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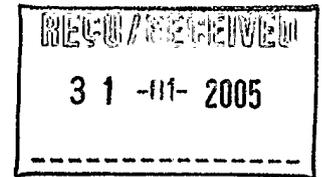


Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

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REGISTERED MAIL



IN THE MATTER OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT, R.S.O.
1990, CHAPTER O.18;

AND IN THE MATTER OF THE LAND AND PREMISES IN PT W PT OF E1/2 LT
31 CON 5 MARKHAM PTS 5&6, 65R18913, KNOWN MUNICIPALLY AS 4160
19TH AVENUE, TOWN OF MARKHAM, IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

TO: Ontario Heritage Foundation
10 Adelaide Street East
Toronto, ON M5C 1J3
Attn: Catherine Axford, Chairman's Executive Assistant

TAKE NOTICE THAT the Council of The Corporation of the Town
of Markham intends to designate the property, including land and
building, known municipally as 4160 19th Avenue, Markham, as a
property of architectural and/or historic interest or value under Part
1V of The Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter O.18.

A Statement of the Reasons for the Proposed Designation of The
Almira Flour and Woollen Mill, is attached.

NOTICE OF OBJECTION to the designation may be served on the
Town Clerk within thirty (30) days, or before 4:30 p.m. on the 24th
day of February 2005

Sheila Birrell, Town Clerk
The Town of Markham
101 Town Centre Boulevard
Markham, ON L3R 9W3

January 25, 2005



STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

The Almira Mill located at 4160 19th Avenue, is recommended for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act because of its historical, architectural and contextual significance.

Historical Reasons

The Almira Mill was originally built c.1844 and served the community of Almira for over a Century. After a disastrous fire in the 1940s, a large portion of the mill was destroyed. In 1986, the mill was re-built in a form reminiscent of the original using a large portion of the original mill which remained after the 1940s fire.

The community of Almira is located in Concession 5 on lots 30 and 31, midway between the 5th and 6th lines of Markham Township on the banks of Bruce Creek, a branch of the Rouge River.

The 1851 Census gives no evidence of Almira's existence, but by 1866 it was a small hamlet. The origin of the name "Almira" is today unknown.

According to Berczy's 1803 Report, early family names in the vicinity were Klein, Spofford and Bowman. The area began to emerge as a settlement around 1844 when a mill was established on the banks of the creek. Within a few years houses sprang up in the vicinity of the mill to house the workers who kept it running. By 1857, a post office was opened.

The Almira Flour, Grist and Woollen Mill was erected in 1844 by Benjamin Bowman on the north side of what became the village of Almira. He also built a number of houses in the community to house workers at the mill. From this pioneer miller, the business passed into the hands of Alfred Spoffard, and in April 1880, the mills were bought by Samuel Boyer Lehman, who with his two sons, Harman Daniel and John Willis, operated the business as S.B Lehman Almira Flour and Woollen Mills until a large portion of it was destroyed by fire on February 13, 1943.

This particular woollen mill was said to be "the only one of its kind in the Province". Five Thousand pounds of wool was manufactured there each year, all of it except the black wool from Western Ontario, purchased from local farmers.

In the 1980s, The German Canadian Folklore Society produced a detailed account of the old mill which is as follows:

“The large 3-storey[in reality 2 storey] brick structure was divided in half from top to bottom by a heavy fire wall of brick. The west half being the feed and flour section, and the east half the Woollen. In the Flour mill, there was a large French Burr Millstone, flour grinding complex as well as two grain grinding machines and an oat roller. The basement of the woollen mill held the large flume, three water turbines and scouring machines for washing blankets and special heavy all-wool cloth for horse blankets.

The first floor contained a heavy power picker for shredding the fleece, a complete set of carding machines.

The process of making wool at the Almira Mill was a major community activity in North Markham Township. In the spring, the farmers would drive their flocks of sheep to the old mill race and wash the fleece while on the sheep. By doing this the mill operators would pay more for their wool (Fleece). After washing the sheep, they would drive them back home and keep them in a clean place for a few days until the fleece was dry. Then the process of shearing began. The fleece was taken to the mill to be sold and to be made into blankets and socks. The woollen yarn was made up into an average of 200 pairs of socks and 200 lbs bulk yarn each season.

All the output from the mill was sold locally to individuals or in stores within a radius of 30 miles. Four people were employed in the mill during the busy season from April till October.”

The Almira Mill was a focal point of the area for decades. Its loss in the fire of 1943 was a major blow to the hamlet causing Almira to virtually fade from the map. A number of the old mill-workers cottages remained, however, as a testament to the thriving village that was. The mill was also not a complete loss, however, as a significant portion remained intact and was put into use for storage and local industry.

In 1988, the process of rebuilding the mill came about when Upper Canada Structures bought the property with the intention to incorporate the remnants of the old building into their new showroom which would take the form of the old mill. Today the reconstructed mill is again a landmark of Almira.

Architectural Reasons

The Almira Woollen mill is of architectural significance as one of only three historic reminders of the numerous mills which were once seen throughout the township and as a focal point of the historic community of Almira. The original mill was a large 2 storey brick structure with a five window bays fronting onto the street. When it burned in 1943 the top section of the old mill was lost leaving only one-storey flat roofed remnant which miraculously survived in that form for over 40 years.

