of the Dobson complex. (Fig. 23 right) Built as an addition, it is a contributing addition.

Building 29 (Mineral Cloth Weaving Mill) Two story trapezoidal shaped saw toothed roof loft building with rubble stone walls attached to Buildings 28 and 30. Erected c. 1920. (Fig. 60) Built as an addition, it is a contributing addition.

Building 30 (Mineral Cloth Weaving Mill) Two story flat roofed irregularly shaped mill with rubble stone walls, concrete frame; large steel industrial sash. Erected. c. 1920. (Fig. 60) Built as an addition, it is a contributing addition.

Building 32 (Mineral Cloth Weaving Mill) Two story triangular rubble walled, flat roofed mill building erected in 1919 in the wedge between Scott's Lane and the railroad tracks.¹⁴ (Fig. 13) Built as an addition, it is a contributing addition.

Building 31a (Mill 2) This is part of the original Dobson Mill complex, and was erected along Scott's Lane, across from Mill 1. The first Building (31a) is a four story gable roofed, rubble stone walled building with stone window arches which was erected in 1864 and extended to the west c. 1875 with similar rubble stone masonry and roof. It housed the weaving lofts of the original overcoating plant. Heavy timber construction. As the last of the Civil War era buildings in the complex it has special interest. (Fig. 14) Constructed as a free-standing building, it is counted as a contributing building.

Building 31b (Mill 2) Four story rubble stone, gable roofed extension to Mill 2, erected 1872. Served as a dye house and manufacturing lofts. Heavy

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Section number 7 Page 13

Description: (continued)

timber construction similar to main building. (Fig. 14)
Built as an addition, it is a contributing addition.

DOBSON BLANKET MILL 3, LATER WHITAKER MILLS

The Fred Whitaker Company acquired the old Mill 3 complex in the early twentieth century and continued its original function in processing and finishing wool. The numbers assigned are arbitrary, prefixed by W for Whitaker, in general directional sequence.¹⁵

Building W-1 (Whitaker Office, formerly Dobson Stable) Two story rubble stone stable, re-clad c. 1927 with stylized classical door frame with steel windows, bronze lamps and with the Whitaker name emblazoned across the front. c. 1870, rebuilt c. 1927. (Fig. 23) Constructed as a free standing building, it is counted as a contributing building.

Building W-2 (Dobson general) Four three story fourteen foot wide stuccoed over rubble stone mid-nineteenth century workers row houses with flat roofs. Modified into a mill building in the twentieth century, party walls opened up to create industrial space. Damaged by fire but good examples of worker's houses. Extended by W-2a. (Fig. 24) Built as a free standing building it is counted as one contributing building.

Building W-2a One story light steel framed brick clad industrial space added to rears of W-2 which links them in turn to the overall Mill 3 group; c. 1960. Constructed as an addition, it is a non-contributing addition.

Building W-4 (Dobson Mill 3) Part of the Dobson Mill company and built as a blanket factory. This impressive one story, monitor roofed, clear span hall was erected in 1875 as the dye house. Rubble stone walls now largely screened by rear loading sheds. Stucco wall finish and modern steel windows.¹⁶ (Fig. 25,26) Built as an addition to building W-5, it is a contributing addition.

Building W-5 (Dobson Mill 3) Three story rubble stone, heavy timber framed mill building erected 1868 and rebuilt 1869 for the carding, spinning and weaving operations of the blanket works. Shallow gable roof. Presently stuccoed. Four story front addition (c. 1880) removed and original end wall repaired as exterior wall. Brick stair and water towers recall the traditional industrial skyline. Modern stucco finish. Lower facade screened by modern loading dock. Fig. (25, right) Constructed as a free standing building, it is counted as a contributing building.

Building W-6 Two story flat roofed infill building in courtyard next to main mill which retains industrial character of site. c.1940. Built as an addition to Building W-5, it is a non-contributing addition.

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Continuation SheetDobson Mills
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Description: (continued)

Building W-7 Two story cement block and brick trimmed modern loading and storage building erected after World War II. At least three separate extensions have been added to the rear and are treated as W-8 below. These continue the industrial character of the site. Built as an addition, it is a noncontributing addition.

