NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

582

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property:

historic name West Brothers Knitting Co

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 700-710 Emerson Ave ☐ not for publication

city or town Syracuse ☒ vicinity

state New York code NY county Onondaga code 067 zip code 13204

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Ruth A Pierpont DSHPO 7/10/14
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

☑ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
Edson H. Beall 9-10-14

☐ determined eligible for the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.

☐ other, (explain:)

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- [X] private
- [ ] public-local
- [ ] public-State
- [ ] public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- [X] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Industrial Resources of the City of Syracuse

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: Manufacturing Facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: Manufacturing Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls BRICK
roof ASPHALT
other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
See continuation Sheet

8 Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

[X] **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

[ ] **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

[X] **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

[ ] **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield,

Criteria considerations
(mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

[ ] **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

[ ] **B** removed from its original location.

[ ] **C** a birthplace or grave.

[ ] **D** a cemetery.

[ ] **E** a reconstructed building, object or structure.

[ ] **F** a commemorative property.

[ ] **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
INDUSTRY

Period of Significance
1907-1958

Significant Dates
1907, 1945, 1958

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Wright, Gordon A. architect, Syracuse, NY

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

[x] State Historic Preservation Office
[ ] Other State agency
[ ] Federal agency
[ ] Local government
[ ] University
[ ] Other

Name of repository:

West Brothers Knitting Co. — Name of Property

Onondaga County, New York — County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	403223	4767602	3			
2				4			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cynthia Carrington Carter

organization Renaissance Studio Preservation Planning date 4/19/2014

street & number 219 Crawford Avenue telephone 315-446-1310

city or town Syracuse state New York zip code 13202

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name John Oster, Founder, Edgemere Development, Inc

street & number 400 Andrews St. telephone

city or town Rochester state NY zip code 14604

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this from to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Narrative Description:

The West Brothers Knitting Company manufacturing building, which nearly covers the width of the 700 block of Emerson Avenue from Harbor Street on the north to Williams Street on the south, was constructed in 1906-1907 to house the growing knitting company started by brothers Eugene and George West in 1890. Facing Emerson Avenue, the 58 x 175 foot, rectangular, red brick building is common mill construction with load bearing masonry walls and wooden joists supported by heavy wooden posts. The three-story building, with a raised basement, has a poured concrete foundation. It is 20-bays wide and 6-bays deep with a 3-bay, 4-story elevator tower centered on the facade. There are pilasters between the windows and at each corner of the building. A corbelled brick dentil pattern crowns each bay just below the metal cornice. The star-shaped fasteners of tie rods are centered within each pilaster just above the level of the window heads. The rectangular windows were originally 10/10 panes, double hung sash. Many remain, but some have been replaced with four light (2/2) or two light (1-1) configurations. The window sills are cast concrete. The square elevator tower has a loading dock centered on the façade. Original door openings on the second and third floors have been converted to windows. A pulley block is centered above all three. The roof appears flat from the street, but is actually trough-shaped.

The main entrance is located on the north end of the building with a secondary entrance adjacent to the north side of the elevator tower. There is a metal fire escape on the south end of the building that culminates on the roof of the adjacent boiler house. On the east side of the building, a second metal fire escape runs from the northernmost bay of the third floor to the ground. Secondary entrances/exits are located at the basement level on the north and east sides of the building. In addition to the loading dock door in the elevator tower, there is a loading dock door in the southernmost bay of the façade.

A one-story, brick accessory building, with a gabled roof, is located on the east side of the building. It originally housed the boiler and the dye and drying rooms. The building is connected to the main building by a one-bay wide hallway and abuts the building on the southeast corner. A large overhead garage door has been cut into the north end of the building.

On the south end of the building, at the basement level, there is a one-story, concrete block addition, with a poured concrete foundation. It has a shed roof. This addition replaced an earlier gabled, one-story building that sat just south of the adjacent knitting mill. It is unclear from historic mapping when this earlier building was constructed, but the ghost of a gable roofline is visible against the east wall of the current structure.

