

LAWRENCE MACHINE SHOP, BUILDING NO. 4
70 General Street
Lawrence
Essex County
Massachusetts

HABS MA-988-S
MA-988-S

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MA-988-S

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

LAWRENCE MACHINE SHOP, BUILDING 4 HABS No. MA-988-S

Location: 70 General Street (bounded by General and Canal Streets), Lawrence,
Essex County, Massachusetts

Present Owner: GenCorp Inc.
P. O. Box 537012
Sacramento, CA 95853-7012

Present Use: Vacant.

Significance: This building was part of the improvements made to the Lawrence Machine Shop yard by Everett Cotton Mills. It was known as the Everett Mill storehouse and built in 1892. When the structure was built, Everett Mills was the world's largest cotton mill. Everett Mills figured prominently in Lawrence's 1912 Bread & Roses Labor Strike.

PART I – HISTORY OF THE LAWRENCE MACHINE SHOP, BUILDING 4

Building 4 is listed in the National and State Historic Registers as Everett Mill Co. Mill No. 4 and is part of the North Canal Historic District. Construction was completed in 1892.

In the 1890s, the Everett Cotton Mills began a series of improvements on the Lawrence Machine Shop yard. Mill No. 4 was part of those improvements and used as a storehouse. Shortly thereafter, the then world's largest cotton mill, the main mill of the yard (6 stories; 650x75 feet; 12 acres of floor space), was constructed to complete the complex. These were the last of the large-scale brick mills to be constructed along the Canal. As best as can be determined, A. H. Dennett may have been the architect of Building 4, as he was for the main Everett Mills building.

As part of the Everett Mills complex, Building 4 was in use during the famous Lawrence Bread & Roses Labor Strike of 1912. Nearby was the site of many confrontations between strikers and the militia, including the death of a woman, which led to the arrest and trial of prominent union leaders. The strike brought particular attention to the labor practices involving women and children.

Everett Cotton Mills ceased operation in 1929 and various tenants have used the buildings. Building 4 was bought by the Bolta Company in 1931, which manufactured hard rubber and vinyl plastics. General Tire & Rubber Co. bought the building in 1954 and continued plastics and vinyl manufacturing until it ceased operations in December 1980.

Based upon historical records and plans of the Factory Mutual Association and American Risk Management Inc., it is known that the usage of Building 4 varied over time. The upper levels (levels 3 and 4) basically housed administrative functions, i.e., general and engineering offices, though a portion of the 3rd floor was used for storage of cardboard materials. The cellar and first two floors included manufacturing operations for injection molding and finishing, storage of resins, scrap grinding, scrap storage, and extrusion. After the early 1970s, with the exception of administrative offices on a portion of the 2nd floor, these areas were used for resin and vinyl scrap storage as well as grinding and rework operations.

Since December 1980, a portion of the 2nd floor continued to be used as administrative offices and a portion of the 1st floor housed maintenance employees and equipment, as well as a decontamination station used during remediation of the property. The rest of the building remains vacant. The company changed its name to GenCorp Inc. in 1984.

PART II – DESCRIPTION OF THE LAWRENCE MACHINE SHOP, BUILDING 4

Building 4 is four stories tall, has a full basement, and is approximately 125,000 square feet (including basement). It is constructed of self-supporting masonry brick walls with interior framing, consisting of wood beams, wood and cast iron columns, and wood floors, all of bolted construction. The walls are restrained by pilasters spaced at eight feet on all sides.

The wood cover is wood planks supported on wood beams. The beams are supported externally by masonry brackets (corbels), and internally by three rows of columns. There is a monitor (skylight) in the middle of the roof that is approximately eight feet high.

Historically, the building was connected by two walkways to its former core buildings and one to the Everett Mills Lawrence Machine Shop; however, the building was physically separated from those buildings.

PART III - SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Interviews

Devaney, Robert J. Jr., Gauvin, Mark R., and Kfoury, Kasper J. *November 1995 – October 2005 GenCorp Inc. Lawrence.* GenCorp Inc. Lawrence Location former employees.

Gwardyak, Chester T. *October 2005, GenCorp Inc. Lawrence Location Project Manager.* Camp Dresser & McKee, Inc., Cambridge, MA.

