



P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
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**Item No. 15.4.1**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**April 8, 2025**

**TO:** Mayor Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**FROM:** Brian MacDonald, Chair, Heritage Advisory Committee

**DATE:** March 26, 2025

**SUBJECT:** **HRTG-2024-00694: Request to include 6 to 16 and 20 Ropewalk Lane, Dartmouth in the Registry of Heritage Properties for the Halifax Regional Municipality**

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**ORIGIN**

March 26, 2025 meeting of the Heritage Advisory Committee, Item 9.1.1.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Set a date for a heritage hearing to consider the inclusion of the subject property in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality;
2. Approve the request to include 6 to 16 Ropewalk Lane, in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality, as shown on Map 1 of the staff report dated February 19, 2025, as a municipal heritage property under the Heritage Property Act; and

**BACKGROUND**

At the March 26, 2025 meeting of the Heritage Advisory Committee, the Committee received a staff recommendation report dated February 19, 2025 and received a staff presentation on HRTG-2024-00694: Request to include 6 to 16 and 20 Ropewalk Lane, Dartmouth in the Registry of Heritage Properties for the Halifax Regional Municipality. Staff noted that should the Committee award the property a total score of fifty (50) points or more for the identified property, out of a possible one hundred (100), then the staff recommendation is that the Committee recommend the property for registration by Halifax Regional Council.

For additional background information on this item, refer to the staff report dated February 19, 2025 (Attachment 1).

**DISCUSSION**

At the March 26, 2025 meeting, following the presentation from staff, the Committee evaluated the proposed heritage property using the Evaluation Criteria for Registration of Heritage Buildings in HRM.

The Committee applied the heritage building criteria to the 6 and 16 Ropewalk Lane buildings in performing the heritage evaluation and provided the following scoring:

| <b>Criterion</b>  | <b>Score</b> |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Age  | 5            |
| 2A. Relationship to Important Occasions, Institutions, Personages or Groups | 13           |
| 3. Significance of Architect/Builder  | 3            |
| 4A. Architectural Merit: Construction Type                                  | 6            |
| 4B. Architectural Merit: Style  | 6            |
| 5. Architectural Integrity  | 9            |
| 6. Relationship to Surrounding Area   | 9            |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>51</b>    |

The Committee applied the heritage building criteria to the 20 Ropewalk Lane building in performing the heritage evaluation and provided the following scoring:

| <b>Criterion</b>  | <b>Score</b> |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Age  | 9            |
| 2A. Relationship to Important Occasions, Institutions, Personages or Groups | 5            |
| 3. Significance of Architect/Builder  | 2            |
| 4A. Architectural Merit: Construction Type                                  | 3            |
| 4B. Architectural Merit: Style  | 3            |
| 5. Architectural Integrity  | 4            |
| 6. Relationship to Surrounding Area   | 5            |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>31</b>    |

It was noted that the 20 Ropewalk Lane building in performing the heritage evaluation did not score 50 or more points on evaluation as a heritage property under the HRM Heritage Property Program and therefore could not be considered for registration.

Based on this evaluation, the Committee approved a motion recommending that Halifax Regional Council schedule a heritage hearing for the matter, and to approve the registration of 6 and 16 Ropewalk Lane to Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality.

For further discussion on the heritage registration evaluation criteria as it relates to this application, refer to the staff report dated February 19, 2025 (Attachment 1) and the Scoring Summary for Heritage Buildings (Attachment 2).

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Financial implications are outlined in the attached staff report dated February 19, 2025.

**RISK CONSIDERATION**

Risk consideration is outlined in the attached staff report dated February 19, 2025.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Heritage Advisory Committee is comprised of eight citizen members and two Councillors. Meetings are live webcast on Halifax.ca. The agenda, reports, video, and minutes of the Committee are posted on Halifax.ca.

For further information on Community Engagement refer to the attached staff report dated February 19, 2025.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Environmental implications are outlined in the attached staff report dated February 19, 2025.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

Alternatives are outlined in the attached staff report dated February 19, 2025.

### **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

#### *Heritage Property Act*

s. 14(1) A heritage advisory committee may recommend to the municipality that a building, public building interior, streetscape, cultural landscape or area be registered as a municipal heritage property in the municipal registry of heritage property.

#### HRM By-law No. H-200 - Heritage Property By-law

4. The [Heritage Advisory] Committee shall, within the time limits prescribed by Council or the [Heritage Property] Act, advise the Region respecting:
  - (a) the inclusion of buildings, public building interiors, streetscapes, cultural landscapes or areas in the Registry.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Staff Recommendation Report dated February 19, 2025

Attachment 2 – Scoring Summary for Heritage Buildings.

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Report Prepared by: Simon Ross-Siegel, Legislative Assistant, Municipal Clerk's Office 902.292.3962

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Attachment 1

**Item No. 9.1.1**  
**Heritage Advisory Committee**  
**March 26, 2025**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Heritage Advisory Committee  
**FROM:** Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer  
**DATE:** February 19, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** **HRTG-2024-00694: Request to include 6 to 16 and 20 Ropewalk Lane, Dartmouth in the Registry of Heritage Properties for the Halifax Regional Municipality**

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**ORIGIN**

April 23, 2024 Regional Council, Item 15.1.1

MOVED by Councillor Austin, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee

*THAT Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to provide a staff report to initiate a process to research and evaluate a potential heritage property on PID 40611576 for consideration for registration as a municipal heritage property in accordance with the Heritage Property Act and By-law H-200, the Heritage Property By-law.*

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- Council-initiated heritage registration request.
- 6 to 16 and 20 Ropewalk Lane (the 'subject property') contains two buildings.
- 6 to 16 Ropewalk Lane contains row houses (hereby known as the 'Tenements').
- 20 Ropewalk Lane contains a single-detached residence (hereby known as the 'Allen house').
- The Tenements were constructed in 1920 in the Hydrostone style.
- The Allen house was constructed circa 1903 in the Late Victorian Plain style.
- The subject property has associations with North Dartmouth's industrial history, including the Dartmouth Ropeworks, later Consumers Cordage Co.
- There are no financial implications identified with this registration request.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Should 6 to 16 and 20 Ropewalk Lane score 50 or more points on evaluation as a heritage property under the HRM Heritage Property Program, the Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) recommends that Regional Council:

1. Set a date for a heritage hearing to consider the inclusion of the subject property in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality; and
2. Approve the request to include 6 and 16 Ropewalk Lane, in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality, as shown on Map 1, as a municipal heritage property under the *Heritage Property Act*.
3. Approve the request to include 20 Ropewalk Lane, in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality, as shown on Map 1, as a municipal heritage property under the *Heritage Property Act*.

## **BACKGROUND**

Regional Council initiated the heritage registration process at their April 23, 2024 meeting to include the property located at 6 to 16 and 20 Ropewalk Lane, Dartmouth (Map 1) in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality. The subject property is on the north side of Ropewalk Lane, bound by Jamieson Street to the west and Wyse Road to the north. There are two buildings on the parcel – 6 to 16 Ropewalk Lane contains row houses (hereby known as the ‘tenements’) and 20 Ropewalk Lane contains a single-detached residence (hereby known as the ‘Allen house’). The following report evaluates each building separately to identify character-defining elements of the property.

This application is being considered in accordance with Sections 14 (Recommendation as municipal heritage property) and 15 (Registration as municipal heritage property) of the *Heritage Property Act*.

### ***Halifax Regional Municipality’s Heritage Property Program***

The purpose of the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Heritage Property Program is to help protect and conserve significant heritage resources including buildings, streetscapes, sites, areas, and conservation districts that reflect the rich heritage found in local communities throughout HRM. One of the aims of the Heritage Property Program is to recognize significant heritage resources through the inclusion of properties into the Municipal Registry of Heritage Property.

Under the Heritage Property Program, all registration applications for heritage buildings are evaluated by the HAC using “The Evaluation Criteria for Registration of Heritage Buildings in Halifax Regional Municipality” (Attachment A). The Evaluation Criteria for scoring a property and building are broken down into six categories as follows:

| <b>Criterion</b>                          | <b>Highest Possible Score</b> |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. Age                                    | 25                            |
| 2. Historical or Architectural Importance | 20                            |
| 3. Significance of the Architect/Builder  | 10                            |
| 4. Architectural Merit                    | 10                            |
| 5. Architectural Integrity                | 15                            |
| 6. Relationship to Surrounding Area       | 10                            |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>100</b>                    |

Should the HAC score a property with more than 50 points on evaluation as a heritage property, a positive recommendation will be forwarded to Regional Council.

### ***Nova Scotia Heritage Property Act***

HRM's Heritage Property Program receives its authority from the *Heritage Property Act* which seeks:

*“to provide for the identification, designation, preservation, conservation, protection and rehabilitation of buildings, public-building interiors, structures, streetscapes, cultural landscapes, areas and districts of historic, architectural or cultural value, in both urban and rural areas, and to encourage their continued use”.*

Sections 14(2) and 15(1) under the *Heritage Property Act* require that notice of recommendation be given to the property owner at least thirty (30) days prior to any Council decision to include the property in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality. The property owner is also given an opportunity to address Council before they decide on the registration request. Should a positive recommendation be forwarded to Council, heritage staff will ensure the required notices are sent to the owners and filed at the Land Registry. In this case, the property owner was advised of the Regional Council initiated application in a letter sent on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Staff have not received any correspondence to-date from the owner regarding this matter.

## **DISCUSSION**

Heritage registration applications are evaluated by the HAC relative to six evaluation criteria outlined previously, and described in greater detail in Attachment A. To assist the HAC in their evaluation and scoring, staff offer the following comments based on staff's research report (Attachment B).

