

## **Staff Houses and Garden Cities:**

*The Influence of the Pulp and Paper Industry on Newfoundland's Built Heritage*  
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When most people think of heritage buildings they call to mind stately, elaborate homes in historic city districts, impressive stone churches or quaint country estates. There also exists the notion that buildings must be old to be considered heritage places, with an ideal vintage falling somewhere around the one hundred year mark. These ideas of what constitutes a heritage place sometimes discount sites that have made an impact on the history and development of more modern towns and cities.

On the island of Newfoundland, where the cultural, social and economic focus was historically on the sea, heritage structures associated with a way of life detached from fishing have in the past been viewed as modern interlopers on a much older, purer tradition. Yet a large part of the province's history and its economic evolution revolves around the establishment of several industrial operations in the early 1900s, relatively recent developments in comparison to centuries of settlement along the island's east coast. These industries, particularly pulp and paper operations, opened up the previously undeveloped interior of the island and were the impetus for building a railway link between the east and west coasts. They also resulted in the construction of new towns established with an eye to the future - an ideal reflected in the built heritage of these places.

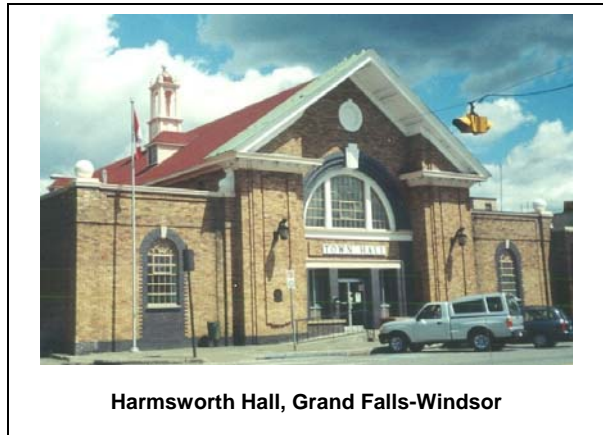
In 1905 the paper mill town of Grand Falls was established amid virgin wilderness. Settlement began with the incorporation of the Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company (AND Company) in 1905. With the threat of war in Europe, the Harmsworths, a British family who ran a newspaper empire, began the search for additional sources of newsprint. In answer to this need, the mill at Grand Falls officially opened on October 9, 1909 and the company town quickly expanded with the influx of workers from Newfoundland, Britain, Canada, and the United States. However, these newcomers were only allowed to live within town boundaries if they worked in the mill or had the company's blessing.

The AND Company built staff houses along streets inspired by the Garden City Movement. Founded in England in 1898, this urban planning movement championed designed communities that incorporated residential areas, industry and green spaces. In 1910, St. Matthew's Presbyterian Church was built on Church Road, one of the first planned roads built

in the town. Intended to meet the spiritual needs of the newly arrived British elite, St. Matthew's congregation included mill managers and other influential members of the company town, such as store managers and bank managers. A one-storey, wooden building with a steeply pitched gable roof, it is the oldest original church in the town and is a fine example of a small, country-style church in an urban setting.



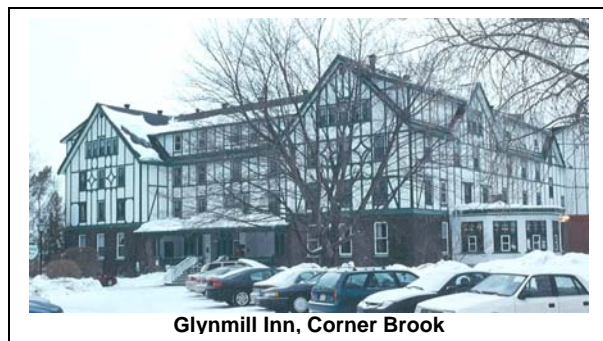
In 1929, the AND Company built Harmsworth Hall on High Street, the main street through Grand Falls' downtown core. Influenced by Neoclassical design, Harmsworth Hall has a symmetrical facade with large windows surrounded by keystone brickwork. The central roof is peaked and large pilasters flank either side of the main doorway. The company named the hall after the original owners of the mill and for decades it served the community as a theatre, playhouse and meeting hall. When the Town of Grand Falls was officially incorporated in the early 1960s, the building was turned over to the new municipality to be used as a town hall. Since then, the town council has renovated the interior to include offices and council chambers. The hall still operates as the offices for the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor.



On the island's west coast is the city of Corner Brook, site of the province's second major pulp and paper mill. While a settlement existed here prior to the establishment of the mill, the impetus for population growth occurred when construction of the mill was started in 1923 by Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Company, later known as International Pulp and Paper Company. A planned, industrial town quickly grew around the mill site. As with Grand Falls, the mill's owners introduced company housing and the Garden City Movement influenced planning.

Noted Halifax architect Andrew Cobb was responsible for the design of a large, Tudor Revival style building that would help remedy the shortage of local accommodations for senior staff involved in the construction of the mill. Built on the outskirts of what was then Corner Brook, it was constructed by the English firm of Armstrong-Whitworth Company. One of the best examples of a Tudor-inspired architecture in the province, it was officially opened in 1924 by Sir Glyn West, Chairman of Armstrong-Whitworth. When the mill became operational in 1925, the staff quarters became a hotel.

