

Complex Name (Common)

Gordon Brothers Mfg. Co.

Complex Name (Historic)

Gordon Brothers Mfg. Co.

Address or Location

504 Hazard Avenue, Hazardville, Enfield

County

Hartford

Historic Designation

Candidate for State Register Listing

Associated Mill Community

Scitico
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<https://connecticutmills.org/find/details/gordon-brothers-mfg.-co>
[× Historic Information](#)

Companies Associated w/Complex

A.W. Dolge & Co.	ca, 1940–1952
DeBell & Richardson	1948–ca. 1980
Gordon Brothers Mfg. Co.	1901–ca. 1940
Springborn Group/Specialized Technology Resource, Inc.	ca. 1980–Present (2015)

Use (Historic)

- **Rubber & Chemicals**
- **Textiles**
- **Other:** Plastics

Largest Documented Workforce

150 (1960s)

Historic Narrative

The Gordon Brothers Manufacturing Company was established following the Civil War by David G., George B., and Andrew Gordon; Amos D. Bridge; and Edward Pricket. The firm was initially located on Oak Street in Enfield and manufactured Shaker-style bonnets. As fashions changed the business faltered and by 1875 the Gordon brothers had purchased a tin shop and rag recycling business located on Main Street. The firm employed 15 workers in the shop and retained over a dozen peddlers who collected rags and sold tinware. The company's recycling output consisted of hundreds of pounds of paper stock processed annually, this sold locally to the J.D. Stone Company, and farther afield to the paper mills at Holyoke, Massachusetts. Around 1900, the Gordons purchased a site on the north bank of the Scantic River that had been the location of a Shaker grist mill since the 1840s, yet had recently been destroyed by fire. In 1901, the brothers incorporated their firm, raised the dam originally built by the Shakers, and then constructed the red brick mill buildings along the river. They shifted the focus of their business at this time, choosing to concentrate on wool rather than cotton processing. They installed 25 wool-carding machines and purchased a dry carbonizing unit from Scotland, which allowed them to more effectively extract reusable wool fibers. The company maintained a profitable business with local woolen mills and were noted as being progressive employers in regards to the well-being of their workers. The firm owned much of the nearby housing stock, renting it for between \$1.40 and \$2.50 per week. Rent, however, was not charged if workers were unemployed or ill. The Gordon Brothers mill remained in family hands for roughly four decades. The southern portion passed to the A.W. Dolge Company for continued use as a shoddy mill ca. 1940, and the northern sections of the plant was acquired by the plastics development firm DeBell and Richardson in 1948. A.W. Dolge relocated to Stafford, Connecticut, in 1952, after which DeBell and Richardson occupied the entire complex. By the 1960s, DeBell and Richardson employed over 150 hands and in 1964 and 1972 additions to the plant became necessary as the company continued to expand its plastics research and development capabilities. DeBell and Richardson was eventually sold to another plastics firm, the Springborn Group, around 1980. This latter company continues to occupy the northern sections of the plant, albeit under a new title, Specialized Technology Resource, Inc.

Architectural Description

The former Gordon Brothers Manufacturing Company plant is comprised of roughly ten adjoining and freestanding blocks located on the south side of Hazard Avenue and Water Street (Private), and north bank of the Scantic River, roughly 0.1 mile east of Hazard Avenue's intersection with Glen Arden Lane. The earliest portions of the plant consist of two two-story gable-roofed red brick blocks erected in 1901. These are located along the river and intersect forming an L-shaped footprint with its exterior corner adjacent to the dam. They measure roughly 40' x 75' and 108' x 31', respectively, and have rough-cut brownstone foundations, segmental-arched window openings with brownstone sills, and corbelled and denticulated brick cornices. The southern wall of the western block was largely reconstructed in 1955 after extensive flooding smashed through the dam and compromised the building's foundation. One-story brick additions with similar details yet flat, rather than pitched, roofs can be found adjoining the east and west ends of the 1901 blocks. These were likely erected ca. 1910. The western building measures 40' x 45' and judging from its large rectangular brick chimney appears to have originally housed the mill's boiler house. The second block measures 74' x 58'. A freestanding wood-frame and stucco garage is located 40' north of the western block, this likely erected ca. 1920. A one-story red brick warehouse erected in 1972 stands directly northeast of the aforementioned buildings. It has an L-shaped footprint and measures roughly 65' x 120' overall. Its northern elevation abuts another of the complex's early blocks, this likely erected ca. 1910. The two-story building measures 42' x 127' and has red brick walls, segmental-arched window openings with brick sills, a corbelled and denticulated brick cornice with cornice returns, and a side-gabled roof. The building has two entrances evenly spaced along its 14-bay west elevation, the northern entry possessing a highly detailed wood surround with paneled door, multipane sidelights, a flat-arched transom, and engaged pilasters supporting a detailed entablature. A two-story red brick addition was erected adjoining the west side of the block in 1965, this measuring 45' x 156'. The next notable portion of the former Gordon Brothers Manufacturing Company plant is located just north of the ca. 1910 block. This is a three-block office building erected between 1925 and ca. 1940. The red brick blocks comprising the stands between one- and one-and-a-half-story tall and have front-facing gable roofs. The westernmost block is the most prominent as it has a pedimented portico with square columns and a wide entablature sheltering its primary entry. The first-story windows are paired and set in rectangular openings with brick sills and lintels. The two blocks to the rear are of similar styling yet lack paired fenestration.

Form Completed By

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Date

3/27/2015

Bibliography

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2. Directory of Connecticut State Manufacturers, 1936, 1939.
3. Industrial Directory of Connecticut, 1947.
4. Register of War Production Facilities in Connecticut, 1951.
5. Map of Hartford County; H & C.T. Smith, 1855.
6. Atlas of Hartford County; Beers, Baker & Tilden, 1869.
7. The Challenge of Change: Three Centuries of Enfield, Connecticut History; Bridge, Ruth, ed., 1977.
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