*The following report evaluates the Tenements and Allen house separately to identify character-defining elements of the property.*

### **The Tenements**

#### **1. Age**

The area was originally part of Samuel Albro's North Dartmouth estate and subdivided in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century following Albro's death. In 1853, Richard Allen purchased one of the lots for a tannery operation. Allen's son, Fredrick, sold a portion of the lot to the Stairs family who later established a nail factory on the site. The Stairs family subsequently developed workers housing throughout the neighbourhood, including on George, Dawson and John Streets. The tax records for Consumers Cordage Co. list land on Jamieson Street for the first time in 1920 and the Tenements are listed by the 1921 directory. The Tenements are depicted in mapping by the 1927 Fire Insurance Plan.



*Figure 1: 6 to 16 Ropewalk Lane (the Tenements; 01 May 2024)*

As the Tenements were constructed in 1920, staff recommend a score of 5.

#### **2. Historical Importance**

The Tenements have historical associations with the Dartmouth Ropeworks and its workers housing, and more broadly the Ropemaking Industry in Canada.

The Dartmouth Ropeworks, later Consumer Cordage Co., was a long-standing industry in North Dartmouth. The company was started by the Stairs family, who operated an expansive maritime business empire. William Machin Stairs had started in ship chandlery and expanded to ship building and banking in the 1850s. Stairs founded a ropeworks company in North Dartmouth in 1868. William's grandson, John F. Stairs, was made manager of the Ropeworks and lived on a property nearby called Northbrook. In 1890, John and his brother, George, incorporated the ropeworks into the Consumers Cordage Company, merging it with five other plants across Canada, including plants in Montreal, Saint John, Brantford, Port Hope and Quebec.

The Dartmouth Ropeworks had capacity to make rope of innumerable sizes, including binder twine for the agricultural industry, and smaller rope needed for fishing and lobster traps. The Stairs family used their navel connections to sell their twine globally to fisheries in the North Sea and further south including Argentina, Australia and New Zealand. By the 1880s, the company had a workforce of 160 for the day shift and 62 for night. The company operated a meeting room and schoolhouse on the property and developed a plan for employee housing on George, John, Wyse, and Jamieson Streets. By 1899, the company was employing 300 workers and had a full night shift. During the Great Depression, however, the plant struggled, and was bought by Plymouth Cordage Company in 1938.

For its significant associations with North Dartmouth's industrial history and the ropemaking industry in Canada, staff recommend a score of 11 to 15.

### **3. Significance of Architect/Builder**

The Tenements were likely built by Montreal based architectural firm, Ross and MacDonald. The architectural firm designed and constructed multiple tenement houses in Halifax following the 1917 Halifax Explosion, and there are similarities in design with other row houses within Halifax. The firm was also hired by Consumer Cordage Co. to design a factory in Montreal on Saint Patrick's Street around that time. There are records of multiple houses built after the Halifax Explosion by Ross and Macdonald on Windmill Road, and Pelzant and Jamieson Streets. Although no documentation confirming the builders were found for the Tenements, it is reasonable to conclude that Ross and MacDonald designed the structure.

Although Ross and MacDonald had local, provincial, and national influence, their involvement in the Tenements was unable to be directly confirmed. As such, staff recommend a score of 1 to 3.

### **4. Architectural Merit**

#### Construction Type/Building Technology

The Tenements are wood-framed, 6-unit row houses. It stands on a concrete block (Hydrostone) foundation, which has since been painted. Hydrostone is a building material made of crushed stone, sand and Portland cement molded into blocks under pressure. Hydrostone was considered an economic and fire-resistant material, and is associated with post-Halifax Explosion construction.

Hydrostone is a unique building material in Halifax and Dartmouth. As such, staff recommend a score between 4 and 6 points.

#### Style

The Tenements are representative of the Hydrostone style. This is evidenced by the Hydrostone construction, shed dormers and gable dormers, small open porch with medium hip and hipped gable roofs, moulded fascia and verges, brackets, and moulded trim around fenestration. Half timbering was used in the Hydrostone style to evoke Tudor Revival elements, as well as exposed rafter verges and brackets (which has since been removed from the Tenements).

The character defining elements of the Tenements include, but are not limited to:

- Jerkinhead style roofline on the west and east elevations;
- Plain fascia along verges and eaves of the roof and dormers;
- Hydrostone partial above ground foundation;

- Projecting gable roof at each end;
- Hip-roof covered entrances with bracketed railings and simple posts;
- Paired windows on the first-storey;
- Projecting verges with exposed rafters along the gables; and,
- One-over-one windows with moulded wood trim.

As a moderately rare example of the Hydrostone architectural style, staff recommend a score of 4 to 6.

### **5. Architectural Integrity**

The Tenements have a moderate level of integrity. Based on historical imagery and visual inspection, the following modifications have been made to the residence since its initial construction:

- Removal of projecting shed rooflines between fenestration on the second storey;
- Simple wood piers separating each unit;
- The loss of some open porch posts and original bracketed railings, which have been replaced by iron or wood railings;
- The rectangular openings and spacing of the windows on the Tenements have been retained but have been replaced with one-over-one vinyl windows;
- The original siding has been replaced with vinyl siding; and,
- Removal of decorative elements, such as wood brackets and exposed rafters.

The Tenements have seen some modifications (e.g., removal of decorative elements); however, the original form and massing are still extant. As such, staff recommend a score of 6 to 10.

### **6. Relationship to Surrounding Area**

The Tenements serve as a reminder of the former Dartmouth Ropeworks which defined the community and its early development. Ropewalk Lane is named in reference to the former industry and there are historical and physical associations with other Ropework employee housing, such as the Nine Sisters on George Street.

The Tenements are a distinctive architectural asset that contributes to the historic residential neighbourhood near Victoria Park in Dartmouth. As such, staff recommend a score of 6 to 10.

## The Allen House

### **1. Age**

The area was originally part of Samuel Albro's North Dartmouth estate and subdivided in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century following Albro's death. In 1853, Richard Allen purchased one of the lots for a tannery operation. Allen's son, Fredrick, was granted the property in 1875. In 1903, Fredrick granted a narrow portion of the parcel to his only son, Percy. A structure is depicted on the property by the 1906 Fire Insurance Plan.

The Allen house was constructed circa 1903, as such, staff recommend a score of 9.

### **2. Historical Importance**

The Allen house has historical associations with North Dartmouth's industrial history.

The Allen house was built on the site of the former Allen family tannery.

At that time, the tannery was a continuation of the industrial character of North Dartmouth. The first mill in the area, Red Mill, was built between 1785 and 1800 and powered by the Albro Brook. Closer to the harbour was the Foster Cove Iron Works. American brothers John and Samuel Albro established a successful barking mill, nail factory and tan yard in 1800. The Albro Brothers were one of the first tanneries established after the Revolution and subsequent population boom. In addition to the Albro tan yard a new tannery was established in Dartmouth Cove, and another near Preston. In 1853, Richard Allen purchased a plot of land where the Tenements and Allen house currently stand to establish a new tannery. The Oland family later established a brewery on the adjacent lot. The Stairs family furthered the industrial identity of the area by opening the Ropeworks, north of the subject property.

For its loose association with North Dartmouth's industrial history, staff recommend a score of 1 to 5.

### **3. Significance of Architect/Builder**

The builder for Allen house could not be confirmed by available historical documentation. There is a possibility that the current structure is a remnant of the 1883 rebuild of the tannery completed by Lamont Gates; however, mapping and property deed records could not corroborate this. The Gates family have likely contributed to several Dartmouth properties around this time, but their work is poorly documented.

As the builder could not be confirmed, staff recommend a score of 0 for builder.

### **4. Architectural Merit**

#### Construction Type/Building Technology

The Allen house is a single-detached house with a parged concrete foundation with vinyl siding and corner boards. Balloon framing was the preferred method of construction from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The method allowed for buildings to be constructed quickly and used dimensional lumber boards held together by nails. Balloon framing is rarely used today but influenced contemporary platform construction.

Balloon framing, while common in its own time, was replaced by platform framing from the 1930s onwards, and is growing increasingly less common in present-day HRM. As such, staff recommend a score between 1 and 3 points.

#### Style

The style of the Allen house is representative of Late Victorian Plain style, characterized by the two-storey box shape, low-pitched gable roof, and minimal ornamentation.

The character defining elements of the Allen house include, but are not limited to:



*Figure 3: 20 Ropewalk Lane (the Allen house; 05 May 2024)*

- Low pitched gable roof;
- Exposed wood detailing and gable roof above the south elevation entrance, supported by rafters;
- Moulded trim around fenestration; and,
- Windows with a flat opening.

There are several more representative examples of the Late Victorian Plain architectural style throughout Dartmouth and Halifax. Staff recommend a score of 1 to 3.

### **5. Architectural Integrity**

Based on visual inspection, the following modifications have been made to the Allen house since its initial construction:

- Loss of decorative details along verges;
- Two-over-two wood windows have been replaced by two vinyl picture windows on the south elevation;
- Moulded wood trim around fenestration has been removed;
- Foundation has been parged with concrete;
- Front entrance replaced by a single-leaf vinyl door and narrow one-over-one window; and,
- Original wood siding, fascia and soffit replaced with vinyl.

The Allen house has a fair level of integrity with significant modifications to the exterior fenestration. As such, staff recommend a score of 1 to 5.

### **6. Relationship to Surrounding Area**

The Allen house is a remnant of North Dartmouth's industrial history which defined the community and its early colonial development. The form and massing of Allen house is consistent with the residential aspect of the neighbourhood beginning along Ropewalk Lane and extending down to Windmill Road, comprised of dense row houses or two-storey, single-detached homes. The Allen house is in keeping with the single detached houses along Ropewalk Lane, Jamieson Street, and the neighbourhood surrounding Victoria Park. The Late Victorian Plain vernacular design is repeated further down on Hester Street and Windmill Road.