On the interior, the building is standard mill construction. Two rows of chamfered wooden posts divide the open interior spaces. The posts are 9 ½ inches square on the basement through second floors and are 7 ½ inches square on the third floor. Those in the boiler house are 11 inches square. The large, multi-paned, double-hung sash windows bring ample light into the manufacturing space. The northern end of the second floor has been divided into offices for the administrative staff. A staircase was added at the north end of the building and a new entrance was constructed on that side of the building after 1939.

Within the elevator tower a 54 inch wide wooden staircase provides access from the basement to the roof. The elevator occupies the southeast corner of the tower. On the second and third floors, the landing is constructed to allow access from the loading doors at the front of the tower into the factory space at that level.

Statement of Significance:

The West Brothers Knitting Company building is historically significant under Criterion A for its association with the historic context **"Industrial Boom and Diversification**" identified in the Multiple Properties Nomination "Industrial Resources of the City of Syracuse." After the Civil War, the salt industry, which had been the foundation of the city's industrial development, began to decline and in its place scores of diverse industries began to drive the booming local economy. The West Brothers Knitting Company is associated with this diversification and located its company on a former salt manufacturing site. By 1910, textiles mills, with 29 factories throughout the city, were the second largest employers in the community. Only iron and steel mills employed more workers. Textile mills, West Brothers included, provided employment opportunities for women.

West Brothers Knitting Company was organized in 1890 in Newport, Herkimer County, New York. Eugene West had learned the business as a boy growing up in Little Falls, Herkimer County. From the 1830s, Little Falls was known for the large knitting mills along the banks of the Mohawk River. According to his own account, without child labor laws to intervene, Eugene went to work in the mills before he was 12 years of age. By the time he was 30, he had saved enough money to open his own small mill in a neighboring community thirteen miles to the northwest. In 1891, he was joined in the business by his older brother, George. They manufactured men's and boys' cotton ribbed underwear. As their business grew, they looked to the larger city of Syracuse, with its central location and excellent transportation systems, to expand. In 1893, they opened a branch in the Gere Block on West Fayette Street, adjacent to the Erie Canal. A devastating fire destroyed the Newport plant in 1895 and the entire business was moved to Syracuse.

In Syracuse, the business continued to grow. In 1896 they were manufacturing first quality ladies' and children's jersey ribbed underwear. The company employed 175 workers, many of them women. Within a decade of moving the entire operation to Syracuse, the West Brothers needed more space.

In 1906, Gordon A. Wright, a prominent Syracuse architect, was hired to design a new state of the art knitting mill for the West Brothers. Wright, who had a previous degree in engineering, graduated from the Department of Architecture, Syracuse University and went on to teach in the School of Architecture. He was head of the Department from 1891-92. He opened an office as a practicing architect in the City of Syracuse in 1892. He left teaching in 1894 to devote himself to private practice. Gordon Wright was one of 12 architects featured in the 1989 exhibit "*Architects Whose Work Have Been Identified with the Growth and Prosperity of the City of Syracuse*" sponsored by the Preservation Association of Central New York.

According to an article in the trade journal *Wool & Cotton Reporter*, at the time of its construction, the building was one of the "most up-to-date mill construction with all modern improvements." Note was taken of the corner location, removed from other tall buildings, thus ensuring excellent light. The elevator, stairway and toilets were all located in the tower centered on the front of the building. Having endured great losses due to fire at their first mill, the West Brothers were concerned about fire safety and Wright designed the building with a 25,000 gallon capacity water tank at the top of the tower and provided additional protection with Grenell sprinklers throughout the building. Electric lights illuminated the interior and electricity was used to power the equipment. The boiler, dye rooms and drying rooms were located in a separate, one-story brick building on the north side of the larger mill. The buildings were connected at the basement level.

In 1919, the business again needed to expand and in October of that year, the West Brothers acquired an industrial building in Baldwinsville, about 10 miles northwest of their Syracuse mill. Cloth was to be produced in the Syracuse