Bibliography

Gwardyak, Chester T. *GenCorp Inc. Lawrence Location Comprehensive Site Assessment Report Volume I, Main Text-Sections 1-6.* Cambridge: Camp Dresser & McKee, Inc., 2003.

Kfoury, Robert T. and Stupich, Martin. *Graphic Sketch Plans.* Methuen and Boston, 2005 and 1996.

Poirier, Clarisse A. *Massachusetts Historical Commission – Form No. 809 (Form B – Building).* Lawrence: Planning & Community Development Department, 1981.

Zellie, Carole. *National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form.* Cambridge: Landscape Research, 1983.

Repositories Searched

1. American Textile History Museum
491 Dutton Street
Lowell, MA 01854
Tel: (978) 441-0400
2. City of Lawrence Planning & Community Development Department and Historical Commission
147 Haverhill Street
Lawrence, MA 01841
Tel: (978) 794-5891

3. Essex Company
200 Bulfinch Drive
Andover, MA 01810
Tel: (978) 681-1900
4. GenCorp Inc. – Lawrence Location
70 General Street
Lawrence, MA 01840
Tel: (978) 683-7123
5. Lawrence History Center – Immigrant City Archives
6 Essex Street
Lawrence, MA 01840
Tel: (978) 686-9230
6. Society For Prevention Of New England Antiquities (SPNEA)
141 Cambridge Street
Boston, MA 02114
Tel: (617) 227-3956

The above repositories were thoroughly searched and are all appropriate sources of information for this project. Very few historic photographs of this site exist, and those that do are copyrighted. They can be viewed at the Lawrence History Center – Immigrant City Archives and the Society For Prevention Of New England Antiquities which are both open to the public. These photographs do not show any of GenCorp’s buildings separately, and the two or three group photos show a large area of buildings partially consisting of GenCorp buildings. The best historic photo, which is owned by GenCorp Inc., has previously been submitted to the National Park Service and is now in the Library of Congress and Massachusetts State Archives (Reference: HABS No. MA-988-18 photograph). The American Textile History Museum has historic site plans of the general area, but all are copyrighted, though they can be seen at the museum which is open to the public. There were no original drawings of the site available.

The historical and descriptive information was all found in the records of GenCorp Inc. - Lawrence Location, the City of Lawrence Office of Planning & Community Development, Lawrence Historical Commission, and Camp Dresser & McKee, Inc. Lawrence Community Development and Historical Commission information included information that could also be found in the state archives with the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