The Allen house maintains the historic residential character of the neighbourhood near Victoria Park in Dartmouth. As such, staff recommend a score of 1 to 5.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The HRM costs associated with advertising and processing this application can be accommodated within the approved 2024/2025 operating budget for Planning and Development.

### **RISK CONSIDERATION**

As a Regional Council-initiated heritage registration request, there exists a risk that the property owner may not support the proposed heritage registration. However, the property owner has been duly informed of the application and, to date, has not submitted any correspondence in response.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The community engagement process for heritage registrations is consistent with the intent of the HRM Community Engagement Strategy. The level of community engagement was information sharing achieved through public access to the required Heritage Advisory Committee meeting. As a provision of the *Heritage Property Act*, no registration of a municipal heritage property shall take place until Regional Council has given the owner of the property an opportunity to be heard.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

No environmental implications were identified.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. The Heritage Advisory Committee may choose to refuse the application to include 6 to 16 Ropewalk Lane, Dartmouth in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality if the property scores less than 50 points based on the evaluation criteria. In doing so, the application will not proceed to Regional Council for evaluation.
2. The Heritage Advisory Committee may choose to refuse the application to include 20 Ropewalk Lane, Dartmouth in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality if the property scores less than 50 points based on the evaluation criteria. In doing so, the application will not proceed to Regional Council for evaluation.

### **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

*The Heritage Property Act.*

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Map 1: Location Map

Attachment A: Evaluation Criteria

Attachment B: Research Report

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Report Prepared by: Elizabeth Cushing, Heritage Planner II, 902.478.2586

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**Map 1 - Location Map**

6-20 Ropewalk Lane,  
Dartmouth

**HALIFAX**



Subject Properties



HRM does not guarantee the accuracy of any representation on this plan.

# **Attachment A**

## **HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY HERITAGE PROPERTY PROGRAM EVALUATION CRITERIA**

**EVALUATION CRITERIA  
FOR REGISTRATION OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS (Revised 2004)**

**1. AGE**

Age is probably the single most important factor in the popular understanding of the heritage value of buildings. The following age categories are based on local, national and international occasions that may be considered to have defined the character of what is how the Halifax Regional Municipality and its architecture.

| Date of Construction | Points | Timeline   |
|----------------------|--------|--|
| 1749 - 1785          | 25     | Halifax Garrison Town to the Loyalist migration          |
| 1786 - 1830          | 20     | Boom period following construction of Shubenacadie Canal |
| 1831 - 1867          | 16     | From Boom to Confederation                               |
| 1868 - 1899          | 13     | Confederation to the end of the 19 <sup>th</sup> century |
| 1900 - 1917          | 9      | Turn of the Century to Halifax Harbour Explosion         |
| 1918 - 1945          | 5      | The War Years  |
| 1945 - Present       | 3      | Post-War   |

*\* Maximum score of 25 points in this category*

**2. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE**

A building can receive points for:

- A) Having specific associations with important occasions, institutions, personages and groups,  
**OR**  
B) For being architecturally important unique/representative of a particular period.

**2A) Relationship to Important Occasions, Institutions, Personages or Groups**

| Nationally         | Points  | Comments |
|--------------------|---------|----------|
| Intimately Related | 16 - 20 |          |
| Moderately Related | 11 - 15 |          |
| Loosely Related    | 1 - 10  |          |
| Provincially       | Points  | Comments |
| Intimately Related | 11 - 15 |          |
| Moderately Related | 6 - 10  |          |
| Loosely Related    | 1 - 5   |          |

| Locally   | Points  | Comments |
|---|---------|----------|
| Intimately Related  | 11 - 15 |          |
| Moderately Related  | 6 - 10  |          |
| Loosely Related   | 1 - 5   |          |
| No relationship to important occasions, institutions, personages or groups. | 0       |          |

*\* Maximum score of 20 points in this category, scoring from one of the three categories only*

## 2B) Important/Unique Architectural Style or Highly Representative of an Era

| Importance  | Points  | Comments |
|---|---------|----------|
| Highly important, Unique, or representative of an era     | 16 - 20 |          |
| Moderately important, Unique, or representative of an era | 11 - 15 |          |
| Somewhat important, or representative of an era           | 10 - 1  |          |
| Not important, Unique, or representative of an era        | 0       |          |

*\* Maximum score of 20 points in this category.*

## 3. SIGNIFICANCE OF ARCHITECT/BUILDER

Is the structure representative of the work of an architect or builder of local, provincial or national importance?

| Status                   | Points | Comments |
|--------------------------|--------|----------|
| Nationally               | 7 - 10 |          |
| Provincially Significant | 4 - 6  |          |
| Locally Significant      | 1 - 3  |          |
| Not Significant          | 0      |          |

*\* Maximum score of 10 points in this category.*

#### 4. ARCHITECTURAL MERIT

The assessment of architectural merit is based on two factors:

A) **Construction type/building technology**: which refers to the method by which the structure was built (early or rare uses of materials), and building techniques;

AND

B) **Style**: which refers to the form or appearance of the architecture.

| <b>Construction Type/Building Technology</b> |               |                 |
|--|---------------|-----------------|
| <b>A) Construction type</b>                  | <b>Points</b> | <b>Comments</b> |
| Very rare/ early example                     | 7 - 10        |                 |
| Moderately rare/ early                       | 4 - 6         |                 |
| Somewhat rare/ early example                 | 1 - 3         |                 |
| Not rare/ common example                     | 0             |                 |
| <b>B) Style</b>                              | <b>Points</b> | <b>Comments</b> |
| Very rare/ early example                     | 7 - 10        |                 |
| Moderately rare/ early                       | 4 - 6         |                 |
| Somewhat rare/ early example                 | 1 - 3         |                 |
| Not rare/ common example                     | 0             |                 |

*\* Maximum score of 10 points for Construction Type, and a maximum score of 10 for Style - a total maximum of 20 points in this category.*

#### 5. ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRITY

Architectural Integrity refers to the extent to which the building retains original features/ structures/ styles, not the state of the building's condition.

| <b>Architecture</b>   | Consider any additions/ removal/ alterations to windows, doors, porches, dormers, roof lines, foundations, chimneys, and cladding. |                 |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------|
| <b>Exterior</b>       | <b>Points</b>  | <b>Comments</b> |
| Largely unchanged     | 11 - 15  |                 |
| Modest changes        | 6 - 10   |                 |
| Major changes         | 1 - 5  |                 |
| Seriously compromised | 0  |                 |

*\* Maximum score of 15 points in this category.*

**6. RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING AREA**

| <b>Points</b> | <b>Comments</b>  |
|---------------|--|
| 6 - 10        | The building is an important architectural asset contributing to the heritage character of the surrounding area. |
| 1 - 5         | The Architecture is compatible with the surrounding area and maintains its heritage character.                   |
| 0             | Does not contribute to the character of the surrounding area.  |

*\* Maximum score of 10 points in this category.*



## Attachment B

# Research Report

6 to 16 and 20 Ropewalk Lane, Dartmouth

**Prepared by:**

HRM Planning & Development  
Alex Kitson, Heritage Planning Researcher

07 February 2024

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## **NOTE:**

**To ensure chronological clarity, this report presents the findings related to the heritage criteria in historical chronological order. In contrast, the staff report organizes the assessment by civic address.**

## Age

6 to 16 and 20 Ropewalk Lane (formerly part of Jamieson Street) are on the north side of Ropewalk Lane, bound by Jamieson Street to the west and Wyse Road to the north, in Dartmouth. There are two buildings on the parcel - 6 to 16 Ropewalk Lane contains row houses (hereby the 'Tenements'), and 20 Ropewalk Lane contains a single-detached residence (hereby 'Allen House').

The area was originally part of Samuel Albro's North Dartmouth estate and subdivided in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century following Albro's death. In 1853, Richard Allen purchased one of the lots (Book 103, Page 348). Before that, Allen was living in Woodside operating his family's tannery (Stayner, 1950). There was a stream running through Wyse Road that was well-situated for the tannery as well as several other industries that developed in North Dartmouth, including the Grist Mill, the Albro Rockland tannery, and a nail factory (Forsyth, 2002). The 1861 census shows Richard A. Allen living in Dartmouth beside James and Nathan Broadie and Dennis Bolan ('Richard Allen', 1861), all listed as landowners in North Dartmouth. Soon after, the Stairs family purchased a large plot of Albro's land north of the Allen tannery to start a large ropeworks factory. It was called Dartmouth Ropeworks, Dartmouth Manufacturing, and later Consumer Cordage (Forsyth, 2002; Frost, 2001). It operated adjacent to the same stream that ran through the Allen property. Allen's tannery is also visible on the 1878 Dartmouth Grant Map (Figure 1).

### Allen House

Richard Allen granted his parcel to his son, Fredrick S. Allen, in 1875, who continued to operate the tannery on the property. In 1881, the tannery suffered a fire, and in 1883 was rebuilt by Lamont Gates (builder and uncle to well-known Dartmouth architect, Herbert Elliot Gates) as a two-story rectangular building with a one-story ell (The Dartmouth Times, 1883). This building is depicted in an 1888 Military Map of the area (Figure 2). The same map shows a second residential structure on the lot, further up Jamieson towards Wyse Road for the first time, likely the Allen's family home. In 1889, Fredrick sold a portion of his land to the north of the tannery along the stream to the Stairs family for three thousand dollars, with a right of entry to clear the stream (Book 270, Page 185).