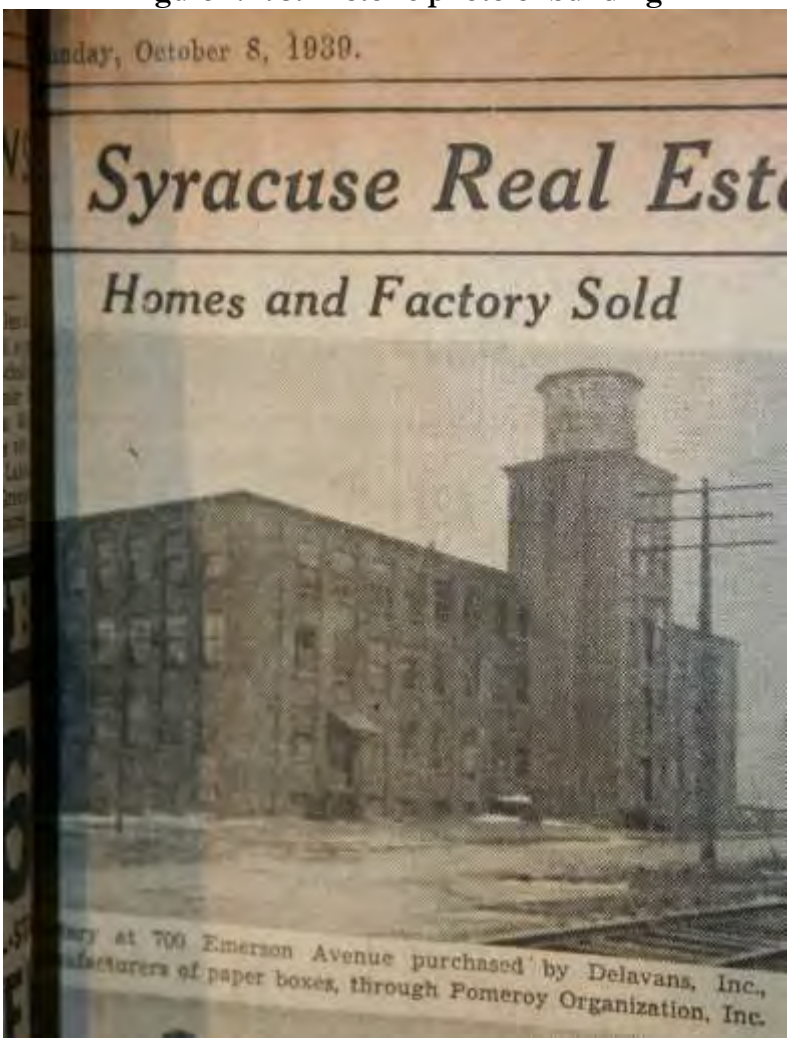
mill and then shipped to Baldwinsville to be cut and sewn into finished garments. They expected to employ an additional 100 workers with the expansion.

In 1922, George West sold his ownership interest in the business to his nephew, Charles West, and Leo R. LaFrance, both long time employees of the company, and the company was incorporated as the West Knitting Corporation. Eugene West was president of the corporation; Charles West was named vice-president and assumed the day-to-day management of the company, and Leo LaFrance became secretary and treasurer of the corporation. Eugene West died unexpectedly on August 27, 1923.

By 1927, knitting mills in the north were consolidating their operations in the southern states nearer the source of raw materials and where wages were lower for mill workers. At the end of December 1927, Charles West, as president of the West Knitting Corporation, announced that the business would be moving to Wadesboro, North Carolina. After three decades in Syracuse, the $300,000 business was scheduled to relocate by May 1, 1928, leaving 42,000 square feet of manufacturing space empty.

The West Knitting Corporation retained the building, possibly because by the time they were ready to market the facility the country had fallen into the Great Depression of 1929. The building stood empty until 1930 and then it was rented, in sections, to start-up companies. At least one, the Apex Manufacturing Company, failed and another, the Perfect Tank and Seat Company, was sold and moved from the building. It was Delavan Incorporated, manufacturers of corrugated paper containers, that eventually purchased the building. Byron Delavan and his two sons, Nathan and William, had been in business manufacturing shipping boxes since 1906, but had sold their former company, Delavan Corrugated Box Company, before incorporating as Delavan Inc., on August 7, 1933 and setting up their new business in the former West Knitting Company building. They initially occupied only one floor and employed between 25 and 30 workers. In October of 1934, they leased an additional floor, doubling the size of their operation. In 1939 they purchased the building (see figure 1). By the time they purchased the property, the one-story complex at the rear of the industrial building included a coal house and a warehouse, as well as the boiler house.