Building W-8 One story loading bay and shed constructed in two phases and in differing materials; the east portion is of galvanized metal over a light frame while the equally long west side is of local heavily stuccoed rubble stone. Built as an addition, it is a non-contributing addition.

Building W-9 (Dobson Mill 3) Two story flat roof, rubble stone mill with industrial steel sash of same 1920s vintage as Buildings 28, 29. Pre 1926. (Fig. 25 right) Built as an addition to Building W-12, it is a contributing addition.

Building W-10 Two story gable roofed building from end of nineteenth century; part of Dobson Mill 3 complex; rubble walls, windows replaced. Built as an addition to Building W-11, it is a contributing addition.

Building W-11 Two story late nineteenth century rubble stone, gable roofed mill building attached to storage buildings; part of Dobson mill 3; all windows replaced. Constructed as an addition to Building W-12, it is a contributing addition.

Building W-12 (Dobson Mill 3) Three story rubble stone stock warehouse, with gable roof, attached on side to building 14. Erected 1878 apparently as first stage of manufacturing process. Constructed as a free-standing building, it is counted as a contributing building.

Building W-13 (Dobson Mill 3) Three story rubble stone stock storehouse, erected 1880 adjacent to building 13 as building to store finished, dried blankets.

Building W-14 One story cinder block and sheet metal loading dock building, attached at rear on new truck loading access to Whitaker site. c. 1960. Constructed as an addition to Building W-13, it is a non-contributing addition.

Footnotes:

1. Hexamer Insurance Surveys were undertaken of the Dobson complex in 1866, 1873, 1877, 1879, 1880, 1885, 1889, and 1894. In addition atlas plates show the evolution of the site, making it possible to ascribe dates after the end of the Hexamer Surveys. Several dated aerial photos of the site also exist, and show the site, and original roof conditions. Finally, Building Permits offer clues to dates in the 20th century. Because of the size of the site and the general nature of much of the information, it is often hard to connect

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Continuation Sheet

Dobson Mills

Section number 7 Page 15

Description: (continued)

permits to specific buildings, but at least a dozen alterations, additions and demolitions can be clearly dated.

2. The demolition permit for Building Number 1 was taken out 1936-853.

3. The Carpet Mill is extensively treated in the 1877 and 1894 Hexamer Surveys, which provide sound dating for all of the extant buildings, and show the change to the saw tooth roof on Building Number 7.

4. Most of the smokestacks of the complex were condemned in 1915 - 6365. A major round of boiler houses followed, presumably including the major brick stack.

5. The permit for the reinforcing with steel is probably 1936-8359.

6. The new roof on the weave shed is shown in the 1894 Hexamer. The sawtooth roof is a Philadelphia invention of the Ballinger Co. who advocated its use in similar applications because the sun never shone in the eyes of the workers.

7. The reinforcement of the structure of Building No. 8 is referred to in permit 1919-2313.

8. The Plush Mill buildings were constructed in 1883 and 1884 and appear in the 1885 Hexamer. The major extensions to those buildings had occurred by 1894. The upper stories were added to Building Number 11, probably in 1910; see permit 1910-3778. It is in these years the McMurtrie Co., architects, begin to add the brick fire towers that bring these early mills into conformity with contemporary fire standards.

9. The shop permit is 1914-5158. Willard Osbourne is listed as the architect.

10. Buildings 15/16 were erected on old foundations according to permit 1915-6172.

11. Building 17 appears on the 1877 Hexamer Survey. Numerous permits in the early twentieth century for the construction of toilet facilities in the main mill buildings mark the modernization of the complex.

12. Building Number 18 is listed in permit 1919-2192. Lockwood Greene Co. published a firm history. Samuel Lincoln, Lockwood Greene, The History of an Engineering Business, 1832-1958, Brattleboro, 1960. It does not mention the Dobson building, but provides the setting for their shift from wood slow-burning construction to modern materials in the early twentieth century.

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Continuation Sheet**

Dobson Mills

Section number 7 Page 16

Description: (continued)

13. Mill Number 1 is described in the 1866, 1873 and 1879 Hexamer Surveys, and shows all of the present buildings with the exception of 22a (erected after 1894).

