

Location: 7 Mill Street, Almonte, Lanark County, Ontario,
part of Town Lot 22, Shipman Survey

Present Owner: John C. Cook & wife

Present Occupant: Pinecraft Ltd.

Present Use: Furniture factory

Statement of
Significance:

The importance of this building lies both in its unusual visual features and in its historical connections. In many respects it is a true 'survivor' of Almonte's past.

It was built as part of the original Rosamond mill complex and as such is one of Almonte's earliest woollen mills. Additionally, it has remained in operation as a manufacturing centre almost continually up to the present day.

Architecturally, it represents the so-called 'Almonte' style with its lighter stone quoins in contrast with the darker stone of the walls; moreover, the five-sided plan coupled with the 'two-tone' effect produced by the lighter stone of the top two floors makes it a particularly unusual structure.

Finally, it is a key tall building on Almonte's main thoroughfare, drawing the street together as it is reflected in the Old Post Office building.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The property was purchased by the Ramsay Woollen Cloth Manufacturing Co. in 1851 from Daniel Shipman for the sum of £100 and was described as a "mill site in Ramsayville". Both the aforementioned Shipman and James Rosamond were shareholders in the company. A frame manufacturing building was erected but was consumed by fire within the next two years. In 1853 the business was sold to Rosamond for \$700. He built a large 3½ storey stone building to the east of the present Pinecraft Mill in or about 1855. "In 1863 the capacity of the mill was doubled to meet the increasing demand for their goods"*. This was accomplished by the addition of the Pinecraft Building which was joined to the earlier structure by a third storey walk-way. Its five-sided plan is probably an adaption to the timber slide which once divided the property. The complex was sold to the B.&W. Rosamond

Woollen Co. (James' sons, Bennett and William, and George Stephen) in 1866 for \$24,000. In 1869, reg. 1870, the Rosamonds had built another larger mill on Coleman's Island and the #2 Mill was sold to Elliott, Routh and Sheard, which company had become Elliott, Sheriffs Co. by 1882. Both companies produced woollen materials. In 1892 the "Victoria Woollen Mills", by which name the mills had been known since their erection, were listed for sale and were not in operation. It was described as a large '5 set' mill. In 1902 the Pinecraft Building alone was sold to Richard Lee and Hirst Taylor, 5315 sq. ft. for \$5000, with the stipulation that the connecting passageways be sealed off. Circa. 1910 the older stone building was destroyed by fire. The Yorkshire Wool Stock Mills Co. bought the property for \$26,500 in 1919. In 1968 it was sold to the present owner, Mr. John C. Cook, for \$11,950.

2. Date of erection: c. 1862
3. Architect: unknown
4. Alterations and additions: An 1863 drawing of the B. & W. Rosamond Mill #2 would suggest that the building was originally only 3 storeys tall and that an additional 2 storeys were added sometime before 1879 when another depiction shows a five storey building on the site; however, these early drawings and photographs do not illustrate the 'two-tone' effect seen today. Charred sections of the structural timbers on the fourth and fifth floors are evidence that the building was at one time touched by fire and may indicate that these top two floors are basically reconstructions. A stone shed extension on the south side was added in the latter part of the 19th C. and with the raising of the street level basement windows have been blocked in. Upon the individual sale of the complex in 1902, third floor windows and doors were blocked in as well. The original casement windows, shown in early photographs, have been replaced. The main door was once on the single-bay wall.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The 'Victoria Woollen Mills', as the complex was known throughout the 19th C. was one of Almonte's earliest and most important woollen mills. Its original owner and builder, James Rosamond, was a driving force in the burgeoning community particularly with regard to the Anglican Church. His son and subsequent owner of the mill, Bennett Rosamond, held the office of Reeve in 1884, the year of Almonte's incorporation as a Town. With the acquisition of the mill by Bennett and his brother William, a third historical

entity was introduced in the form of the third shareholder, George Stephen. Stephen was later to become Lord Mountstephen through his involvement in and success with the C.P.R..

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views:

North Lanark Historical Society Photograph Collection

- i) The first Rosamond Mill, c. 1860
- ii) Lower Mill St., Marching Band, c. 1910
- iii) Ruins of fire of 1906, from Farm St.
- iv) Old View of Bay, c. 1900
- v) Shoddy Mill, c. 1935

Public Archives of Ontario

- i) Almonte knitting and woollen mills, timber slide, Ref. S15195

2. Bibliography:

Books:

Belden, H. & Co.. Illustrated Atlas of Lanark County. Toronto, 1880. reprint edition, Ross Cumming, 1972.