In 1903, Fredrick's only son, Percy, married and Fredrick divided his property again the following year. Fredrick granted Percy a narrow lot where the Allen House now stands (Book 364, see Figure 11). This was around the time Fredrick was winding down the tannery operations, as he is listed in the directories less frequently as a tanner. Percy moved into a separate residence on Jamieson Street at this time as noted on the Tax Assessment Rolls (Figure 4), which was almost certainly the Allen House. The location of the Allen House on the 1906 Fire Insurance Map is similar in orientation and massing to the structure on the 1888 map, making it a possible renovation to the 1883 former tannery built by Lamont Gates (see Figure 11). The two-storey section described in the newspaper clipping could well be the house as depicted in the 1906 Fire Insurance Plan (Figure 3) with the rear one level ell being what remains of the original ell. There is insufficient documentation available to confirm; however, it may also be an entirely new structure. By 1906, Percy's family was living in the Allen House on the narrow lot shown on Figure 3, with a construction date of circa 1903.

After Fredrick's death in 1910, he willed his land on Jamieson Street to his daughters, Blanch and Maud (Book 421, Page 38). Maud (now married to David Oland) moved her family to Jamieson Street to live beside Percy based on Property Tax Assessment records ('Oland', 1911) and the directories (McAlpine's, 1911). The two families occupied the two houses on Ropewalk Lane (then Jamieson Street) as shown in the 1906 Fire insurance map (see Figure 3).



Figure 1: Dartmouth Grant Map 1878 showing beginning of what would be Ropewalk Lane splitting off from Wyse Road, and Allen's Tannery. Dartmouth Ropewalk is visible to the north (Hopkins, 1878).



Figure 2: 1888 Military Map showing development of North Dartmouth with red arrow pointing to Allen property (Akers, 1888)

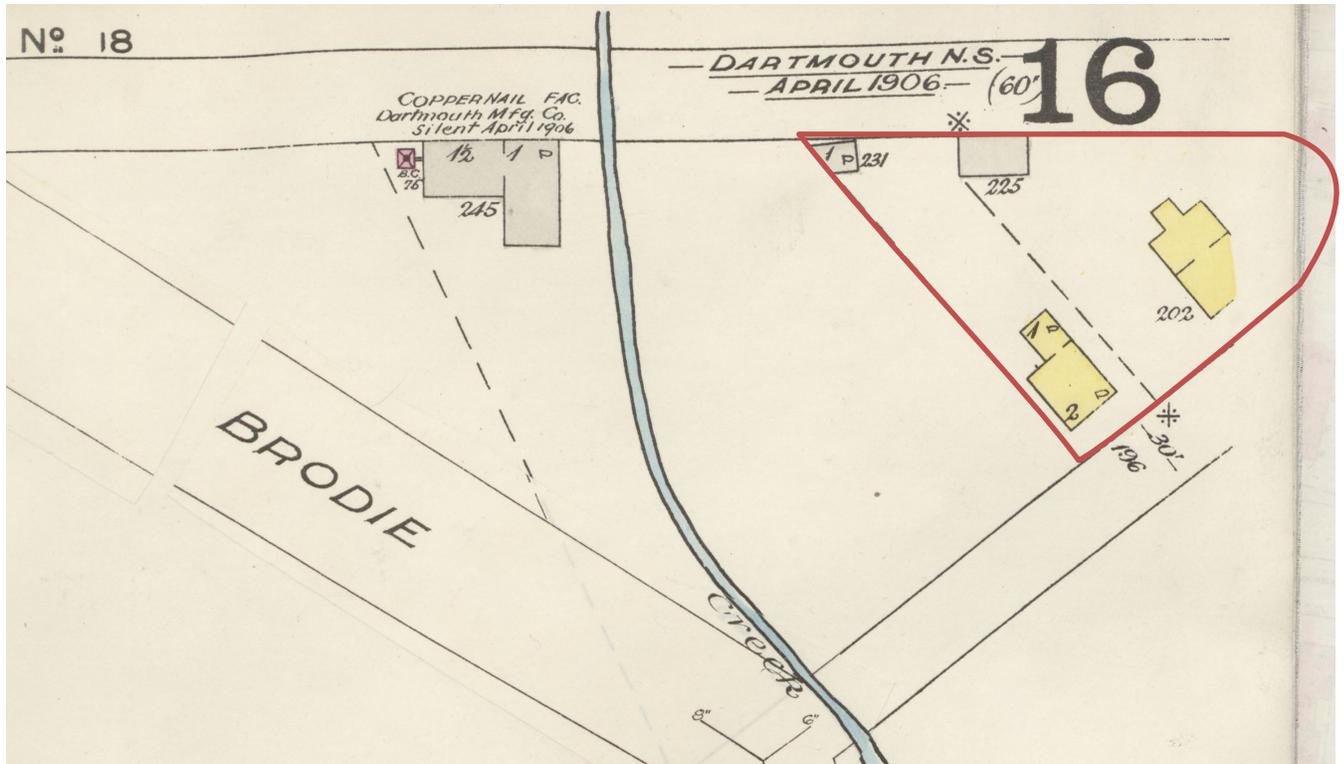


Figure 3: 1906 Fire Insurance Plan for Dartmouth with Allen property outlined in red (Charles Goad, 1906).

## The Tenements

The Stairs family established a nail factory on a portion of the site purchased from Fredrick Allen in 1889. The south portion of the property was not used for tenement housing until 1920, after the Allen's tannery was no longer in operation. The Stairs family developed the area further south for employee housing along what would become George, Dawson, and John Streets. The company is also credited with extending Jamieson Street to the waterfront for access to the wharf, raw materials, and finished products (Chapman, 2000). It was not until after the Halifax Explosion that tenement houses were built on Jamieson Street. The tax records for Consumers Cordage Co. list land on Jamieson Street for the first time in 1920 (Figure 5) and the Tenements are listed by 1921 (Figure 6). The land granted to the Dartmouth Ropeworks is confirmed by a land survey from 1917 (Figure 7). The 1927 revision to the 1914 Fire Insurance Plan (Figure 8) is the first time the Tenements are depicted in mapping.

The timing of the tenement's construction correlates well with the conditions in Halifax at that time. Following the Halifax Explosion, the lack of housing was addressed largely by the Halifax Relief Commission, however this effort took several years, incentivising employers to supply housing themselves to assist in the recruitment and retention of workers. In 1947, Consumer Cordage granted Louise Smith the deed to the parcel (Book 962, Page 777; Figure 10). The two properties remain on separate parcels until 1974, when they are acquired and consolidated by Edward Fine Foods (Figure 10; Book 2852, Page 835). The company did consider demolition of the Tenements at that time. The Dartmouth Free Press (1974) covered the story and included interviews with tenants, who voiced concern of losing their units which were described as affordable family sized housing (MacLeod & Weiss, 1974). The demolition was subsequently halted.

| Assessment Roll |                          |                | Town of Dartmouth, 1905 |                     |                        |                             |                       |
|-----------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| NAME OF OWNER   | NAME OF TENANT           | WHICH BOUNDARY | STREET                  | PROPERTY SITUATE ON | WARD                   | DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY     | VALUATION OF PROPERTY |
|                 |                          |                |                         |                     |                        |                             | REAL                  |
| Allen Mrs Sarah | Exempt \$100 on a window |                | Pastor Road             | 1                   | House & lot            |                             | 400                   |
| Allen J. Walter |                          |                | Pleasant                | 1                   | Residence              | D 6000                      |                       |
|                 |                          |                |                         |                     | Land & Water lots      | P 4500                      |                       |
|                 |                          |                |                         |                     | Cottage House          | P 1500                      |                       |
|                 |                          |                |                         |                     | Cottage                | D 750                       |                       |
|                 |                          |                |                         |                     | House on field         | H 400                       |                       |
|                 |                          |                |                         |                     | Boon on field          | H 400                       |                       |
|                 |                          |                |                         |                     | lots on same           | H 200                       |                       |
|                 |                          |                | Portland                | 1                   | Field                  | P 5000                      |                       |
|                 |                          |                |                         |                     | Money field            | 600                         | ✓                     |
|                 |                          |                | Albion                  | 1                   | House (piped)          | D 500                       | 20750                 |
|                 |                          |                |                         |                     | Shed and Furniture     |                             | 2000                  |
|                 |                          |                | July                    | 3                   | Land & Boon            | P 200                       | ✓                     |
|                 |                          |                | Parsons                 | 3                   | lot of land            | H 200                       | 400                   |
|                 |                          |                | Pleasant                | 1                   | Residence              | D 2000                      |                       |
|                 |                          |                |                         |                     | Land                   | P 400                       |                       |
|                 |                          |                |                         |                     | House (see)            | (v) D 1600                  | 4000                  |
|                 |                          |                |                         |                     | Furniture              |                             | 500                   |
|                 |                          |                | Pleasant                | 1                   | House and Furniture    | D 3000                      | 800                   |
|                 |                          |                | Bone Albert             | 1                   | Double House           | P 1000                      |                       |
|                 |                          |                | P.A. Park               | 1                   | lot of land            | 1500                        |                       |
|                 |                          |                | <del>Parsons</del>      | <del>2</del>        | <del>lot of land</del> | <del>see Bone St. 1/2</del> | <del>400</del>        |
|                 |                          |                | Wellsbury               | 3                   | House                  | D 1000                      |                       |
|                 |                          |                |                         |                     | Land                   | P 500                       | 1500                  |
|                 |                          |                |                         |                     | Shed & Furniture       |                             | 100                   |
|                 |                          |                | Wellsbury               | 2                   | House                  | D 1000                      |                       |
|                 |                          |                |                         |                     | Land                   | P 800                       | 1800                  |
|                 |                          |                |                         |                     | Furniture              |                             | 150                   |
|                 |                          |                | Halifax                 |                     |                        |                             |                       |
|                 |                          |                | Wellsbury               | 2                   | Land near lake         | D 100                       |                       |
|                 |                          |                | July                    | 3                   | House and Furniture    | D 850                       | 50                    |
|                 |                          |                | Wellsbury               | 3                   | House (see)            | 1500                        |                       |
|                 |                          |                | Jamieson                | 3                   | House and Furniture    | 800                         | 100                   |
|                 |                          |                | D                       | 3                   | House and Furniture    | 600                         | 50                    |
|                 |                          |                | Parsons                 | 3                   | Half Double House      | H 500                       |                       |