Figure 1: 1939 historic photo of building



Byron Delavan died unexpectedly on Feb. 11, 1944. The following year, Nathan and William Delavan, as the surviving owners made plans to move the operation to the town of Solvay. They purchased a 12 acre site with a modern one-story industrial building.

On August 15, 1945, the building at 700 Emerson Avenue was purchased by Gray Brothers Incorporated. The company, manufacturers of stylish, high quality ladies' shoes, was founded in 1865 in Little Falls, New York. Brothers John D. and Harrison H. Gray had learned the trade from their father Levi Gray, and had set up their own manufacturing facility in 1865. In 1866 they relocated to Syracuse. In 1873 they exhibited their ladies' shoes at the World's Fair in Vienna and took first prize. That same year, they built a new factory building at 202 Walton Street in Syracuse. In 1876 they again received first prize at the World's Fair, the Centennial International Exhibition, held in Philadelphia. Their reputation for first quality ladies' footwear had been secured.

In 1880 the business was incorporated as Gray Brothers Boot & Shoe Manufacturing Company, with Harrison Gray as president, John D. Gray as vice-president, Dewitt C. Gray, treasurer, and George S. Sanford, secretary. Thirty-eight year old Harrison Gray died in 1881 and Dewitt Gray moved to California, leaving the management of the