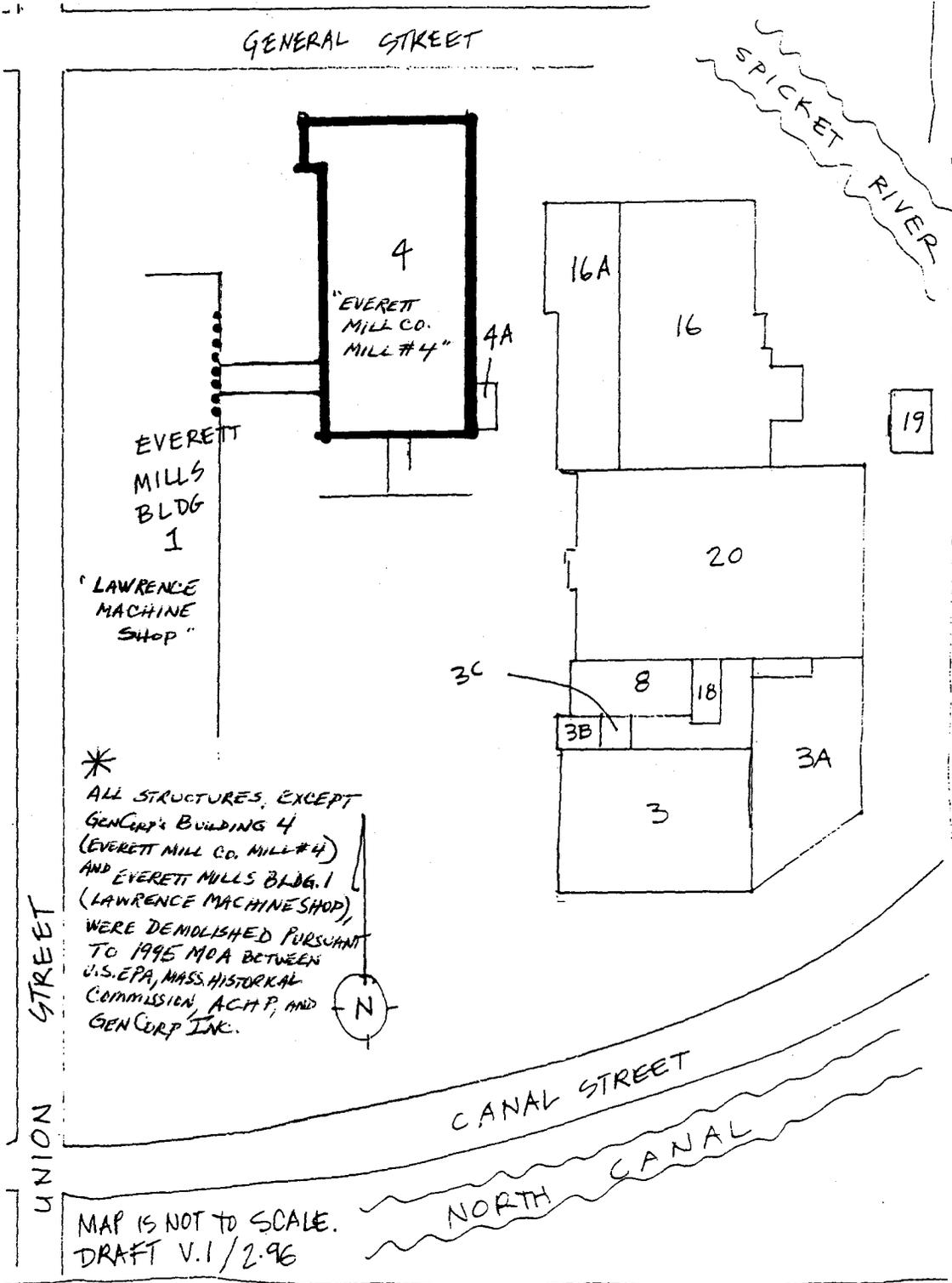
PART IV – PROJECT INFORMATION

This project is a continuation of an ongoing remediation project with this particular segment known as the Building 4 Demolition/Site Remediation & Re-Use Plan. It is part of a phased comprehensive remediation project addressing environmental, health, and safety concerns with the objective to return the property to productive use in the City of Lawrence. This phase of work, scheduled to begin in November 2005, is primarily needed to implement GenCorp's risk-based plan to address PCB-contaminated materials, which includes the demolition of Building 4 as part of the site re-use plan. More specifically, the work includes the removal of a few contaminated areas in the building prior to its demolition; remediation of soils, subsurfaces, and the commonly owned raceway systems; and the construction of a new drainage system, a groundwater treatment center, landscaped surface parking, and a passive park.