Figure 4: 1905 Property Tax Assessment Roll for Dartmouth showing Fredrick and Percy Allen owning property on Jamieson Street of different values ('Allen', 1905).

| NAME OF OWNERS OR TENANTS      | STREET    | WARD | DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY                  | VALUATION OF PROPERTY | EXEMPTION | LEDGER FOLIO |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------|--|-----------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Courtney Margaret<br>Mrs. Mary | School    | 3    | Land 1/2 Acre                            | 1100.                 |           | 70           |
| Consumers Cordage Co. Ltd.     | Myse Road | 3    | Works Land<br>Block<br>Residence<br>Land | 70000.                |           | 48           |

Figure 5: Property Tax Assessment for Consumers Cordage Co. 1920, property described as "Land for Tenements" highlighted ('Consumers Cordage', 1920).

| NAME OF OWNERS OR TENANTS      | STREET    | WARD | DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY                  | VALUATION OF PROPERTY | EXEMPTION | LEDGER FOLIO |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------|--|-----------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Courtney Margaret<br>Mrs. Mary | School    | 3    | Land 1/2 Acre                            | 1100.                 |           | 70           |
| Consumers Cordage Co. Ltd.     | Myse Road | 3    | Works Land<br>Block<br>Residence<br>Land | 70000.                |           | 48           |

Figure 6: Dartmouth 1921 Property Tax Assessment for Consumers Cordage Co., assets described as "6 tenements" on Jamieson Street highlighted ('Consumers Cordage', 1921).

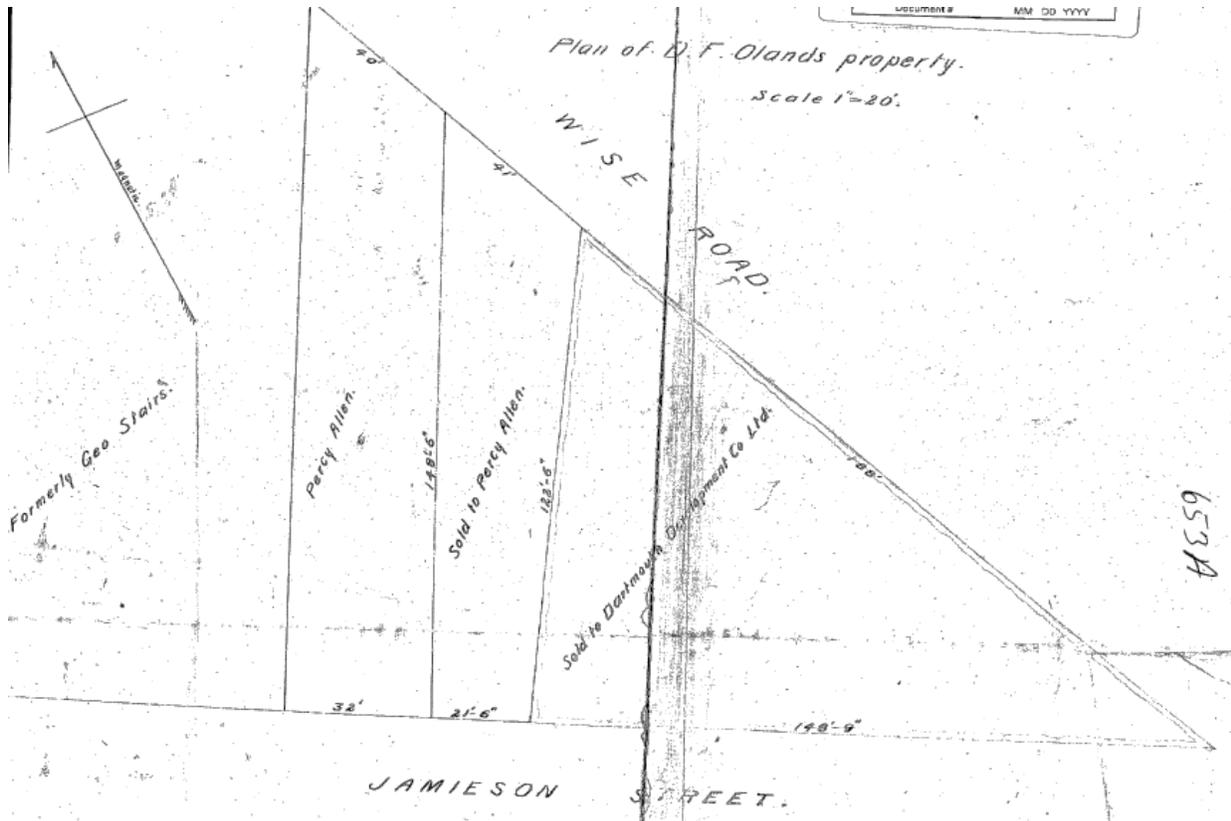


Figure 7: Survey of Oland Property from 1917 showing additional plot sold to Percy Allen and the remainder sold to Dartmouth Development Co (Book 473, Page 653).

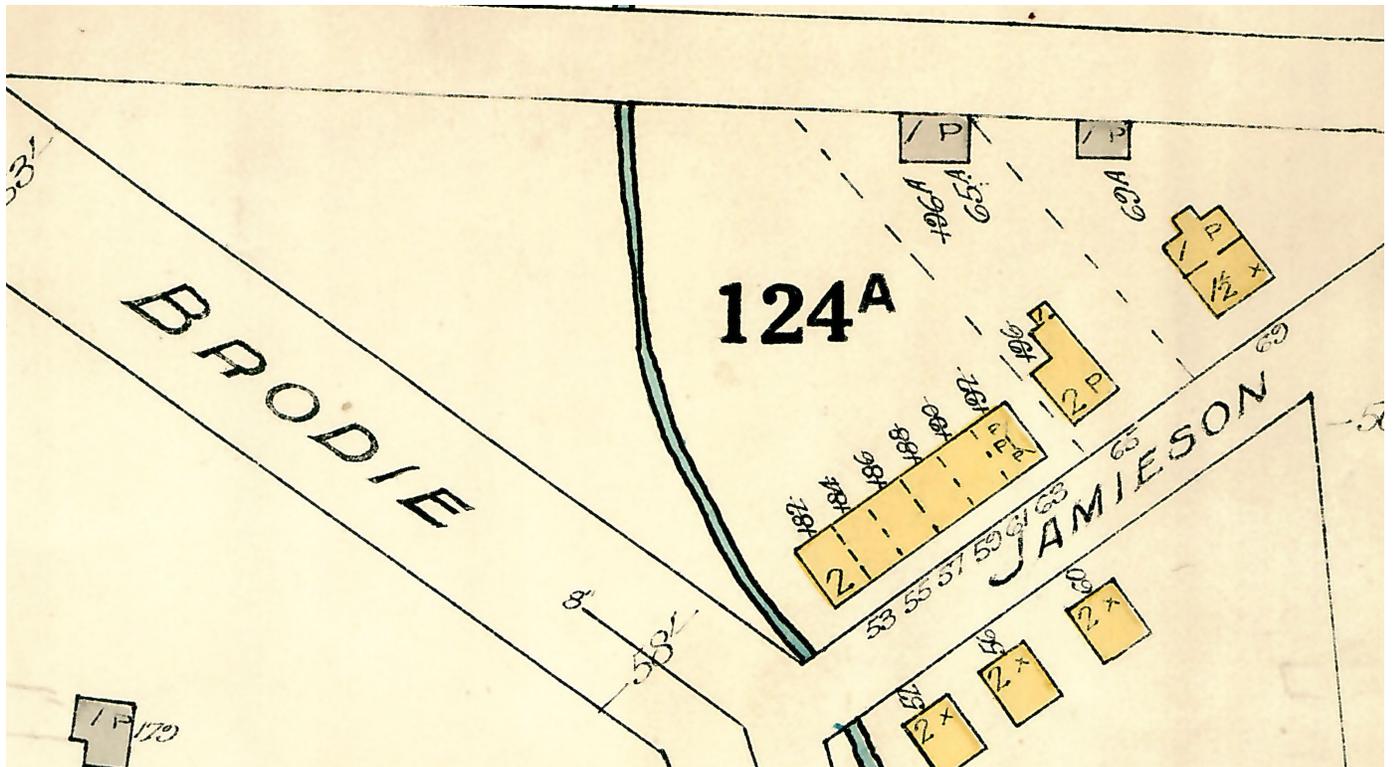


Figure 8: Dartmouth 1914 (Revised 1927) Fire Insurance Plan (Underwriters Survey Bureau).

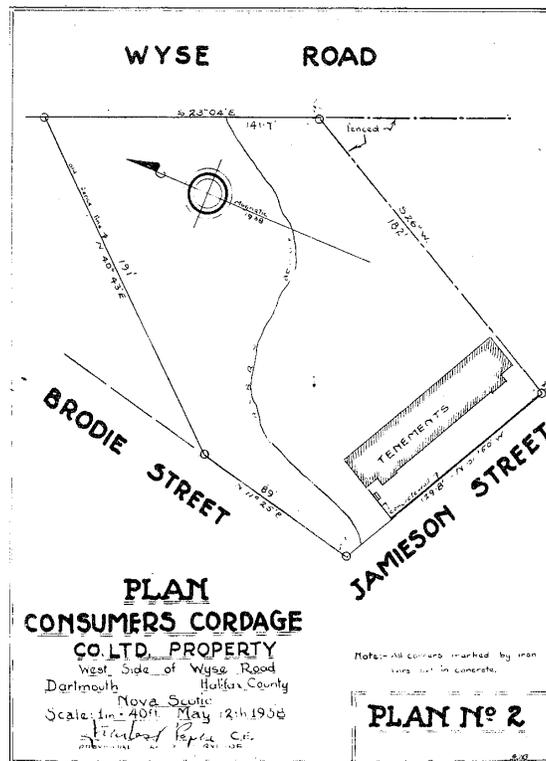


Figure 9: Survey of Consumers Cordage Co. upon sale of company 1938 (Roper, 1938).

