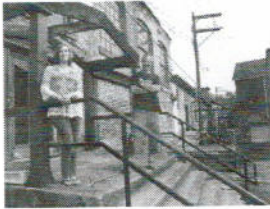


Garnerville Arts gets landmark status

Alex Taylor 5:40 p.m. EDT March 31, 2014

The designation, which is largely honorific, helps ensure the former textile factory's long-term preservation., and makes the 28-building complex off Railroad Avenue eligible for grants and credits.



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The Garnerville Arts and Industrial Center has just been listed to the National Register of Historic Places.

The designation, which is largely honorific, will help ensure the former textile factory's long-term preservation. It also makes the sprawling, 28-building complex just off Railroad Avenue eligible for grants and tax credits, among other benefits.

"It says to the world, 'This is an important place,'" complex owner Robin Rosenberg told The Journal News.

"Sometimes I feel that people don't recognize that old isn't a negative. It's a positive. It's our history. It's where we all come from."

Gregory Dietrich, a preservationist who wrote the report that led to the designation, described the complex as both historically and architecturally significant — an "unorthodox combination of references" to Greek Revival, Italianate and Gothic Revival styles.

The complex was built between 1838 and 1909, and is named after the brothers James and Thomas Garner, the second owners of the original calico printing plant.

From 1838 on, the Garner family expanded its Rockland Print Works, part of a textile empire that stretched across the Northeast, from Rochester to Reading, Pa. The works grew to include the printing and dyeing of wool, cotton and linen.

"The company was not only considered the largest textile producer in the United States," Dietrich writes in his report, "but also a national business leader with a workforce that numbered over 10,000 employees by the mid-late nineteenth century."

It closed briefly during the Great Depression, wiping away hundreds of local jobs. It was reorganized in 1934 as the Garnerville Holding Co., one of the first industrial cooperatives in the United States.

In recent decades, the warren of brick buildings has been occupied by artist lofts, painting studios, textile workshops and small businesses.

The complex also houses the Garner Arts Center, which suffered substantial flood damage during Tropical Storm Irene in 2011. The arts non-profit is currently renovating the factory's former cafeteria, Building 35, into a state-of-the-art gallery and performance space.

The Garnerville Arts and Industrial Center joins more than 75 other buildings and properties in Rockland County that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

They include Tappan's DeWint House, where George Washington stayed four times, and Edward Hopper House Art Center in Nyack, where Hopper grew up.

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