

JOHN & JAMES DOBSON CARPET MILL (WEST PARCEL),
BUILDING NO. 22
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5383- S

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6955-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Mid-Atlantic Regional Office
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
JOHN AND JAMES DOBSON CARPET MILL (West Parcel), BUILDING 22
HABS No. PA-5383-S

Location:

4041-4055 Ridge Avenue
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania

Present Owner:

Rouse Urban Housing, Inc.
1500 Walnut Street, 19th Floor
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102

Present Occupant:

Mixed commercial and industrial tenants.

Significance:

Building 22 is significant as a document of the first large scale expansion of the Dobsons' mill following the Civil War. The building was built as the principle building for Mill No. 1 and displays the oldest version of the rubble-based construction common to all the mill buildings.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

Date(s) of Erection:

1870 with later alterations. The footprint of the building appears in the 1866-73 Hexamer Atlas.

Architect:

Unknown.

Original/Subsequent Owners:

See Chain of Title.

Builder, Contractor, Suppliers:

Unknown.

Original Plans/Construction:

Building 22 was built in 1870 as a four story and attic stone structure with a slate roof. The irregularly shaped structure fronted on Scott's Lane and helped to define an interior courtyard. Weaving and mule spinning facilities were located in the first two stories of the building while the upper two and the attic remained vacant. Hatchways and bridges connected this building with the other buildings associated with Mill No. 1.

Alterations/Additions:

By 1877, the third and fourth stories and the attic housed carding, warping, spooling and blanket drying facilities. Early views show that there was a water tower on the main facade of the structure which has since been removed. As well, most of the windows have been infilled and the original brick cornice has been removed. Rubble construction in gable end is of a different character suggesting its rebuilding early in the twentieth century.

B. Historical Context

As one of the survivors of Mill No. 1, Building 22 documents some of the oldest masonry construction on the Dobson site. The building was part of a group built in the late 1860s and early 1870s to manufacture blankets. The group was the first major phase of expansion at the Dobson site and predated the structures in the center of the complex and the northern, western and southern edges.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

Architectural Character:

Building 22 is of the same rubble construction as the majority of the buildings on the Dobson site, however, its use of rubble instead of brick window arches and thick barn dash mortars dates the building as one of the oldest on the site.

Condition of Fabric:

The rubble construction of the building is in severely deteriorated condition and is collapsing from fire damage and exposure to the elements. The interior structure of the building is exposed and the roof is completely gone.

B. Description of Exterior

Overall Dimensions:

S elev.-102.4; E elev.-26'; N elev.- 16.8'; E elev.-91.6'; N elev.-68.2'; W elev.-124.2'.

Foundations:

Rubblestone.

Walls:

Rubblestone, severely deteriorated and partially collapsed excepting the east elevation on Scott's Lane. Wood hoist on upper east elevation.

Structural System/Framing:

Masonry construction with timber framing.

Porches/Stoops/Balconies/Bulkheads:

None.

Chimneys:

None.

Openings:

Doorways/Doors:

East elevation- arch headed window has been altered to door with brick soldier course lintel, central bay of loading doors with steel lintels. South elevation- vertical board door between Buildings 22A and 22. North elevation- two doors, one with brick segmental arch lintel, the other with steel lintel, both altered from original window openings. Also another central entry with vertical board door.

Windows/Shutters:

East elevation- eleven bays of window openings under segmental rubble arches, central register is a tier of loading bays with flat headed openings under brick arches. The majority of the openings have been infilled or altered. South and north elevations- sixteen bays, windows either missing or infilled. West elevation- eleven bays of window openings with central tier of loading bays, all windows either missing, infilled or deteriorated from loss of structural integrity of wall.

Roof:

Completely deteriorated, was originally a low-pitched gable roof of slate.

C. Description of Interior

Floor Plans:

Unpartitioned mill space, irregularly shaped.

Stairways:

Stair tower in eastern corner of building.

Flooring:

Unfinished wood flooring, floors and floor joists have deteriorated.

Wall/Ceiling Finishes:

Rubblestone with fire damage. Interior inaccessible due to structural failure.

Openings:

Doorways/Doors:

Interior inaccessible.

Windows:

Interior inaccessible.

Decorative Features and Trim:

N/A

Hardware:

Original hardware is presumed to have been utilitarian in character.

Mechanical Equipment:

Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: See PA-5383-C for heating system, air conditioning is N/A, ventilation by window mounted fans, exhaust ducts and air conditioning units.

Lighting: Interior inaccessible.

Plumbing: Interior inaccessible.

D. Site

General Setting/Orientation:

Building 22's primary elevation faces Scott's Lane and forms part of the continuous wall of mill buildings fronting that lane. It is connected and shares walls with the passageway to Building 19 and Building 22A. Together with Building 19, Building 22 helped form the courtyard to Mill No. 1, off Scott's Lane. The structure is located at a low grade and is not readily visible from the center of the west parcel.

Historic landscape Design:

See Historic Context Section.

Outbuildings:

N/A.