

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

0A-2209

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

ELLCOTT'S MILLS (SITE) HISTORIC DISTRICT

AND/OR COMMON

OELLA, ELLCOTT CITY

**2 LOCATION**STREET & NUMBER East and West side of Maryland Route  
144, South of Patapsco River BridgeCITY, TOWN  
OELLA

VICINITY OF

SIXTH

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTSTATE  
MARYLANDCODE  
24COUNTY  
BALTIMORECODE  
005**3 CLASSIFICATION**

| CATEGORY                                     | OWNERSHIP                                   | STATUS                                                | PRESENT USE                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED          | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE           | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH               | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS             | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE     | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION | <input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE                   | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT              | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS         | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED              | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC                    |
|                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION     |
|                                              |                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> NO                           | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:                          |

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

MULTIPLE PRIVATE OWNERS

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. BALTIMORE COUNTY COURTHOUSESTREET & NUMBER  
WASHINGTON AVENUECITY, TOWN  
TOWSON

STATE

MARYLAND

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

BALTIMORE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY HISTORIC BUILDINGS SURVEY

DATE

1964-1975

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☒ COUNTY ☒ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

BALTIMORE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CITY, TOWN

COCKEYSVILLE

STATE  
MARYLAND

# **77 DESCRIPTION**

| CONDITION                                |                                               | CHECK ONE                                   | CHECK ONE                                         |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT       | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED         | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED |                                             |                                                   |

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Ellicotts' Mills Historic District (Baltimore County) is located on the east bank of the Patapsco River, opposite Ellicott City (Howard County). The Ellicotts' Mills district relates to the industrial operations the Ellicott family operated here from the 1770's through the mid-nineteenth century. The district consists of historic archaeological sites, an 18th century building, a section of an 18th century mill incorporated in a 20th century factory, a 19th century tavern, 19th century workers housing and an 1860 villa, united by the major east-west route in Maryland during the early 19th century, the old National Pike (old Fells Road).

The district is located in a wide part of the generally narrow Patapsco River Valley defined by the river on the west, Cooper's branch on the south and a steep rise in ground on the east.

The mammoth multi-story Wilkins-Rogers Company flour plant exists at the southern end of the district on a site where grain products have been produced since the Revolution. Constructed of concrete, brick and glass, the present plant is located on the site of the 1792 Ellicott Flour Mill, the first merchant flour mill in the United States. The historic precedents have fallen victim to the changing demands of the market, but remarkably a section of the 1770's flour mill is located in the power house at the southern end of the complex.

The original (1792) mill was located downstream from George Ellicott's house with its gable end facing the Patapsco. It measured 36 x 100 feet. Attached to the west side of the flour mill was a saw mill measuring 14 x 60 feet. This complex was superseded by a second Ellicott mill of 1809, then by the Patapsco Mill (circa 1830's). The mill was rebuilt in 1906 and added to in 1921. The present building dates from after a fire which occurred in 1941.

Traces of the race which powered the mill remain at the intersection of Old Frederick Road and Oella Avenue.

Opposite the mill is the George Ellicott House (1789). It is a two-story five-bay structure constructed of granite cut into rectangular blocks and laid in even courses. In the floods caused by Eloise (September 1975), the southwest corner was washed away. Some woodwork (e.g., stair rail, paneling around the windows) remains.

The central entrance is recessed from the exterior wall and paneled. A rectangular transom exists above the door. The door frame consists of a pair of pilasters supporting an entablature decorated with swags which in turn supports a pediment.

The gable roof contains two dormers. An enclosed chimney projects from each gable end. A one and one-half story wing extends perpendicularly from the rear elevation.

A similar 18th century stone house once stood to the north, but this building, the Jonathan Ellicott House, was destroyed by the floods caused by Agnes (June 1972). This remains now simply as an archaeological site.

(See Continuation Sheet # 1)

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CONTINUATION SHEET Ellicotts' Mills ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

As the George Ellicott House reflects the beginning of the family enterprise, John Ellicott's House interprets the prosperity of an established business. Built on the brow of a hill overlooking the flour mill, the two-story frame house (1859) is Italianate in design. It is reminiscent of villa designs published by William Ranlett and Andrew Jackson Downing in the 1850's. The romantic feeling of the architecture is repeated in the name of the building, the Alhambra, a probable reference to Washington Irving's Spanish Sketches (1832). The principal facade (west) is three bays long. The northernmost bay consists of a two-story porch which projects from the facade. A two-story porch supported by piers on the first floor and columns on the second extends across the facade south from the tower. The southernmost bay supports a third story which gives the effect of a second tower projecting through the roof. The three-part windows (two-over-two sash flanking a six-over-six sash) have shutters. The central door supports a large six-pane transom and is flanked by sidelights. The second floor which gives over to the porch is treated similarly. Arched recesses flank both doors. A contemporary newspaper described it as "...a very spacious dwelling, suitable for a large family, finished with marble mantels, closets, and water fixtures complete." (The Sun (Baltimore), April 26, 1861).