14. Permits 1917-2058 and 1919-9094 are clearly related to this group of buildings, and the cornerstone of 32, dated 1919 conforms to the 1919 permit.

15. The Fred Whitaker Company is named on permits after 1927 for buildings across Scott's Lane in the area of Mills 2 and 3.

16. Mill Number 3 is discussed in the Hexamer Survey for 1880 and provides dates for the major buildings. The main mill was erected in 1868 and rebuilt the following year; the dye house followed in 1875.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☒ N/A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Industry

Period of Significance

1858-1928

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Various

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

East Falls', Dobson Mills complex is one of the largest and most impressively sited industrial complexes surviving from Philadelphia's nineteenth century heyday as the nation's workshop. Begun in the 1850s by English immigrants John and James Dobson, the mills provided a diversified line of wool products that, in keeping with Philadelphia textile industry practice, could be varied depending on market conditions. By the 1870s, it was the largest individually owned woolen firm in the United States, a position it would hold into the twentieth century when six separate mills on the same site occupying 500,000 square feet of space provided employment to more than 11,000 residents of East Falls. Finally the Dobson Mills are important as a largely intact complex of industrial buildings that describe the early character and evolution of Philadelphia mill design and share a common palette of materials, local rubble stone often with brick trim, that typified large plants from the Schuylkill River to Germantown.

The Dobson Mills were established by John (1827 - 1911) and James Dobson (c. 1830 - 1927) in 1855, based on knowledge that they had acquired in the English textile industry.¹ Their history is told in the National Cyclopaedia of Biography (J.T. White, 1920, vol. XVII, p. 120-1) which recounts an extraordinary story of immigrants making good in the United States.² With modest capital, they established a mill in Manayunk. Shortly thereafter, both brothers married into the Schofield family, an important Manayunk milling family, considerably enlarging their regional presence. These contacts and their expertise eventually brought the Dobsons to prominence in the National Association of Wool Manufacturers with John Dobson serving as director of the association for the state of Pennsylvania.³ Even after the death of the Dobson brothers, they were still upheld by biographers as the standard for the Philadelphia textile industry "as Charles Willson Peale was for art and John Bartram was for industry."⁴ It was based on their importance as mill owners and developers from the 1850s until the 1920s that Philip Scranton chose the Dobsons to illustrate the Philadelphia textile industry after 1850 in Proprietary Capitalism.

☒ See continuation sheet

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Dobson Mills

Section number 8 Page 2

Significance: (continued)

By 1890, the Dobson Mills at Falls of the Schuylkill operated what was far and away the largest and most diversified mills in the city -- with the capacity to produce 200,000 yards of woolens per month which was nearly 25% of the entire city's output.⁵ This was independent of the Schofield Mills in Manayunk which was related to the Dobson Mills by interlocking directorates, but which were spatially and functionally separate. They were able to reach that position as Scranton pointed out because during the Civil War, the Schofield and Dobson mills could provide bonds for each other, and because they were prepared to produce woolen goods, which supplemented and replaced the cotton fibers that could no longer be imported from the south. That loss of raw material devastated the New England cotton mills in Lowell, and elsewhere. As a result, the Philadelphians were prepared when Army blanket orders in the hundreds of thousands were offered. Scranton reports that the Schofield firm received a single contract of a million dollars for 150,000 blankets, while Dobson received an order for 200,000 blankets at the Falls of Schuylkill mills.⁶ By 1863 the Dobson Mills were large enough to fund a volunteer company for the Union army -- which was no doubt good advertising for additional military contracts. Military contracts brought a significant increase in size, and the post war economy brought about a diversification of production which Philip Scranton indicates was typical of the Philadelphia textile industry.⁷

Contemporary sources such as Blodget's Manufactures of Textile Fabrics in Philadelphia (1890) listed the Dobson brothers output including cloth and coating fabrics, carpets including Brussels and Wilton designs, worsted yarns, wool cassimeres (sic) and across Scott's Lane, broadloom blankets.⁸ That variety is confirmed in the Hexamer Insurance surveys of the 1880s and 90s which indicate the separate functions of the various buildings of the complex which include dye houses, yarn drying room, yarn printing room, spooling and winding buildings, weaving lofts as well as immense lofts for carpet weaving.⁹ Interestingly, though the complex was under single ownership, the corporate structure provided for six separate mill groups which functioned autonomously. Each had its own offices, machine shops, power plants and production and storage facilities. Such duplication may have represented a management tactic -- or it may have represented the limits of water and later steam powered machinery. By 1880, the complex had expanded to fill the river plain from Ridge Avenue north to the river palisades between Scott's Lane and Crawford Street.