Now known as the Glynmill Inn, the staff house has achieved landmark status in Corner Brook. Surrounded by mature trees and flower gardens, it is certainly the city's best-known building.



The original Tudor-inspired half-timbering is still in place and the Arts and Crafts influenced interior remains relatively unaltered. Over the years, the hotel has welcomed many important persons including Princess Anne, Andrew the Duke of York, Edward the Duke of Wessex, Sir Eric Bowater, visiting heads of state and various premiers of Newfoundland and Labrador. In addition, the inn has served as a focal point for many local organizations. The first adult

education classes for the area took place in the building and the local chapter of the Rotary Club has met in the inn since the chapter's inauguration.

Andrew Cobb was also commissioned by the Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Company to design houses at Townsite, the original name for the residential section of Corner Brook. Within walking distance of the Glynmill Inn, the old Townsite is now surrounded by newer housing developments. Yet the Townsite houses are still quite recognizable for their distinctive style. Entire streets boast houses that have largely remained true to Cobb's original design concepts, creating streetscapes that harken back to the time of the city's development boom.

The Townsite development contained just under 200 houses, of varying types, all inspired by the Arts and Crafts Movement. 67 Central Street is an exceptionally well-preserved example of the type-4 house designed by Cobb. The type-4s were the most common of the four main house types, with each type having several variations on a main model. Type-4s were rented to skilled tradesmen, foremen and clerical staff working in the mill. Constructed in 1925, the house captures the architectural essence of Corner Brook's Townsite at the time of its inception. The two-and-one-half-storey structure has a steeply pitched gable roof, a covered front porch, and spruce shingle cladding, all common elements of the Arts and Crafts style.



67 Central Street, Corner Brook

The influence of the pulp and paper industry on Newfoundland's built heritage extends beyond Grand Falls and Corner Brook to towns that supplied materials and services essential to the large mill operations. In 1922, Newfoundland Power and Paper Company began construction of a hydroelectric power generator in Deer Lake, fifty kilometres east of Corner Brook. In the mid-1800s some loggers and trappers had made their homes in the area around what is now Deer Lake, but large scale settlement did not occur here until the construction of the power plant. Between 1923 to 1925, three thousand men were employed in the developing community, constructing the plant and associated dams and canals. Deer Lake continued to grow as industrial labour needs increased and workers migrated to the new community to meet the demand. Acquired by the International Pulp and Paper Company upon its completion in 1925, the power plant provided much of the electricity for the growing Corner Brook paper mill.

The growing workforce necessitated the building of such structures as the International Pulp and Paper Company Staff House. Constructed between 1923 to 1924 for employees of the Newfoundland Power and Paper Company Limited, it is a worthy example of the type of staff quarters built by industrial enterprises in Newfoundland during the first half of the



International Pulp and Paper Company Staff House, Deer Lake

twentieth century. Located on a main thoroughfare in the town and in close proximity to the power plant, it is a testament to both the early days of large scale settlement in Deer Lake and industrial development on the west coast of the island.

As with hydro power, wood for the mills was often imported from other towns. Robert's Arm, Notre Dame Bay, was one such community. In 1938, Bowater Newfoundland Limited took over the operation of the Corner Brook mill. A few years previous, Bowater had started cutting and exporting pulpwood from the Robert's Arm area. In 1936 Jack Hewlett secured the Robert's Arm contract from Bowater and by 1939 two hundred and fifty men were employed cutting pulpwood in the community. Loads of pulpwood for export were stacked onto ships at nearby Tommy's Arm. Bowater operations in and around Robert's Arm continued into the 1970s, with one notable disruption occurring in October of 1937. One of the first loggers' strikes in Canada was then executed in Robert's Arm when workers protested pay rates and living conditions at logging camps.



Hewlett House in Robert's Arm was constructed for pulpwood contractor Jack Hewlett in the summer of 1937 by carpenter Harris Walkins. Built in a bungalow style with vernacular influences, it was a modern house for its time. Hewlett House incorporates many stylistic elements associated with the bungalow movement, including a mid-pitched roof, street-facing gable, one-and-a-half-storey elevation, a modest front porch and a balanced rather than symmetrical facade.

Structures built during the infancy of the pulp and paper industry have left a mark on the built heritage of Newfoundland. From grand inns to modest bungalows, they are tangible connections to a stage in the province's history that continues to play a role in its economic, social and cultural evolution. The historical and architectural importance of these buildings has been recognized by the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador, who have declared Harmsworth Hall, the Glynmill Inn, 67 Central Street and the International Pulp and Paper Company Staff House Provincially Registered Heritage Structures. The towns of Grand Falls-Windsor and Robert's Arm have respectively designated St. Matthew's Presbyterian Church and Hewlett House as municipal heritage sites. With these measures of protection, heritage structures related to the early days of the province's pulp and paper industry will be appreciated for generations to come.

To read more about the history of the highlighted heritage buildings, visit Newfoundland and Labrador's Provincial Register of Historic Places at [www.heritagefoundation.ca](http://www.heritagefoundation.ca) or the Canadian Register of Historic Places at [www.historicplaces.ca](http://www.historicplaces.ca).