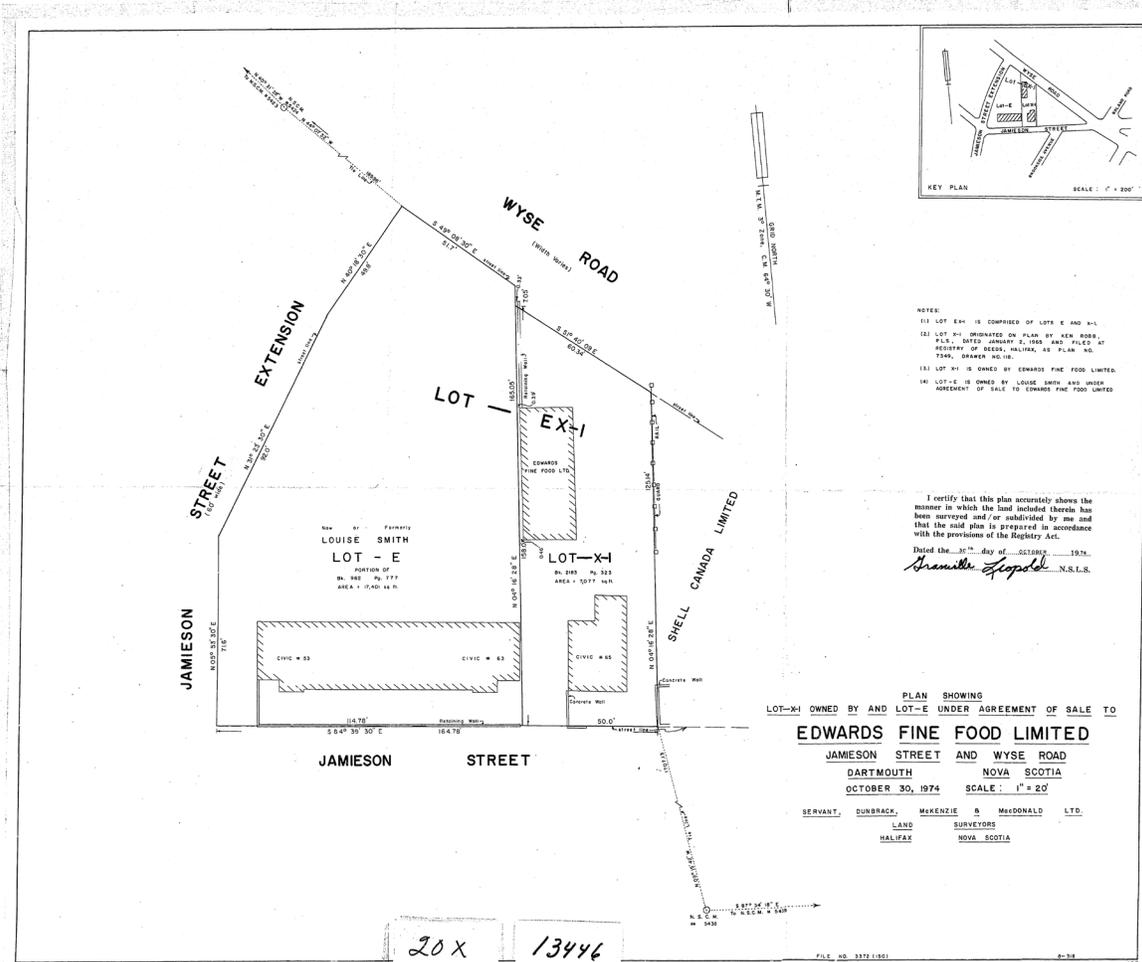


Figure 10: 1974 survey of consolidation of parcels by Edward's Fine Foods (Plan 13446, Drawer 183).

# Historical or Architectural Importance

## Relationship to Important Occasions, Institutions, Personages or Groups

### North Dartmouth Industrial History

The Allen House was built on the site of the former Allen tannery and may be a renovation of the former building. When established, it was a continuation of the industrial character of the North End of Dartmouth. It started with the Red Mill, built sometime between 1785 and 1800 and powered by the Albro Brook through a water wheel (Forsyth, 2002). Closer to the harbour where Jamieson Street would eventually lead, was the Foster Cove Iron Works owned by an Edward Foster. He sold a large plot of his property to a pair of American brothers John and Samuel Albro in 1800 and they used it to establish a successful barking mill, nail factory and tan yard. Part of their success may have been due to demand as there were no tanneries in Dartmouth before the American Revolution according to Trider (1999), requiring cobblers to tan their own leather for shoes.

The Albro Brothers were one of the first of many tanneries established after the Revolution and the population boom to make leather more available. In addition to the Albro tan yard a new tannery was established in Dartmouth Cove, and another near Preston (Chapman, 2000). The Albro brothers died in 1840s, and their sons began selling the land off in lots. In 1853, Richard Allen purchased a plot of land where the Tenements and Allen House currently stand (Book 103, Page 358) to establish a new tannery. The Oland family purchased the site of the former Albro tannery, making the Allen tannery the only one in the area by this time. The Oland family used the plot to establish a brewery which would prove quite successful. The Stairs family furthered the industrial identity of the area by opening the Ropeworks just north of the property. These industries did not come without risks however and there were multiple fires in the area over the years. The Oland Brewery suffered three fires over its lifetime and the Ropeworks had their own company fireman and firefighting equipment (Chapman, 2000).

The Allen Tannery was no exception and burnt down completely in the 1880s ('New Tannery', 1883; Figure 11). Lamont Gates is credited with building the tannery that replaced it in 1883. Fredrick Allen was the last tanner on the site and seems to have retired around 1904 when he gives his son Percy a deed for the lot of now Allen house where the tannery operated. It may be the foundations of the tannery or some of the structure was renovated to build the Allen house, but the evidence is inconclusive.

NEW TANNERY.—Mr. Fred. Alan has recently erected a new Tannery to take the place of the one destroyed by fire about two years ago. The main building is 64x25 feet, two stories, with L 50 feet x 25, one storey. Having both water and steam power, Mr. Alan will be able to drive business. The tannery, which is so well built and conveniently arranged, was erected for him by Mr. Lament Gatais.

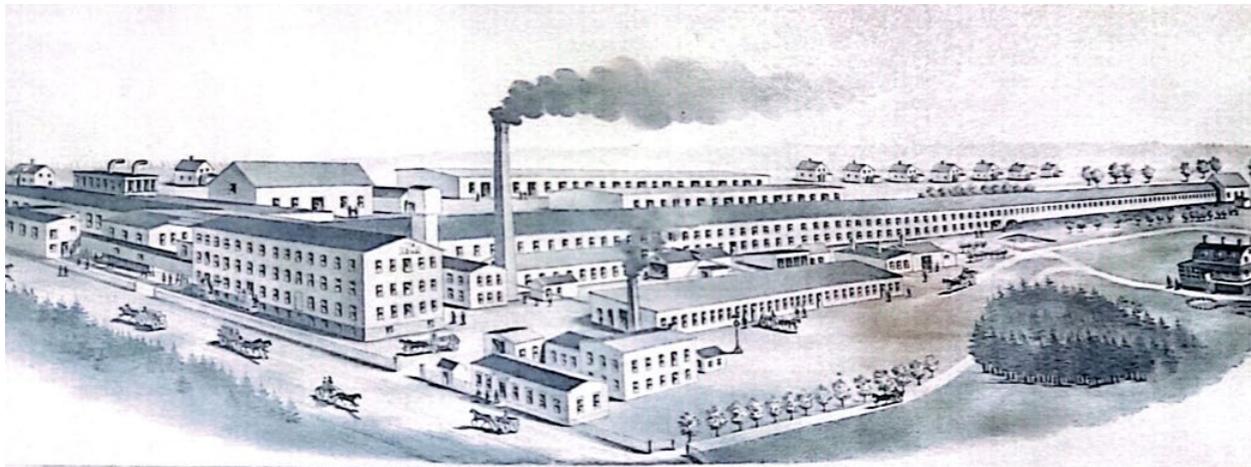
Figure 11: Excerpt from Dartmouth Times 1883, November 3rd issue announcing new tannery completed.

### Dartmouth Ropeworks/Consumer Cordage & Association with Stairs Family

The Dartmouth Ropeworks, later Consumer Cordage, was a long-standing industry in North Dartmouth. The company was started by the Stairs family, who operated an expanding maritime business empire. William Machin Stairs had started in ship chandlery and expanded to ship building and banking in the 1850s (Sutherland, 1976). Looking to expand further, Stairs founded a Ropeworks company in North Dartmouth in 1868 (Lawson, 1893; Forsyth, 2002, Frost, 2003). William's grandson, John F. Stairs, was made manager of the Ropeworks and lived on a property nearby called Northbrook. The Stairs family was on the forefront of Maritime business corporation and monopolization during post-confederation. In 1890, John and his brother, George, incorporated the ropeworks into the Consumers Cordage Company, merging it with five other plants across Canada, including Montreal, Saint John, Brantford, Port Hope and Quebec. They quickly gained the majority control of the company, with John becoming president and George taking on the role of secretary while continuing to manage the Dartmouth plant. This was not the first consolidation by the Stairs family - they merged and incorporated their banking businesses, the Acadia Sugar Refinery, the Union Protection power company, and the Montreal and Cape Breton Oil Company. John followed in his father and grandfather's footsteps and entered politics in 1877 as alderman for Ward 3 (North Dartmouth) on Dartmouth's Town Council, later going on to serve in the provincial legislature (Frost, 2003).