It should be noted that while Dobson became the largest manufacturer of woolens in Philadelphia from the end of the Civil War until the 1920s, there were other important woolen mills, including the Pequa Mills at 21st and Hamilton, the Dornan Company at Howard and Oxford streets, the various Schofield Mills scattered in Manayunk and the John Bromley & Sons mill on Lehigh Avenue all of which produced carpets and other woolen fabrics. The

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National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Dobson Mills
Section number 8 Page 3**Significance: (continued)**

urban mills were distinguished from the mills along the Schuylkill by being constructed of Philadelphia red pressed brick, and by more elaborate architectural styling. Of these, it was Bromley that was easily the most architecturally impressive in Philadelphia, occupying four city blocks in a mansarded and pavilioned building designed by Walter Geissinger in 1892. The North American Lace Co. by the William Steele Co., at 8th and Allegheny, was similarly grand.¹⁰ But all of these have been demolished -- as have the chemical mills of the Powers and Weightman Company, which was the other great mill complex at East Falls, occupying the north side of Midvale Avenue from Ridge Avenue to Henry Avenue.

The loss of the great mills of the city has been paralleled by the demolition of most of the small mills that made Manayunk and East Falls manufacturing centers. Many have fallen to the rampages of the Schuylkill river which destroyed mills on the island that framed the canal. Others have been demolished as smokestack industries lost out to the modern downtown service economy, but enough early mill buildings remain in Manayunk to serve as points of comparison. Interestingly several are still involved with textiles such as the John Wilde and Bro. Carpet Wool manufacturer at 3737 Main Street and the Littlewood (formerly the Albion Dye Works) bleaching and dyeing mill at Main Street and Shurs Lane further to the west. The Littlewood Mill has been largely rebuilt in concrete and brick along Main Street, but a narrow rubble 3 story building on the hill side reflects Civil War era design. These, and the U shaped stone mill that once was part of the Fleisher Imperial Mills at Cotton and Main street are all three and four story, rubble schist buildings of the character and scale of the earlier Buildings 31 a and b, or Buildings 19, 22, 24 and 25, suggesting that they were erected in the years immediately after the Civil War. Interestingly, later buildings in Manayunk are built of rubble schist with brick arches over the windows, and framing the doors in the manner of the larger Dobson buildings suggesting a common core of builders and mill styles. However where typically two or three small blocks formed the extent of the original mill, the Dobson complex was ten to twenty times larger and far more complicated.

Thus, although there are other mills that survive in the Philadelphia region, there were qualitative differences that make it fortunate that the Dobson complex is generally preserved. None of the other great mills were even half the size in square footage of buildings, or a quarter of the size in site area. Indeed, the only industrial rivals in size were the steel mills such as Midvale, or the industrial assembly plants such as Baldwin Locomotive. And because most of the other Dobson textile rivals were largely rebuilt in the 1880s and 1890s, none gave such a complete picture of the evolution of the Philadelphia mill.

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Dobson Mills

Section number 8 Page 4

Significance: (continued)

Unfortunately, though industrial architecture has been the subject of much interest by the champions of modern architecture, there has been little research on the evolution of the mature factory type. Because of its national importance as an industrial center, Philadelphia architects, notably the William Steele Co., and Walter Geissinger (which evolved into Geissinger and Hales, and later Hales and Ballinger before becoming the present Ballinger Co.) played a significant role in developing the modern factory layout. Planning with an eye to increasing efficiency, and safety, they incorporated fire towers, offices and toilet facilities into a rational mill layout in buildings such as Hales and Ballinger's design for the Caleb Milne Textile mill (1895) on Washington Avenue, and the William Steele design for the Snellenberg Factory (1903ff) on Broad Street (both of which are listed on the National Register).