company to John D. Gray and George S. Sanford. By 1895, both John Gray and George Sanford had retired. There were a number of consolidations and reorganizations over the next decade, but in 1914, the company was incorporated as Gray Brothers, Inc., and the factory was remodeled. The company continued to manufacture the stylish ladies' shoes, known as "Cushionet," for which they were famous. In 1946, after the installation of new modern equipment, the company moved into its new home on Emerson Avenue with plans to increase the number of employees and the output of the company.

Figure 1: 1958 historic photo of building

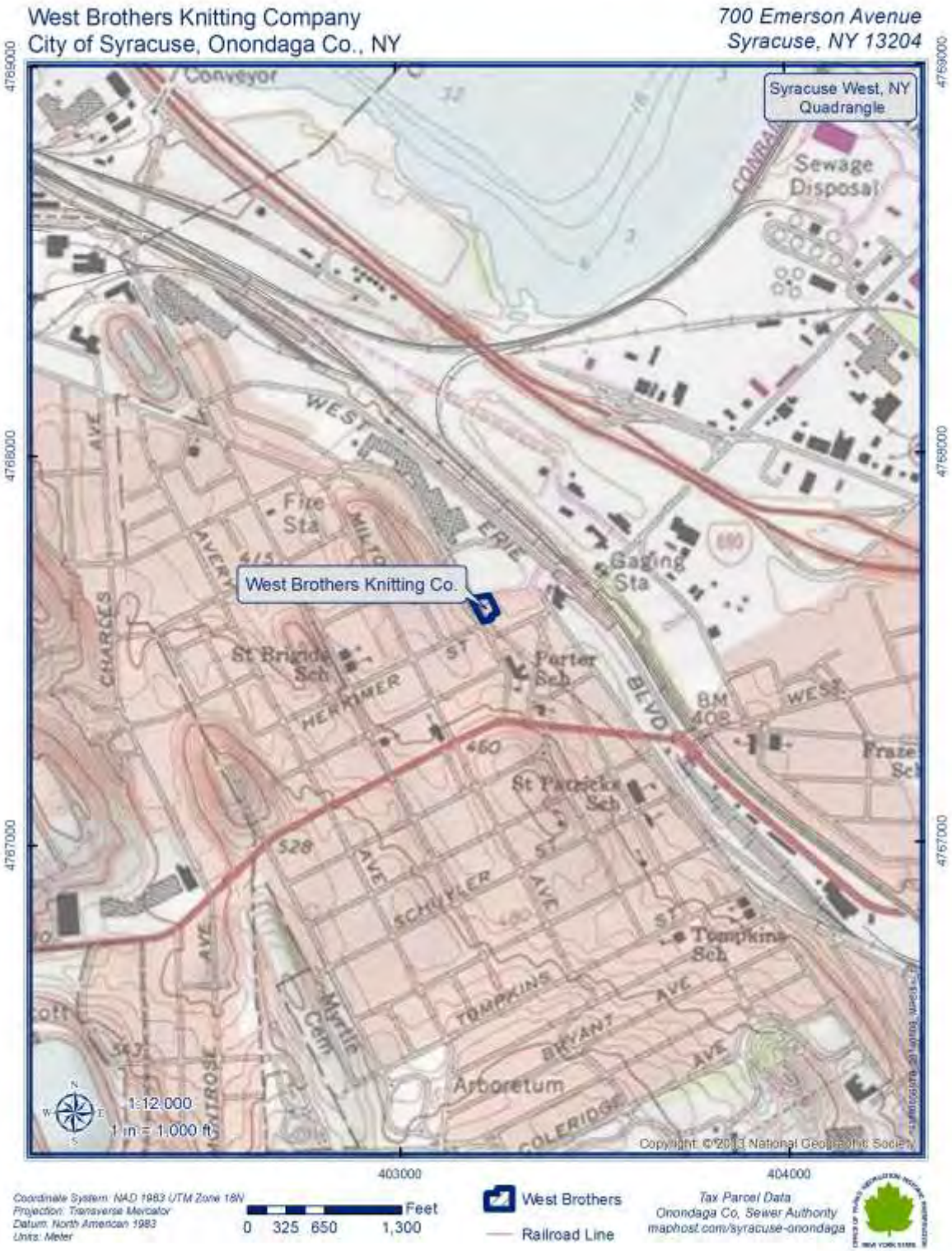
Gray Brothers occupied the building until 1958. In 1959 the building was leased to Cargery Corporation, a wholesale supplier of upholstery material and the American Store Fixture Company. The fixture company leased the building until 1966 when it was sold to the current owner and occupant of the building, Edco Sales, manufacturers of a wide variety of air filters.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Carter, Cynthia Carrington. *Industrial Resources in the City of Syracuse*. Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2008.