In 1895 the Ellicott City Electric Railway Company laid its trolley tracks across the property of the Alhambra. The company made a remarkably deep cut through the hillside sixty feet from the house in order to graduate the change in elevation down to the Patapsco riverbed. Although trolley service was discontinued in 1955, the 33-foot right-of-way and the deep cut remain.

Below the Alhambra and immediately north of the bridge on the Patapsco is the McLaughlin House, a tavern in continuous use since the early 19th century. It is a three-story stone and brick building painted white. The first floor of the principal (west) elevation has been altered for the present occupant, chiefly by filling in the windows. The remainder of the exterior is intact. The four second floor windows have four-over-four sash while those on the third are two-over-four. The cornice which extends around the north, west and south sides of the gable roof has brackets and modillions. The Italianate effect of the roof and broad areas of wall constructed in brick lead to the supposition that the original stone tavern included the three southernmost bays. It was probably two stories high and had a steeply pitched gable roof.

The Old National Pike (Frederick Road) threads north through the district and crosses the Patapsco to Ellicott City. This is the resurfaced road built by the Ellicotts to transport their flour to the Baltimore Harbor. In the early 19th century a group of bankers agreed to finance the extension of the Old National Pike west to meet the National Road in Cumberland.

(See Continuation Sheet 2)

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CONTINUATION SHEET Ellicotts' Mills      ITEM NUMBER 7      PAGE 2

North of the bend in the Old National Pike and on the west side of Oella Avenue is the site of the Ellicott Iron Works, a rolling and slitting mill established in 1806. This factory was replaced in the mid-19th century by a textile concern which united a four-story granite mill with a tower on the site. Neither structure presently exists aboveground.

On the east side of Oella Avenue stands a long row of stone workers' houses now called Granite Hill after the textile factory. Employees from the Granite factory lived here, and it seems possible from the dating of similar early stone worker's housing that these buildings date from the Ellicotts' period. The plain two and a half story houses sit on a high basement. Each unit is three bays wide and one deep. The windows have six-over-six sash fitted into plain wooden frames. The central door is covered by a porch. The gable roofs have shed domers in the rear (east) facades.

All of the aboveground structures in the Ellicotts Mills district predate the Civil War. The George Ellicott House dates from the 18th century. None of the property is federally owned.

**18 SIGNIFICANCE**

| PERIOD                                    |                                                 | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW |                                                 |                                              |  |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC      | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING      | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION            |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499        | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC    | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION            | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW                    | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599        | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE            | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS               | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE             | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE           |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699        | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE           | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION               | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY               | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799        | <input type="checkbox"/> ART                    | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING             | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC                  | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899        | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE               | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT  | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY             | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION      |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY     | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT    | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)     |  |
|                                           |                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION               |                                                 |                                              |  |

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the Ellicotts' Mills Historic District is derived from its history as the center of the industrial operations begun by the Ellicott family in the 18th century and as the site of continuous industry from that time to the present. The district offers a broad range of opportunities for interpreting the history and industrial development of the Ellicott family.

The Ellicott brothers, founders of the Patapsco Flour Mills in the 1770's, were among the first men in America to practice merchant milling on a large scale, that is, they carried on milling not as a barter transaction and service to their immediate neighbors, but as a capitalistic venture wherein they paid cash for wheat and shipped flour in large quantities to points overseas as well as to their nearest city market. The mills were built on a remarkably large scale for their time, equipped at first with the largest machinery for milling as practiced in the colonial period, they were added onto with a number of Ellicott improvements. The mill was much larger than the celebrated mill of George Washington near present Fort Belvoir. The Ellicotts were among the first merchant millers in the country to adopt the Oliver Evans (1755-1819) patented system of mill automation (1789), and they appreciated the cost-effectiveness of the Evans system of mechanical conduits for speeding the flow of grain and flour through the plant, untouched by human power from wheat storage bin to the packed flour barrel.

