

VLR-10/20/81 NRHP-10/21/82

VDHR Reconnaissance Survey Form

Reviewed by D. Edwan

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES
PROPERTY SURVEY FORM
RECONNAISSANCE LEVEL

IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

VDHR File # ~~104-0212-000~~
104-0242

Property Name:
Historic/Current Armstrong Knitting Factory

NR Property Category: Building
Wuzit: Knitting Factory

Tax Code: Section Parcel
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35 132

County/City: Charlottesville (City)

USGS Map: USGS Quad: Charlottesville East

ADDRESS/LOCATION INFORMATION

Address: 700 Harris Street

Location:

Vicinity of: Municipality: ZIP: 22903

PROPERTY CLASSIFICATION INFORMATION

Property Boundaries:
Ownership: Private

RESOURCE COUNT -

#	Category	Contributing?	TOTAL:	
1	Building	Contributing	1	
			Contrib:	1
			Non-Contrib:	0

WUZIT COUNT -

#	Wuzit	Contributing?	TOTAL:	
1	Knitting Factory	Contributing	1	
			Contrib:	1
			Non-Contrib:	0

RESOURCE - GENERAL DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Resource Level:

Estimated Construction Date: 1889 -90
 Source of Date: Tax Records
 Physical Status: Existing
 Condition: Good
 Threat: None Known
 Degree of Historic Integrity:
 Association:
 Design:
 Feeling:
 Location:
 Materials:
 Setting:
 Workmanship:

PRIMARY RESOURCE RECONNAISSANCE DESCRIPTION

Architectural Style/Derivative: Second Empire

of Stories: 2.0 # of Bays Wide: 11 # of Bays Deep: 5
 Arch Config: Geo Config:
 Footprint:

Component	#	Form/Treatment	Material	Matr'l Treatment
Chimneys		freestanding	Brick	
Foundation			Brick	5-course American
Roof		Hipped	Metal	Standing seam
Tower		entrance	Brick	mansard roof
Windows		double-hung sash	Aluminum	1-over-1

Brief Architectural Description of Primary Resource:

This building is of a design common to many large industrial buildings of the period. It is a two-story, 11-bay rectangular block with a central entrance tower projecting on the facade. The main block has a low-pitched hipped roof covered with standing-seam metal, with projecting eaves and a boxed cornice. There is a small gabled dormer at each end of the building. Walls and foundation are constructed of brick laid in five-course American bond. The bays are recessed between brick piers. Windows are segmentally arched, double-sash, 9-over-9 light. Those at the second storey level are somewhat shorter. The ends of the building are five bays wide with the central bay on each level containing segmentally arched double warehouse doors across the entire width of the bay. The double entrance doors at the first storey level of the tower are set under a segmental arch. There is a pair of windows above them at the second storey level, and there are single windows in the sides of the tower. The tower rises above the roof of the main block and has a Mansard roof with projecting eaves, a boxed cornice, and tall, shallow, corbelled brick cornice

brackets. It is covered with standing-seam metal and has delicate metal cresting. There is a steep gabled dormer on each side of the tower. There is a small one-storey rear wing. Beside it is a tall, round, free-standing brick chimney with a bowed string course. A one-storey brick building northeast of the main building resembles it in some details, but lacks the style of the larger building.1987: All windows and doors in the tower have been removed and the openings bricked up flush with the surrounding walls.1993: The widows are now one-over-one, so the nine-over-nine sash were apparently replaced.

Brief Architectural Description of Additions and Alterations
See Architectural Description.

Brief Architectural Description of Secondary Resources:

Potentially Contributes to Historic District:

Potentially Associated with NR Multiple Property:

Architectural and Historical Summary:

HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

According to an agreement made September 25, 1889 (ACDB 93-424), the Charlottesville Industrial and Land Improvement Co. erected this building and conveyed it and a certain quantity of land (Block 2 of the Rose Hill plat (ACDB 97-34)) to James and James A. Armstrong, "upon consideration that they occupy said building for the manufacture of knit goods -- and employ sixty to seventy hands for a five year term and an average of one hundred day laborers." By 1890 the Armstrongs occupied the building. In 1903 the H. C. Marchant Manufacturing Co., (ACDB 125-252) acquired the building with the intent to manufacture silk products. From Marchant the building passed to the Charlottesville Silk Mills (ACDB 154-193) in 1913. In 1923 the factory was assumed by Amalgamated Silk from the N. Y. Trust Co. that held a 1922 mortgage (City DB 41-344 & 411, 46-151). It passed to Schepp and Rosenthal in 1924 (DB 49-179); to Julius Rosenthal; to S & R Silk Mills; to William J. Schepp, Inc., in 1931 (DB 72-46). The Peoples National Bank purchased the building in 1939. The Essex Pencil Corporation, manufacturers of several well-known brands of pencils, occupied the building from 1941 until 1966, when the building was purchased by the General Electric Co. The building was purchased by Rivanna Partners L P in 1986 (DB 488-703).

SIGNIFICANCE & RELATION TO EVALUATION CRITERIA

Built in 1889-90, the Armstrong Knitting Factory is listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Charlottesville Multiple Resource Area. The Armstrong Building's status as the oldest surviving factory building in the City and the only industrial building in the Second Empire Style, make it an extremely important part of the architectural and historical fabric of the City. The Armstrong building resembles the 1882 Charlottesville Woolen Mills Building (now demolished) and was probably designed by the same architect. H. C. Marchant, President of the Charlottesville Woolen Mills, acquired the Armstrong

Knitting Factory in 1903. It is not known whether he might have been involved with the firm from the beginning and thus have influenced the design of both buildings. The Second Empire Style never achieved great popularity in Charlottesville and no more than half a dozen buildings remain today. Of those, the Armstrong Knitting Factory is the only industrial building. Moreover, it is the oldest factory building still standing within the City limits. The handsome entrance tower with iron cresting on its Mansard roof, which was seriously altered a few years ago, has now been restored to its former grandeur.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Type of Record	Citation
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City Records	Charlottesville City Deed Book
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County Records	Albemarle County Deed Books
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Map	Sanborn Map Company
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Misc. sources	Albemarle Co. Hist. Soc. files
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PHOTOGRAPHIC/DRAWINGS DOCUMENTATION

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MISSING DATA ELEMENT

Media	VDHR Neg #	Frames	Date
B&W 35mm photos	13469	0 - 6	1/ /1994

CRM MANAGEMENT EVENTS

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MISSING DATA ELEMENT

CRM Event	Agency/Organization	Date
Survey	Community Development-Bibb/Huppert	/ /1974

IPS data entry-PAVA (Smead)