The Dobson Mills, by contrast with the later buildings such as the Milne and Snellenberg buildings show the primitive origins of the Philadelphia textile mill with some specialized structures -- offices and water closets set amidst the large mill buildings. In this they are similar to the Bristol Carpet Works which are roughly contemporary. In the early twentieth century, those features of up-to-date mill design, such as fire towers, and toilet facilities were incorporated into the overall design usually as vertical stacks on the north side of the building as was done on the Snellenberg and the Milne mills. Interestingly, these features were added to the larger Dobson buildings in the early twentieth century as a part of a general upgrading that was probably caused by changing city building codes and is marked by numerous building permits after 1910.¹¹

The primitiveness of the early Dobson buildings such as the four story building 31a and b in Mill 2, provides insights into the development of the Philadelphia mill at the time when Philadelphia was becoming the nation's workshop and its factory designers were leading the nation. The earliest buildings of the Dobson complex were little more than masonry clad heavy timber framed barn like buildings suggesting that most were the work of builders, without benefit of architectural training who were merely providing work space without regard to the depth of the buildings for lighting, work safety and even efficiency. The Dobson buildings however show a progressive evolution so that by the 1870s water towers and stair towers were being combined becoming significant facade features such as the tower that is all that remains of Building 1 of the old Carpet Mill. Around 1900 toilet stacks were added as indoor plumbing became standard and external stair towers became the norm, presumably for fire safety.

By the twentieth century, architectural and engineering firms were in charge for fire safety improvements and for the few large modern buildings which were erected in response to World War I orders. (Seventy building permits were

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Continuation Sheet

Dobson Mills

Section number 8 Page 5

Significance: (continued)

taken out by the company between 1914 and 1921). These included several Philadelphia industrial designers such as the McMurtrie Company who supervised the addition of fire towers on the existing buildings (1913);¹² in 1915 the company also hired the Lockwood Greene Company of Providence and Boston which was probably the best known factory design firm in the country.¹³ Those later buildings differ in design and structural system, but tended to maintain the same scale and appearance -- in part because they were often erected on the old foundations, and because they continued to mine the site for schist for building materials.

In addition to their importance as the largest assemblage of nineteenth century mill buildings surviving in Philadelphia, the Dobson Mills were an impressive regional employer. No one seems to have debated their claim to being the "the largest individual wool enterprise in this country". Scharf and Westcott supported their claim and devoted a full page to the illustration of their buildings (vol. III, p. 2308 -9) in their 1884 History of Philadelphia. By 1890, the Dobson Mills and the adjacent Powers and Weightman chemists were the economic center of the East Falls neighborhood with the Dobson Mills increasing its work force from 1300 in the 1860s to nearly 5000 by 1895.¹⁴

When John Dobson died in 1911, the work force had reached 11,000, an astonishing number for any industry that had evolved from nineteenth century methods of production and organization¹⁵. It is not a coincidence that as the mills grew in the 1860s and 70s, the Falls region grew apace, with churches, schools, a brewery, and housing reflecting the mill prosperity.

Finally, the company was important for the products which it mass produced and sold at prices that were affordable throughout the world. The National Cyclopedia of American Biography reported that the firm had the "first important power looms to operate tapestry, velvet and pile carpets" and that they were "among the first to produce mohair plush for upholstery purposes in the country".¹⁶ Dobson Mill products were exhibited at the Centennial Exhibition, under the title of the Falls of Schuylkill Blanket, Cloth and Carpet Mills and were judged "most favorable; and the Messrs. Dobson were rewarded by receiving the highest merit of a diploma with a Grand Medal of Honor" with the additional note that their carpets could be purchased at their own store at 809-11 Chestnut Street.¹⁷

As a complex of buildings that describes the development of the mill in Philadelphia over the principal half century of its evolution, as an industrial center associated with the Dobson family who organized the largest privately held textile company in the nation, and that served as the chief employer of the Falls of Schuylkill, the Dobson Mills are associated with events that made a significant contribution to the industrialization of the nation, and warrant being placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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Dobson Mills

Section number 8 Page 6

Significance: (continued)

Footnotes:

1. James T. White, National Cyclopedia of American Biography New York, 1920, vol. XVII, 120-121; Dobson is also discussed in Philip Scranton, Proprietary Capitalism, The Textile Manufacture at Philadelphia, 1800-1885, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 62-69; Scharf and Westcott, A History of Philadelphia - 1609-1884, vol. 3, Philadelphia, 1884, p. 2309. John Dobson's obituary was published in the New York Times, June 30, 1911, p. 9 col. 5.
2. The principal account of their business history can be found in Scranton, op. cit. pp. 62-69 and 314-317, pp. 401, 421.
3. Scranton, op cit. p. 317-319.
4. Herman LeRoy Collins, Philadelphia: A Story of Progress, vol. 2 (Philadelphia, 1914), p. 285.
5. Loren Blodget, The Textile Industries of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, 1890, pp. 11, 46.
6. Philip Scranton, Origins of the Philadelphia System of Textile Manufacture, 1780-1880. Philadelphia, 1984, p. 25.
7. Scranton discusses the diversification of the Philadelphia industry in Proprietary Capitalism, Chapter 9, "Flexibility and Specialization", pp. 314-352.
8. Blodget, op cit. p. 46.
9. Hexamer General (Insurance) Surveys were undertaken from 1866 - 1894, and show the footprints of each building, and have a printed description of materials; Free Library of Philadelphia.
10. The Bromley mill and other large plants, including Dobson are published in John McFarlane, Manufacturing in Philadelphia, 1683 - 1912, Philadelphia, 1912, passim.
11. The building permits of Philadelphia are retained at the city records center and in the twentieth century are indexed by a card file system. Most of the toilet and fire tower additions occur after 1910; cf. for example 1914-1101, and 1916-2242.
12. Philadelphia Building Permit, 1913 - 435.

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Dobson Mills

Section number 8 Page 7

Significance: (continued)

13. Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builder's Guide, vol. 29:13, April 1, 1914. They published a history of their firm in Samuel Lincoln, Lockwood, Greene, the History of an Engineering Business, Brattleboro, Vt, 1960.
14. Philip Scranton and Walter Licht, Work Sights: Industrial Philadelphia, 1890 - 1950, Philadelphia, 1986, p. 266.
15. White, op. cit p. 121.
16. White, ibid. 121.
17. John L. Hayes, Awards and Claims of the Exhibitors at the International Exhibition 1876 Boston, 1877, National Association of Wool Manufacturers, pp. 86.

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☒ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☒ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)
has been requested

- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings

Survey # _____

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering

Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☒ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other

Specify repository:

Free Library of Philadelphia

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 20 Acres

UTM References

A

1	8
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4	8	4	2	8	0
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4	4	2	8	3	4	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

1	8
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4	8	3	8	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	4	2	8	5	5	0
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B

1	8
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4	8	4	2	9	0
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4	4	2	8	4	7	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

D

1	8
---	---

4	8	3	6	7	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	4	2	8	4	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The site of the Dobson Mills is bounded to the north by a steep incline up to McDevitt Park and playground, to the northwest by Crawford Street, beyond which is now the overpass for the Roosevelt Boulevard extension; to the southwest by Ridge Avenue which is lined on the far side by three story rowhouses and shops, and to the south and east by the Philadelphia and

☒ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries contain the historic buildings of the Dobson Mills as they developed from the 1850s into the 1920s, in the hands of the Dobson family. There are natural boundaries (steep hills on the east, Ridge Avenue on the west, the Pennsylvania railroad on the south) and the Roosevelt Expressway on the north which define the site; the entire site was owned by the Dobsons.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

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Section number 9 Page 3

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Dobson Mills

Section number 10 Page 2

Verbal Boundary Description: (continued)

Reading Railroad. The eastern and northeastern boundaries are described in deed FHS 695 p.40. The whole site is shown on the accompanying reduction of survey plat 142 N 19 located in the Department of Records, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

NOTE.
In matter of Contemnington of
County of New York at 6:00 PM Dec 10/12.
Order of Contemnington of New York 10-12-12.

SEE 107

SEE 107-N-2

RIDGE

McDevitt Park

SEE 40-N-24

RAILROAD DEED
ANY RIGHT, TITLE, INTEREST
(IF ANY?)
D.C.C. 1956-1
Lot #43

plat 142-N-19
(reduction)

scale:
1 bar = 100 ft.

SEE 40-N-23