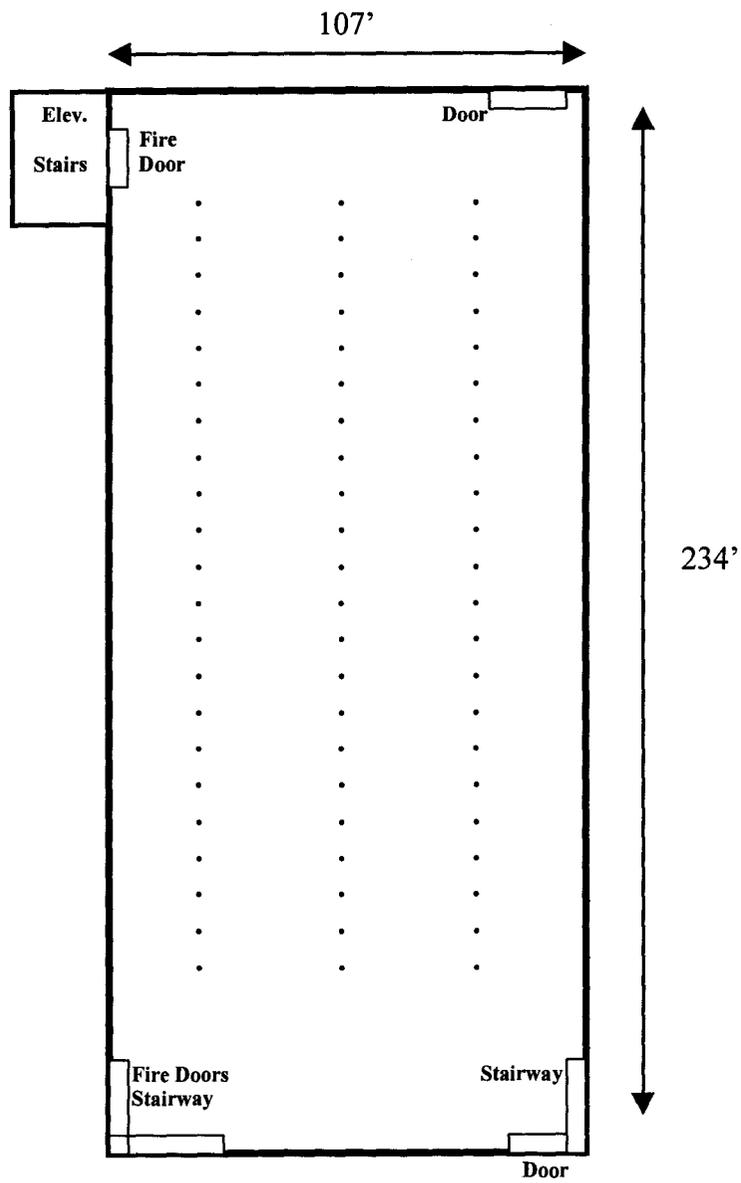
This program is being conducted under the Massachusetts Contingency Plan, with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MA-DEP) as the lead state agency and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as the lead federal agency, using a risk-based plan [*Remedial Action Plan Under 310 CMR 40.0850 Massachusetts Contingency Plan and Subsection 761.61 of 40 CFR Part 761-Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) Manufacturing, Processing, Distribution in Commerce, and Use Prohibitions (RAP)*]. EPA will approve GenCorp's Remedy Implementation Plan (RIP) in phases - pursuant to the Risk-Based PCB Remediation under 40 CFR 761.61(c) and the existing and pending National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit(s). Both agencies concur with GenCorp on the project. This record was prepared October 31, 2005.

Prepared by: Robert T. Kfoury, Esq.
Title: Consultant
Affiliation: CDM, Inc. for GenCorp Inc.
Date: November 3, 2005