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:
As indicated by the heavy black line on the attached boundary map, the nominated property consists entirely of tax parcel lot number 112.-08-14.0 in the City of Syracuse, Onondaga County, NY.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:
The nominated parcel includes the West Brothers Knitting Mill building and its environs. The boundary includes all of the land and buildings historically and currently associated with the property.


West Brothers Knitting Company
City of Syracuse, Onondaga Co., NY
700 Emerson Avenue
Syracuse, NY 13204
Syracuse West, NY Quadrangle
Conveyor
Sewage Disposal
West Brothers Knitting Co.
Fire Sta
Gaging Sta
St Brigids Sch
Porter Sch
St Patricks Sch
Tompkins Sch
Fraze Sch
Arboretum
Myrtle Cem
1:12,000
1 in = 1,000 ft
Copyright: © 2013 National Geographic Society
403000
404000
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4768000
4767000
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter
Feet
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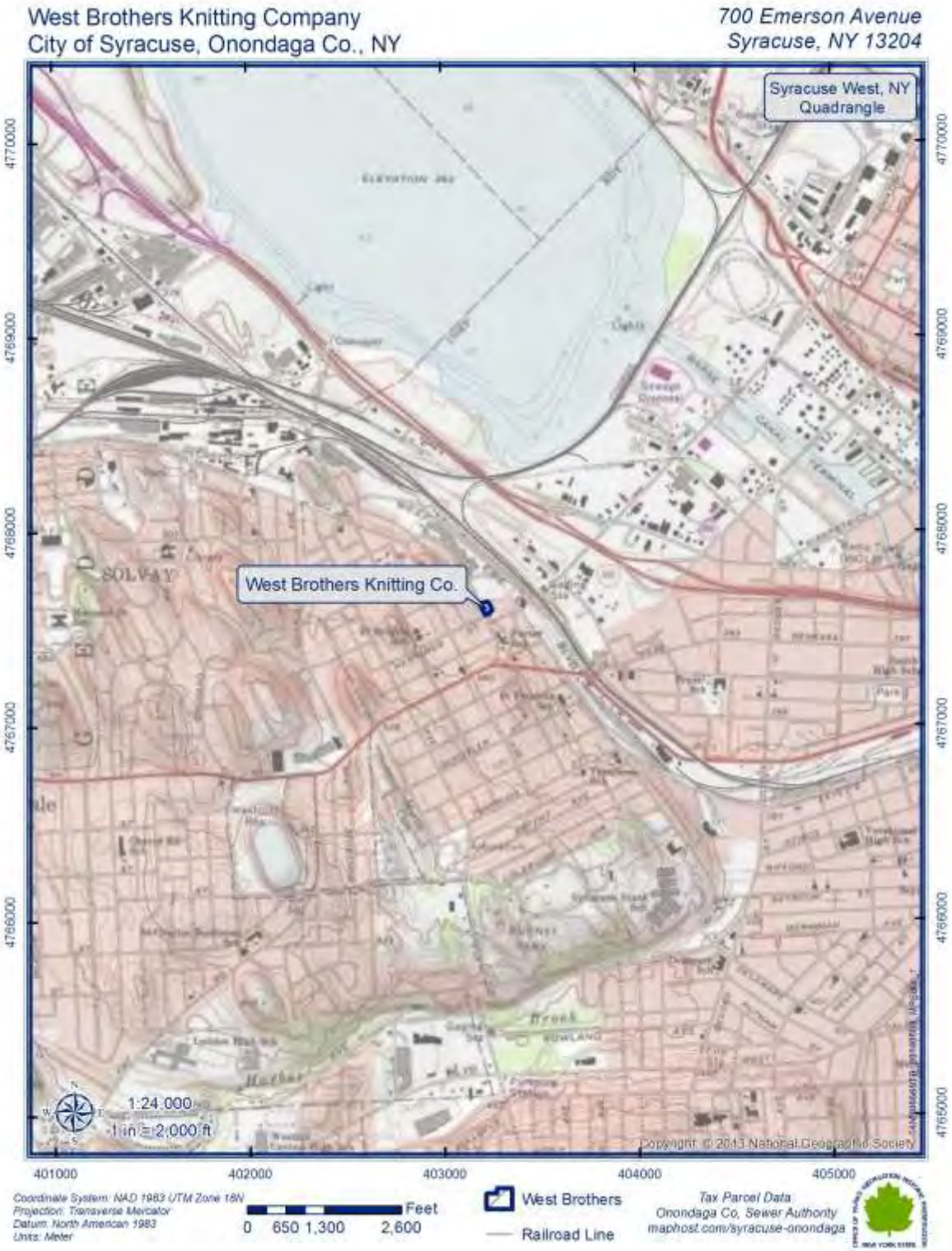
West Brothers
Railroad Line
Tax Parcel Data
Onondaga Co. Sewer Authority
maphost.com/syracuse-onondaga


West Brothers Knitting Company
City of Syracuse, Onondaga Co., NY
700 Emerson Avenue
Syracuse, NY 13204
Syracuse West, NY
Quadrangle
West Brothers Knitting Co.
SOLVAY
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Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter
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West Brothers
Railroad Line
Tax Parcel Data
Onondaga Co. Sewer Authority
maphost.com/syracuse-onondaga

West Brothers Knitting Company
City of Syracuse, Onondaga Co., NY
700 Emerson Avenue
Syracuse, NY 13204
∑ = .66 Acres
Emerson Ave
Kingsley Ave
Harbor St
Pharis St
Williams St
N Lowell Ave
Saint Marks Ave
Bann Ave
4767800
4767600
4767400
403200
1:2,000
1 in = 167 ft
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Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter
Feet
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West Brothers
Railroad Line
Tax Parcel Data
Onondaga Co. Sewer Authority
maphost.com/syracuse-onondaga