## Association with Ropemaking Industry in Canada

The Dartmouth Ropeworks supplied cord and rope throughout Canada and adapted to rapidly changing demands. The company had capacity to make rope of innumerable sizes, including the rope used to survey the length of the Halifax Harbour from Tufts Cove to Halifax in 1881 for the Bridge Feasibility Study (Parker, 1998). In 1883, the company expanded its capacity to include binder twine for the agricultural industry in anticipation of demand from the growing farming exports from Canada West (Frost, 2003). At the turn of the century, the company again pivoted to make smaller rope needed for fishing and more particularly lobster traps as lobster fishing were growing at the time (Frost, 2003; Lawson, 1893). Facing increased competition from the United States for agricultural twine, the Stairs family used their navel connections to sell their twine globally to fisheries in the North Sea and further south including Argentina, Australia and New Zealand. During the Great Depression, however, the plant struggled and was bought by Plymouth Cordage Company in 1938 prior to the outbreak of the Second World War (Frost, 2003).



WORKS  
OF  
**CONSUMERS CORDAGE CO., LIMITED.**  
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA.  
MANUFACTURERS OF  
MANILA, SISAL, RUSSIAN HEMP CORDAGE AND OAKUM,  
MANILA AND COMPOSITE SILVER BINDER TWINE.

Figure 12: Illustration of Consumer Cordage showing length of Ropework from Wyse to Victoria Streets (Canadian Manufacturers' Association, 1913).



Figure 13: Photograph of the interior of Consumer Cordage Ropeworks taken sometime between 1890 and 1920 (Consumer's Cordage Co, Ropeworks).



Figure 14 Consumer Cordage employee with finished rope sometime between 1890 and 1920 (Consumer Cordage Co, C. W. Maxwell).

## Association with Dartmouth Ropework Workers

The Dartmouth Ropeworks was a well-known local company that employed a significant number of people. By the 1880s, the company had a workforce of 160 for the day shift and 62 for night. They employed men, women and children, though the company policy was not to hire below the age of 14 (as it wasn't required by law there may have been younger employees who lied about their age; Frost, 2003). The company operated a meeting room and schoolhouse on the property and developed a plan for employee housing. The housing plan involved laying out several streets in North Dartmouth, including George, John, Wyse, and Jamieson Streets (Frost, 2003). By 1899, the company was employing 300 workers and had a full night shift. The company was an important employer in the area and many workers started their careers at the Dartmouth Ropeworks before going on to start businesses of their own. For example, John Oland with Oland Brewery (Chapman, 2000), and James Moir, However, initially they recruited a good portion of their workers from Scotland who were already trained in rope manufacturing (Forsyth, 2002).

As a large Dartmouth employer, the Dartmouth Ropeworks became part of the development of labour organization in the early 1900s. In 1902, there is reference to female workers on strike at the Ropeworks for better wages (Frost, 2003). The plant's starting wages for women were \$2.50 a week in the 1880s, the lowest for men being \$1.00 a day. The strike is historically significant as it was well before the unionization of the workforce in 1937, thus they were striking with no union protection (Chapman 2000). The company was purchased in 1938 by the United States Plymouth Cordage Company. After the Second World War, the company struggled again and despite reinvestment, the plant was closed in the 1950s (Forsyth, 2002).



Figure 15: Consumer Cordage employee sometime between 1890 and 1920 (consumer's Cordage Co, rope trolley)

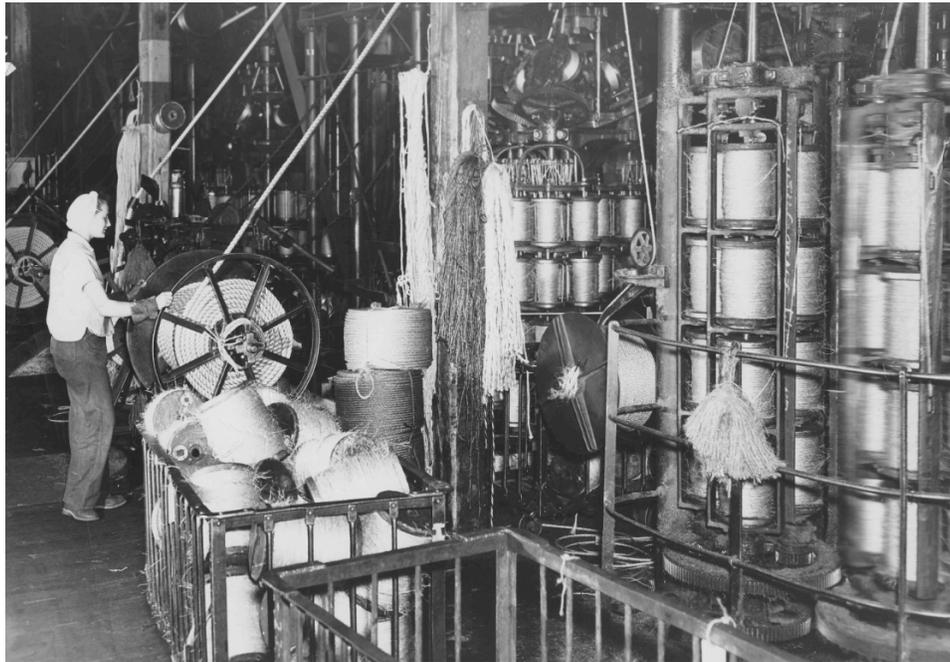


Figure 16: Consumer Cordage employee in rope room sometime between 1890 and 1920 (Benjamin's Studios, Consumer's Cordage)

### Halifax Explosion and Rebuilding Effort

The Halifax Explosion caused severe damage to North Dartmouth - Tufts Cove was decimated and Oland Brewery destroyed (Figure 18). Conrad Oland (related to the Allens by marriage) and 11 employees were killed (Chapman, 2000; Forsyth, 2002). Consumers Cordage was also heavily damaged, and the roof collapsed but luckily all employees survived. The Stairs Memorial Church, built for the Ropework employees, was also heavily damaged as well as multiple residences along Pelzant Street and Windmill Road.

It is no surprise in the aftermath of the Explosion, that the city had an acute need for housing. The Federal government swiftly established the Halifax Relief Commission in January 1918 to oversee the distribution of donations and grants aimed at rebuilding and providing relief (Latre mouille, 1988). Consumer Cordage submitted the largest claim in all (\$100,000) to the Relief Commission but settled for \$80,000 (Chapman, 2000). Six temporary apartments were constructed on Victoria Park to house some of Dartmouth's homeless while the city rebuilt (Chapman, 2000). It was likely due to the housing shortage that the Ropeworks commissioned the Tenements to be built, as they already had the significant cost of rebuilding to tend with.



Figure 17: Consumer Cordage Office after 1917 Explosion (Consumer's Cordage Co, 1917)



Figure 18: Picture of the Oland Brewery after the Halifax Explosion (n. n., 1917).

## Important/Unique Architectural Style or Highly Representative of an Era

The style of the Allen House can be best described as Late Victorian Plain style (Penney, 1989), which was popular in working class housing at the turn of the century (Latremouille, 1988). It follows the form as Latremouille describes:

*“These houses tend to be the two storied, low gable buildings that were fast becoming the trademark of housing for a maritime climate. The door is to the side on the front façade, often next to a window bay extending the full height of the building. The framing is much lighter than that of fifty years previous, and any decoration is now machine made.” (pg. 51 1988).*

The Allen House design is an example of the Late Victorian Plain style associated with the working class, and the Halifax Box style which is also well represented in Dartmouth (see Style Section). As Archibald and Stevenson (2003) attest the Halifax Box was “a good solution to the need for a versatile house on a compact urban lot” (p. 78). Evidentially, the design of the Allen house was quite popular in working class communities as close copies can be found throughout Dartmouth including Austenville (present day Flower Streets in Dartmouth), Windmill Road and Hester Street. The flexibility of the design allowed families to expand through additions to the rear of the house, a feature the Allen family took advantage of based on the rear ell expansion visible in the 1906 Fire Insurance Plan (see [Figure 3](#)). It also allowed for a variation among tastes by the additions of wood detailing (increasingly accessible through the turn of the century) along verges, and/or window and entrance sills. The Allen house is therefore a specific example of the Late Victorian Plain and Halifax Box style that was quite popular across Halifax and Dartmouth during end of the Victorian era.

The design of the Tenements most closely aligns with the Hydrostone style, a local architectural style that was developed in response to the Halifax Explosion (Penney, 1989).

Ross and Macdonald’s work was influenced by Thomas Adams, a planner with the Halifax Relief Commission, and advocate of the English Garden City movement (Penney, 1989; Latremouille, 1988). The Garden City philosophy predicated cities should retain elements of the country to be livable. With their mandate to create affordable housing quickly, Ross and Macdonald devised multiple plans using Hydrostone for fire protection (hence the name; Vaughan, 1919). They also emphasized variation by developing multiple plans for different dwelling sizes and varying roof pitch, type and building materials, as well as decorative elements. The Hydrostone style houses often had porches as they were seen as an important place of social interaction and served the Garden City Movement belief in the need for transitions between public and private space (Penney, 1987). The Tenements share similarities with other Hydrostone rowhouses constructed in North End Halifax, particularly in the breakup of housing units, the style of roof line, and porch entryway (see [Figure 20](#) and [Figure 21](#)).