In 1988, the original component of the building was sensitively incorporated into a larger frame structure which echoed the form and massing of the original Almira Woollen Mill. The renovated mill features wood, double hung windows with true divided lights, horizontal wood siding and a side wing clad in board and batten which incorporates most of the original structure.

Contextual Reasons

The Almira Woollen Mill is of contextual significance as a major landmark of the community of Almira and a tangible reminder to the period when the structure in its original form were the economic hub for much of north Markham Township.

Significant Heritage Attributes:

1. Overall Form and Height
2. Window Openings on the original section of the building;
3. Original structural walls and foundations of the historic mill;
4. Historic associations with the founding of Almira;
5. Wood Siding
6. Wood Windows with true divided lights;

IDENTIFICATION

Property: The Almira Flour and Woollen Mill
4160 19th Avenue

Legal Description: Lot 31, Concession 5

Owners: 4160 19TH Avenue Inc
c/o Karen Chadwick
176 Main Street Unionville

Inventory Number: E1-4

Assessment Roll No.: 160 985 00

Date of Construction: 1844, 1988

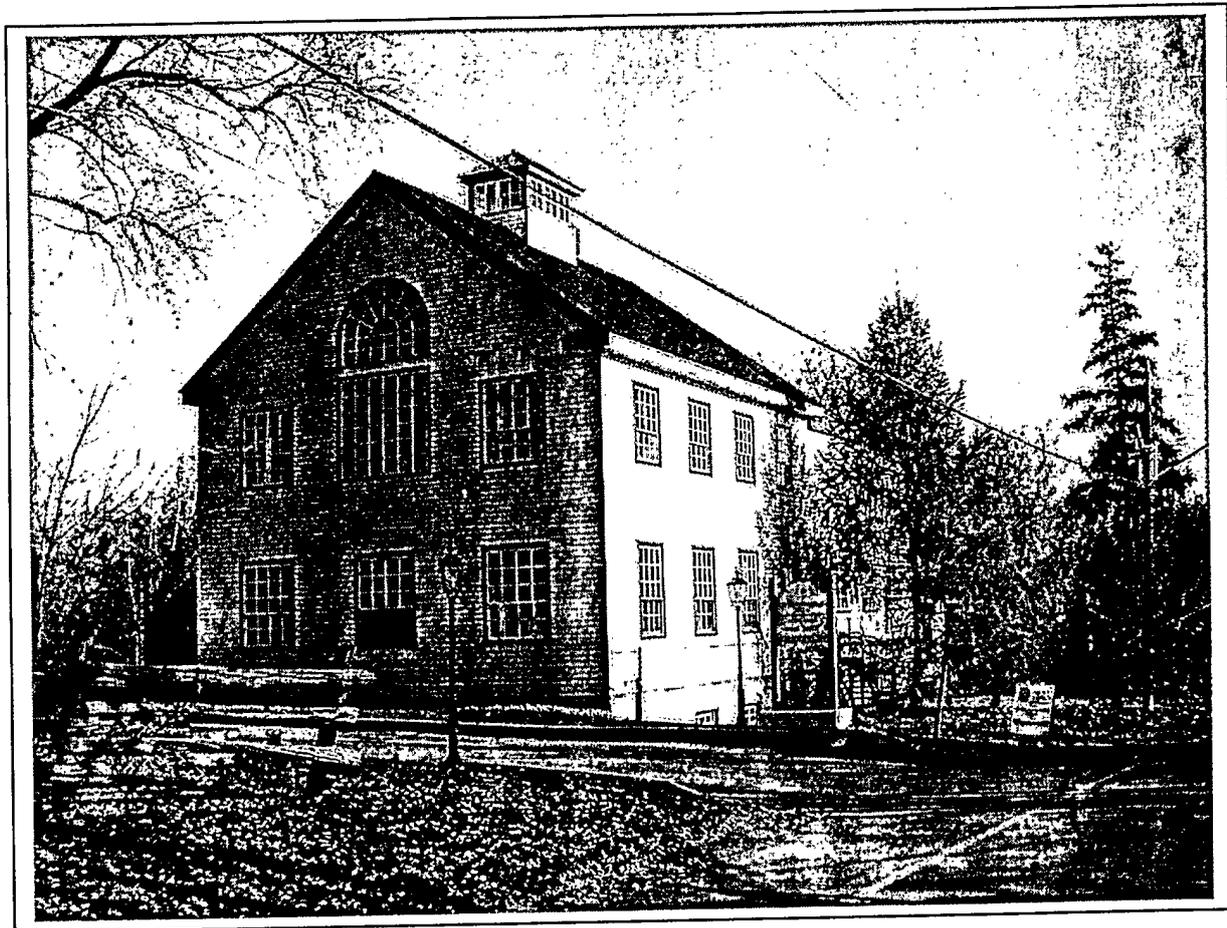
Style of Construction: Historic Renovated Mill

Type of Structure: Mill

Number of Storeys: 2

Exterior Wall Material: Wood siding over brick

DESIGNATION PROPOSAL



THE ALMIRA FLOUR AND WOOLLEN MILL

Built circa 1844
4160 19TH Avenue
Lot 31, Concession 5
Village of Almira

Prepared For: Heritage Markham

Prepared By: Michael Seaman
Town of Markham
November 2004