West Brothers Knitting Company
City of Syracuse, Onondaga Co., NY
700 Emerson Avenue
Syracuse, NY 13204
∑ = .66 Acres
Erie Blvd W
Kingsley Pl
Emerson Ave
Kingsley Ave
Lewis St
Harbor St
403223E 4767602N
Pharis St
Milton Ave
Williams St
W Fayette St
N Lowell Ave
Herkimer St
Saint Marks Ave
Rann Ave
School St
Emerson Ave
Erie St
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4767400
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West Brothers
Railroad Line
Tax Parcel Data
Onondaga Co. Sewer Authority
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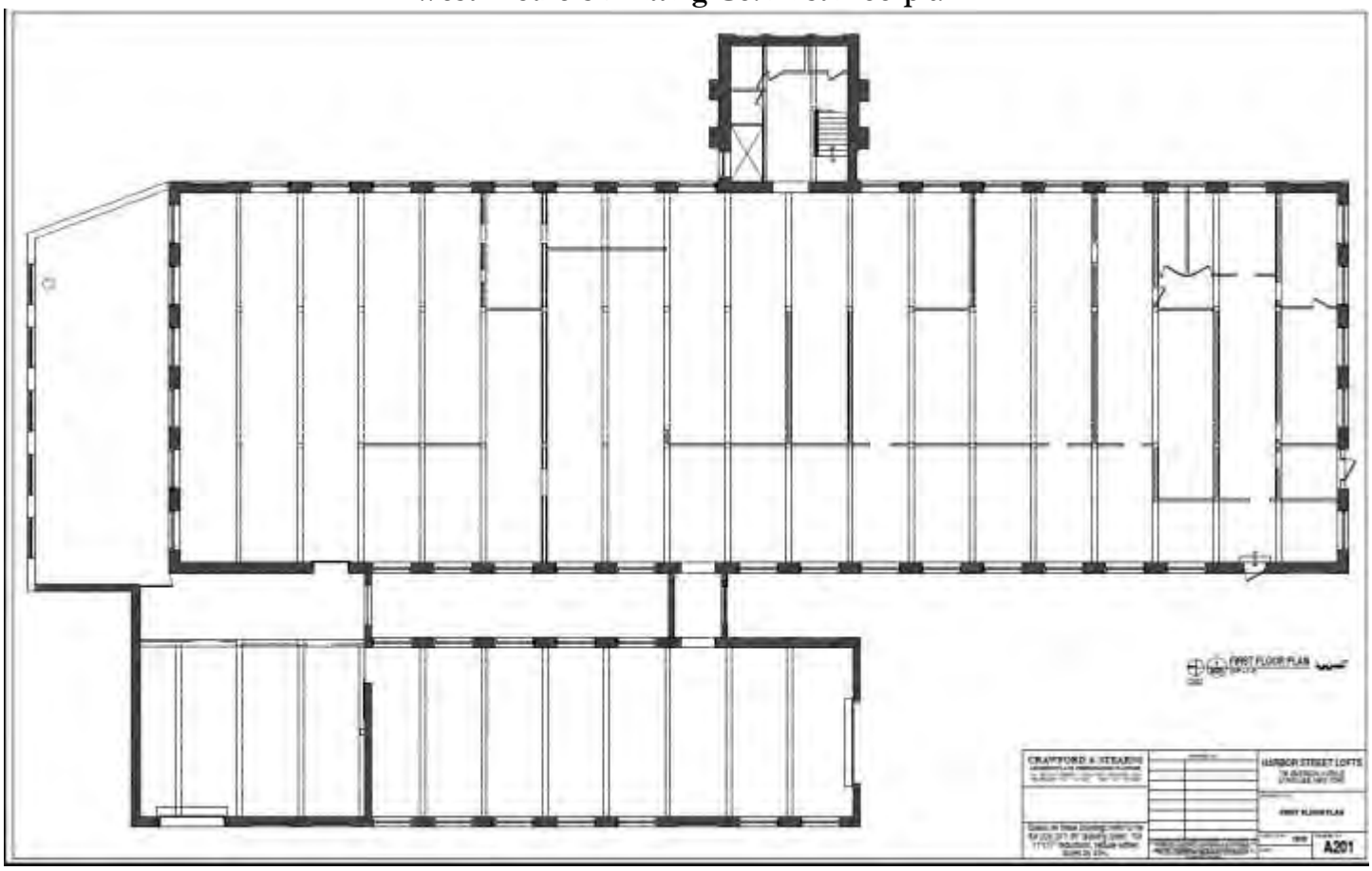
West Brothers Knitting Co. First Floorplan