Herman Steen, historian of the flour industry, credits Baltimore's early adoption of the Evans inventions with helping to make that town the leading American flour production center from 1805 to 1836.

The Ellicotts perhaps gave the final push that ended the dominance of tobacco in the agriculture of Northern and Western Maryland, not only by providing an outlet for crops of wheat, but also by their missionary efforts to persuade farmers, including Charles Carroll of Carrollton, to specialize in wheat, rather than tobacco as the main money crop. They were certainly a factor in shifting to a money economy, and later generations of the family are found in banking.

The Ellicotts took it upon themselves, as had other great planters, to open roads to market when the public treasury was unable to provide for them. They built or upgraded road links from their mills to both Baltimore and Frederick which became the Old National Pike. In Baltimore, they acquired wharf property on the Basin and built the first Pratt Street piers by scooping out berths for ships and using the mud excavated to extend and fill in the pier to a solidity that would support masonry structures.

Even without the inventions of Oliver Evans, the Ellicott Mills would have drawn attention for their mechanical innovations. Members of the family were skilled clockmakers, surveyors, and experimenters. John Ellicott was experimenting

(See Continuation Sheet 1)

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CONTINUATION SHEET Ellicotts' Mills ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

with steam engines as early as 1787, unfortunately unaware of much more advanced technology already developed and put to work in England. There is even an unsubstantiated claim that John Ellicott tried out a steamboat in the mill race about 1792. (Ellicott City Bicentennial Journal, 1972, p. 42-A). David Ellicott in 1801 patented a grain drying machine, and in 1816, George Ellicott received a patent on a machine "for rolling bar iron edgeways."

The Ellicott Mills were in a location sufficiently prosperous to serve as the terminus of the first railroad to go into service in America. (B&O), and the subsequent history of the site is a reflection of the general history of the eastern milling industry in its battle with floods and fire, its change from owner-operated plants to investor-owned enterprises, its efforts to compete with the massive influx of flour from Minneapolis and other western centers, and its eventual decline as a dominant flour manufacturing center.

The Ellicott brothers, John and Andrew II, chose the site after examining alternatives extending as far west as the Blue Ridge mountains. The Ellicotts helped their success by convincing Charles Carroll of Carrollton who farmed 10,000 acres to change his cash crop from tobacco to wheat. The Ellicotts grew grain for their mill and constructed a road to Baltimore to transport the flour and to the west to transport the grain. A post office (1797), the company store and school soon appeared to serve the employees.

On May 4, 1789, Oliver Evans visited the flour mill to promote his steam engine. He observed the Ellicotts' inventions, including a continuous screw for mixing flour in the bolting chest, and suggested improvements. The Evans system included an elevator, conveyor, hopper-bay, drill and descender. These devices carried the wheat along continuous straps fitted with buckets, and by rakes, troughs and continuous screw mechanisms to channel the grain from farm cart or ship to the millstone box without human labor. The hopper-bay was a 12-foot revolving rake that pushed the ground meal from the loft floor where it emerged from the conveyor space and funneled it down the chute to the bolting chest. Oliver Evans was a "mail-order" consultant for new mill construction. After his death in 1819, no major improvements in milling occurred until the 1870's.

In 1809, the descendants of John Ellicott and Andrew Ellicott II partitioned the extensive family holdings. Jonathan Ellicott retained the industrial property on the Patapsco. The deed of partition lists Jonathan Ellicott's stone house (demolished after Agnes, 1972), the new Patapsco flour mill which replaced one that burned, a saw mill and two other mills, a warehouse, barn and sundry improvements. This deed represents the first mention of the Ellicott Iron Works, located above the bridge, called the slitting mill with a slitting mill dam upstream. The row of stone workers' houses may possibly date from this period. Their architectural style resembles stone workers housing in neighboring Oella of circa 1810. Whatever the period, this workers housing shows a concern for proportion, a feeling for material and a degree of craftsmanship which makes them outstanding examples of this cultural heritage.