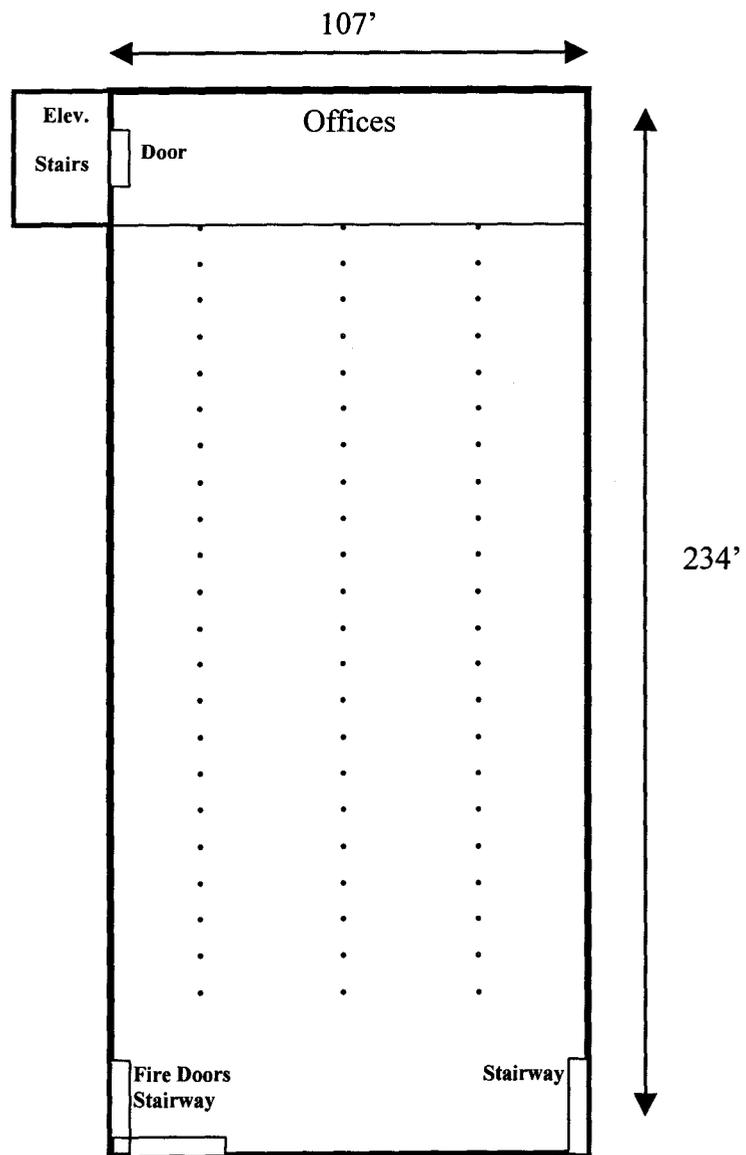
BUILDING 4 SITE PLAN



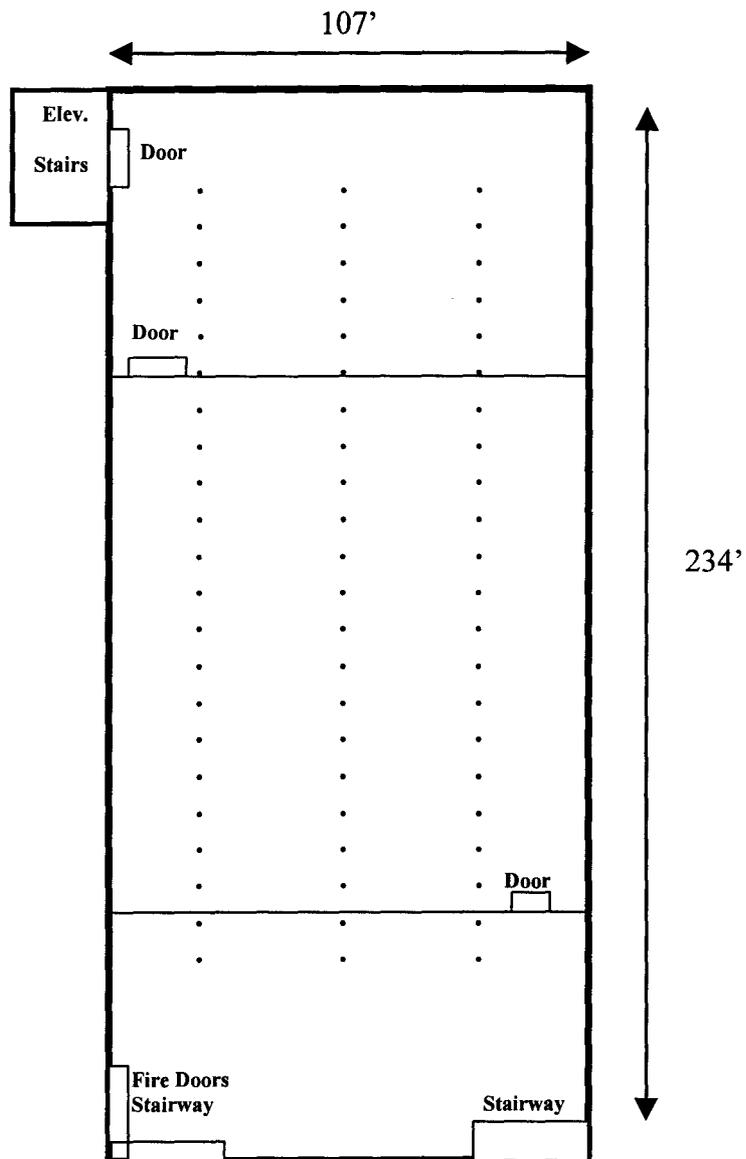
Building 4
Floor 1



Building 4
Floor 2



Building 4
Floor 3



Building 4
Floor 4