# Significance of Architect or Builder

## The Allen House

The builder for Allen House cannot be confirmed but it is possible the current structure is a renovation of the tannery building built by Lamont Gates in 1883 (see Figure 11). Lamont Gates's father John was a carpenter of German origin who raised the family in Dartmouth ('Gates', 1871). Lamont and his three brothers continued the family construction business, and all stayed in Dartmouth. His nephew Herbert would later become the well-known Dartmouth architect Herbert Elliot Gates (Rosinski, 1994). The Plain Victorian Style is common from the 1880s to around 1915 according to Penney (1989) and the Gates family also built multiple houses in Austenville where the Plain Victorian Style is also well represented. No other builder for any structures the Allen's erected on the property has been identified.

## The Tenements

Given the style and period of the building, the Tenements was likely a Ross and Macdonald design. The architectural firm designed and constructed multiple tenement houses in Halifax following the 1917 Halifax Explosion and there are similarities in design with other row houses within Halifax (see Important / Unique Architectural Style or Highly Representative of an Era). Moreover, the firm had previously been engaged by Consumer Cordage to design a factory in Montreal on Saint Patrick's Street (Hill, 2024).

Ross and Macdonald were a well-known Canadian architectural firm that was based in Montreal and had a significant impact on Halifax and Dartmouth. Following the Halifax Explosion, the firm was hired by the Relief Commission to help develop affordable housing and were tasked with designing over 300 homes, the design of one is included in Figure 19 (Vaughan, 1919; Latremouille, 1988). The firm designed multiple buildings in Dartmouth following the explosion, such as a house for J.G. Smith on Windmill Road (possibly George Smith, a machinist with Consumer Cordage who lived on Windmill Road; Ross & Macdonald, 1918; McAlpine's, 1921).





HOME SWEET HOME for six families, rents enable tenants to save and live comfortably. Yet it may be demolished. (Cherok photo: this is genuine low-cost housing and the

Figure 21: The Tenements circa 1974 following purchase by Edwards Fine Foods (Cherok, 1974).

## Architectural Merit

### Construction Type or Building Technology

The Allen House is a single-detached house with a parged concrete foundation with vinyl siding and corner boards. The builder used balloon frame construction, which was standard by the late nineteenth century, as the method allowed for buildings to be raised with less labour, time and skill which made them a more economical option (Rempel, 1967).

The Tenements are wood-framed, 6-unit row houses. It stands on a concrete block (Hydrostone) foundation, which has been painted. Hydrostone is a building material made of crushed stone, sand and Portland cement molded into blocks under pressure. Hydro-stone was considered an economic and fire-resistant material (Nova Scotia Archives, 2024). Based on visual analysis of the historical imagery, there had previously been a Hydrostone retaining wall separating the front gardens from the street, since removed. Hydrostone building material is associated almost synonymously in Halifax with post-explosion building given the prevalence of its use by the Halifax Relief Commission. The Ross and Macdonald firm drafted a proposal for the use of the material and devised a process to build Hydrostone blocks quickly and economically using a plant in Dartmouth (Erickson, 1987). Its unique to the style and is not common outside of Halifax Relief commissioned buildings.

## Style

The style of the Allen House is representative of Late Victorian Plain working class housing, with Halifax Box influences, as emphasized by the two-story box shape and low-pitched gable roof. The ratio of wall to windows also supports an older style as the historic picture of the street in 1938 (Figure 20) indicates the current large windows and sidelights are a replacement for small rectangular windows. Characteristic of Late Victorian Plain style, the house has little decoration, only the brackets and moulding on the entrance. It is also characteristic of a simpler working-class version of the Halifax Box described by Archibald and Stevenson (2003), missing the front bay window and flat roof (though the gable pitch is so low it appears almost flat). The style is particularly suited to the narrow lot Percy was granted by his father and is also situated close to the street, another common feature to Austenville homes and box style in general (Gunn, 2013; Archibald & Stevenson, 2003).

The Tenements are representative of the Hydrostone style (see Important / Unique Architectural Style or Highly Representative of an Era). The shed dormers and gable dormers provide variation along the roofline. Each unit includes a small open porch with medium hip and hipped gable roofs, providing privacy and separation. The moulded fascia and verges, brackets, and moulded trim around fenestration (some of which has since been removed) would have provided a contrast with the dark shingle siding as well as the corner posts, creating a half timber style. Half timbering was used in the Hydrostone style to evoke Tudor Revival elements. Tudor Revival, popular in Hydrostone and English cottage designs, was previously further extenuated with exposed rafter verges and brackets which has since been removed. Perhaps most representative of all, however, is the use of Hydrostone in the foundation and retaining wall.

## Character Defining Elements

The character defining elements of 20 Ropewalk Lane (the Allen House) include, but are not limited to:

- Low pitched gable roof;
- Exposed wood detailing and gable roof above the south elevation entrance, supported by rafters;
- Moulded trim around fenestration; and,
- Windows with a flat opening.

The character defining elements of 6 to 16 Ropewalk Lane (the Tenements) include, but are not limited to:

- Jerkinhead style roofline on the west and east elevations;
- Plain fascia along verges and eaves of the roof and dormers;
- Hydrostone partial above ground foundation;
- Projecting gable roof at each end;
- Hip-roof covered entrances with bracketed railings and simple posts;
- Paired windows on the first-storey;
- Projecting verges
- One-over-one windows with moulded wood trim.



Figure 22: South and West Elevation of 6 to 16 Ropewalk Lane (May 1, 2024)



Figure 23: West elevation of 6 to 16 Ropewalk Lane (May 1, 2024)



Figure 24: North elevation of 6 to 16 Ropewalk Lane, with 20 Ropewalk Lane visible to the left (May 1, 2024)



Figure 25: East elevation of 6 to 16 Ropewalk Lane to the left, and 20 Ropewalk Lane to the right (May 1, 2024)



Figure 26: Entrances to 6 and 8 Ropewalk Lane (May 1, 2024)



Figure 27: Jerkinhead roofline as visible from east elevation (May 1, 2024)

## Architectural Integrity

The Tenements have a moderate level of integrity. Based on historical imagery and visual inspection, the following modifications have been made to the residence since its initial construction:

- Removal of projecting shed rooflines between fenestration on the second storey;
- Simple wood piers separating each unit;
- The loss of some open porch posts and original bracketed railings, which have been replaced by iron or wood railings;
- The rectangular openings and spacing of the windows on the Tenements have been retained but have been replaced with one-over-one vinyl windows;
- The original siding has been replaced with vinyl siding; and,
- Removal of decorative elements, such as wood brackets and exposed rafters.

The Allen House has a fair level of integrity. Based on visual inspection, the following modifications have been made to the Allen House since its initial construction:

- Potential loss of decorative details along verges;
- Two-over-two wood windows have been replaced by two vinyl picture windows on the south elevation;
- Moulded wood trim around fenestration has been removed;
- Foundation has been parged with concrete;
- Front entrance replaced by a single-leaf vinyl door and narrow one-over-one window; and,
- Original wood siding, fascia and soffit replaced with vinyl.

## Relationship to Surrounding Area

Both residences at 6 to 16 and 20 Ropewalk Lane are in keeping with the surrounding area, in form and through historical associations. The Allen House is in keeping with the side of most single detached houses along Ropewalk Lane, Jamieson Street, and the neighbourhood surrounding Victoria Park. The Late Victorian Plain vernacular design is repeated further down on Hester Street and Windmill Road, as evident in pictures taken after the explosion, some of which remain today such as 11 and 50 Hester (Figures 24 and 25).

The Tenements serve as a reminder of the former Dartmouth Ropeworks which defined the community and its early development. Ropewalk Lane is named in reference to the former industry and there are historical and physical associations with other Ropework employee housing, such as the Nine Sisters on George Street (Figure 23). The form and massing are consistent with the residential aspect of the neighbourhood beginning along Ropewalk Lane and extending down to Windmill Road, comprised of dense row houses or two-storey, single-detached homes. Although no documentation confirming the builders were found for the Tenements, there are records of multiple houses built after the Halifax Explosion by Ross and Macdonald on Windmill Road, and Pelzant and Jamieson Streets (Halifax Relief Commission, 1917-71)



Figure 28: Ropewalk Lane facing east from intersection with Jamieson Street (May 1, 2024).



Figure 29: 'Nine Sisters' Ropeworks Housing on George Street (May 1, 2024).



Figure 30: A damaged house on Hester Street, of similar style to 20 Ropewalk Lane (MacLaughlan, Album 2, No 159).



Figure 31: Damaged house on Windmill Road of similar style to 20 Ropewalk Lane (MacLaughlan, Album 2, No 197).

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## Attachment 2

Scoring for HRTG-2024-00694: Request to include 6 to 16 and 20 Ropewalk Lane, Dartmouth in the Registry of Heritage Properties for the Halifax Regional Municipality

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### Scoring for 6 and 16 Ropewalk Lane

| Criterion   | Score Awarded |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Age  | 5             |
| 2A. Relationship to Important Occasions, Institutions, Personages or Groups | 13            |
| 3. Significance of Architect/Builder  | 3             |
| 4A. Architectural Merit: Construction Type                                  | 6             |
| 4B. Architectural Merit: Style  | 6             |
| 5. Architectural Integrity  | 9             |
| 6. Relationship to Surrounding Area   | 9             |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>51</b>     |

### Scoring for 20 Ropewalk Lane

| Criterion   | Score Awarded |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Age  | 9             |
| 2A. Relationship to Important Occasions, Institutions, Personages or Groups | 5             |
| 3. Significance of Architect/Builder  | 2             |
| 4A. Architectural Merit: Construction Type                                  | 3             |
| 4B. Architectural Merit: Style  | 3             |
| 5. Architectural Integrity  | 4             |
| 6. Relationship to Surrounding Area   | 5             |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>31</b>     |