Periodicals:

- "Almonte Illustrated", Canadian Illustrated News. Vol. XIX, #1 (Sat. Jan. 4, 1879). 7-10.
- *"Almonte", The Saturday Globe. Vol. XLVIII (Sat. Sept. 24, 1892). 1-4.

Directories:

Ontario Business and Professional Directory, 1871
 Lovell's Business and Professional Directory of Ontario, 1882

Plans:

North Lanark Registry Office-

- Plan #189 by Josiah Richey, Coleman's Island, 1861
- Plan #208 by Andrew Bell, Coleman's Island, 1867
- Plan attached to Instrument #7391 (1902)

Public Archives of Canada-

"Plan of part of the town of Almonte shewing the subdivision into Town and Park Lots of the west half lot 16, 9th concession Ramsay. Surveyed and drawn by Andrew Bell P.L.S., Almonte, 13th Dec. 1869."

Deeds, etc.:

North Lanark Registry Office, Almonte, Ontario

PART III. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

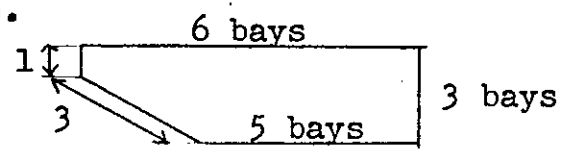
A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The building is a good example of the so-called 'Almonte' style - contrasting stone quoins. As well, the lighter stone used in the top two floors and the five-sided plan make it a very unusual specimen of its kind. It retains a functional integrity in its continued use as a manufactory.
2. Condition: good

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The building is approx. 100' deep by 30' wide.

bays:



This free-standing stone structure is 5 storeys tall with basement. There is a one storey stone extension on the south side and a two storey frame and stone extension to the rear of the building on the river side.

2. Foundations: The foundations are rubble stone.
3. Wall construction, finish and colour: The walls are squared rubble stone, sandy brown in colour. The corners are finished with dressed stone quoins of a darker gray colour.
4. Structural system and framing: masonry load-bearing walls
5. Porches: None.
6. Chimneys: There is a large brick chimney stack to the rear of the building rising from the roof.
7. Openings:
 - a) Doors and doorways: The main doorway is in the central bay of the angled south-west wall. It is recessed by about three feet and the recess walls are vertically panelled. The door itself is a plain vertical plank. There are also loading bays out of the southern stone extension.
 - b) Windows and shutters: The windows of the upper four floors are four-over-four light double-hung sash; however, the height of the windows on the uppermost two floors is approx. one foot greater than those on the other upper floors, reflecting the greater ceiling height on those floors.

On the ground floor, the windows are comparable in height to those on the 4th and 5th floors but are a fixed, six light sash divided centrally by a heavy wooden muntin. With the exception of the angled wall on which the two ground floor windows are both nine light fixed sash.

8. Roof:

- a) Shape, covering: The present roof is a flat, tar and gravel covered, type.

C. Description of Interior:

Ceiling height varies considerably from floor to floor. Ground floor, fourth and fifth floors being from 12-15 feet in height while second and third floors are approx. 8 feet high.

Also, depth of wall as measured on window sills decreases somewhat from the base to the top storey, from about 28" at the basement level to only 20" on the fifth floor.

The interior has been renovated to meet the needs of a furniture factory.

D. Site:

- a) General setting and orientation: The mill is situated on the banks of the Mississippi River at the intersection of Mill and Almonte (Highway 44) on the north-west corner. The main facade faces south, south-west across Mill Street.

- b) Outbuildings: None.

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

Compiled by M. Christine Castle, architectural researcher, under the auspices of the Almonte Local Architectural Advisory Committee and the Ontario Heritage Foundation, July, 1976.

Appended material:

- i) modern photographs
 ii) photocopy of 1863 Walling Survey, taken from Ross Cumming reprint of Illustrated Atlas of Lanark County, 1972
 iii) photocopy of Plan attached to Instrument #7391(Almonte), 1902.
 iv) photocopies of rough sketches of Plans #189 and #208