(See Continuation Sheet 4)

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CONTINUATION SHEET Ellicotts' Mills ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 4

The Panic of 1837 brought financial disaster to the Ellicott factories along the Patapsco. Charles Carroll, grandson of the Signer, and Charles Gambrill took over the operation from the Union Bank. They retained the flour mill which continued to operate. In 1850 the Patapsco Mill was listed in the census as a merchant mill consisting of a \$125,000 investment with twelve employees and a water powered out-put of flour valued at \$270,000. After the 1868 flood, the Carroll family retired from the venture. The Gambrills' interests continued flour milling on the site through World War I. Subsequent owners have been the Morris Shapiro Company, the Donut Machine Corporation and the present owners, the Wilkins-Rogers Company. The site has had a series of mills destroyed and rebuilt in 1906, 1917 and 1941.

In the 1840's the slitting mill site, the Ellicott Iron Works, became the property of the Granite Hill Factory, a textile mill. By 1850 the company had built a four-story, steam heated granite mill, 48 x 168 feet, with gas lights and employed 40 men and 110 women on the site. The water-powered looms produced 1.35 million yards of muslin a year. Employees of the factory lived in the stone houses on the east side of the road.

Financial problems plagued the Granite Hill factory. The 1868 flood compounded the problems by reducing the mill to rubble and washing away the mill dam. In the 1870's the Union Manufacturing Company bought the property as part of a major expansion program. In 1887 the W. J. Dickey Company acquired all the Union Company's assets.

Located on the brow of the hill above the industries on the river bank is the Alhambra, a mansion built in 1859 by John Ellicott. This Italianate villa is architecturally significant as it relates directly to the contemporary published plans of William Ranlett, Alexander Jackson Davis, Andrew Jackson Downing and Calvert Vaux. Although the Alhambra does not relate directly to a specific drawing, the double porches, window treatment, roof shape and overall massing recalls the villa style. The use of a published design rather than construction based on vernacular traditions reflects the prosperity the Ellicotts had achieved by the mid-19th century.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES** -John M. Main compiled the historical data on the Ellicott's Mills. He is the authority on the Mills of Maryland. His material is available at the Maryland Historical Trust in Annapolis or the Baltimore County Historical Society in Cockeysville. The research was done in primary sources including Niles Register, the Baltimore American, The Sun (Baltimore), county records and historic maps. Secondary source material included theses and articles in the Maryland Historical Magazine, the Society for Industrial Archaeology and contemporary newspapers. (SEE Continuation Sheet 5 for Items 9, 10 & 11)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 45 acres.

UTM REFERENCES

A 

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Ellicotts' Mills Historic District is bounded on the west by the Patapsco River on the south by Cooper's branch upstream to the crest of the hill then northwest to the abandoned trolley right-of-way, then southeast along the northside of the right-of-way to Westchester Avenue then north up Westchester Avenue 150' then west and north and northeast following the rear property lines of the property on the westside of Oella Avenue to a point 600' southwest of the centerline of the Baltimore Gas & Electric Company right-of-way (See Cont.)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

See Continuation Sheet for Items 9, 10 & 11.

ORGANIZATION

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL \_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_

LOCAL \_\_\_\_

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

### FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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9. Alice (Mrs. Clyde) Martin of the Baltimore Historical Society and the Baltimore County Committee of the Maryland Historical Trust compiled exhaustive mapping data on the area as well as a complete list of property owners.

10. then in a straight line northwest to the Patapsco River.

11. John McGrain, Vice President

Baltimore County Historical Society  
34 Willow Avenue  
Towson, Maryland 21204

Summer 1975  
301-823-1844

Alice Martin  
Baltimore County Committee,  
Maryland Historical Trust  
Rt. 1, Box 98  
Phoenix, Maryland 21131

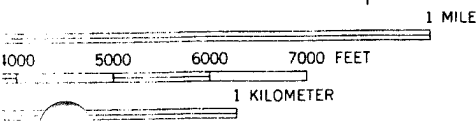
Fall 1975  
301-472-2128

Nancy Miller  
Maryland Historical Trust  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Fall 1975  
301-267-1438

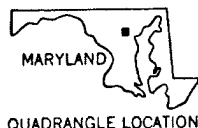


3 MI. TO MD 175  
WEST ELKBRIDGE 5.9 MI.



20 FEET  
LEVEL

P ACCURACY STANDARDS



BA-2209

### ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- |                  |       |                 |       |
|------------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| Heavy-duty       | ————— | Light-duty      | ————— |
| Medium-duty      | ————— | Unimproved dirt | ===== |
| Interstate Route | ⊖     | U. S. Route     | ⊖     |
| State            | ⊖     |                 |       |

ELLICOTT CITY,  
SE/4 ELLICOTT 15' QUADRA:  
N3915- W7645/7.5