West Brothers Knitting Co. Typical Upper Floorplan

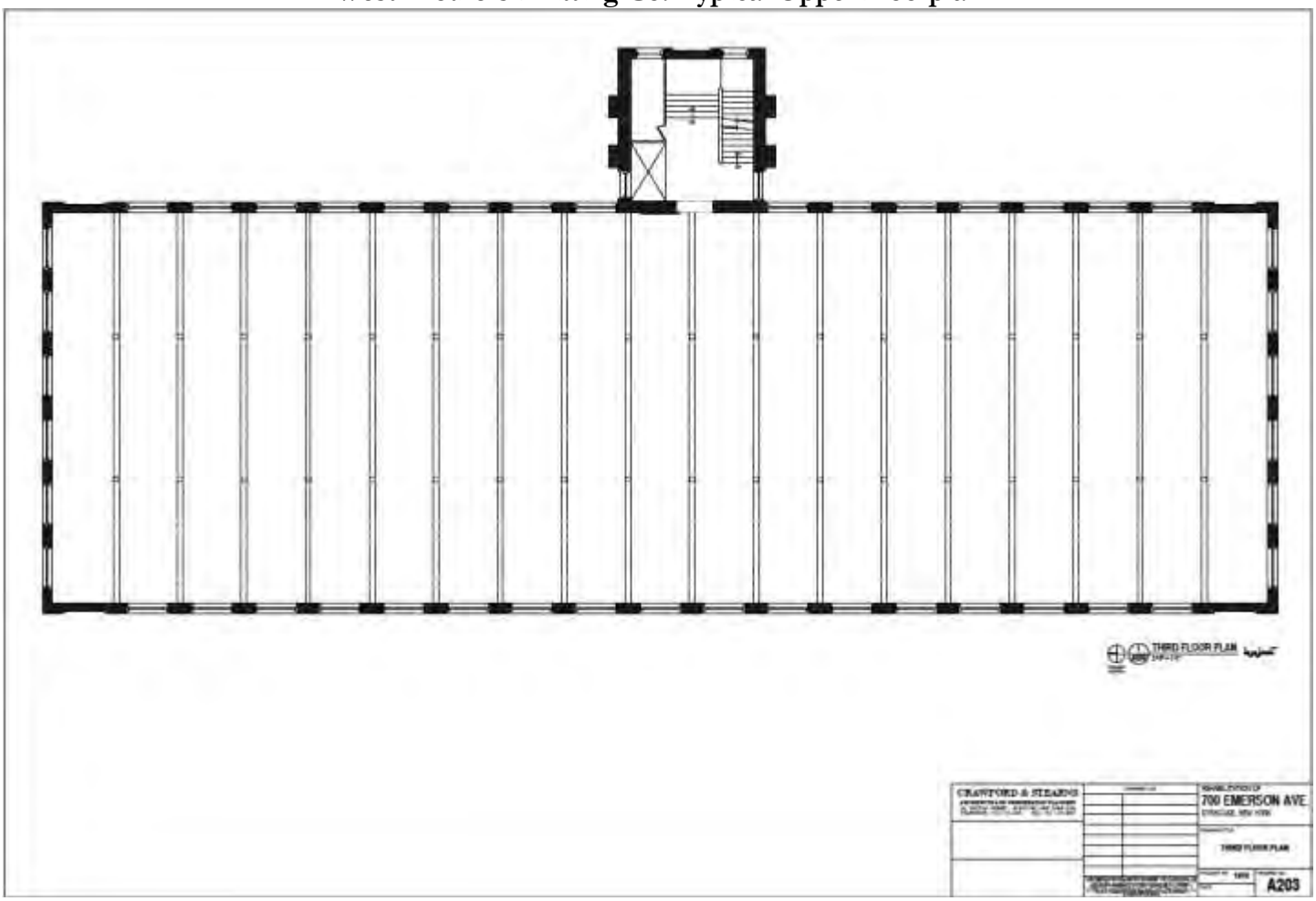


Photo Log (Prints from Digital Photos)

Name of Property: West Brothers Knitting Co.

Location: Onondaga County, New York

Photographer: Cynthia Carrington Carter

Date: April, 2014

Location of Negatives: NYS OPRHP

NY_OnonCo_WBK

PHOTO LOG

PHOTO	DESCRIPTION
0001	Northwest corner
0002	Typical manufacturing space, interior
0003	Typical load door and typical stair

EDCO
SALES
THE JOINERY

SMOKING
SMOKI