

MINNESOTA HISTORY / ARCHITECTURE INVENTORY FORM
NORTHFIELD COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
Rice County, Minnesota

PROPERTY LOCATION	
Property Name: Ames Mill, Campbell Cereal, Malt-O-Meal	Inventory No.: RC-NFC-273
Address: 319 S. Water Street, Northfield, MN	PIN: 2201100004
QTR/QTR/T/R/S: SE SE Section 36 T112N R20W and NE NE Section 1 T111N R20W	
USGS Quad: Northfield, Minnesota	Plat: Cannon River West
UTM Z 15 4871021E, 492494N NAD 83	

PROPERTY INFORMATION	
Construction Date: 1869-	Style: Commercial Style
Historic Use: commercial	Current Use: commercial
Property Type: commercial	Historic Context: "Commerce, 1856-1945" and "Industry and Agriculture, 1856-1945"
Architect/Builder	Survey Name: Northfield Historic District Survey Revision Project, 2016
Previous NRHP Status: Contributing to Northfield Commercial Historic District	NRHP Recommendation: Contributing to Northfield Commercial Historic District
Form Prepared by: Landscape Research LLC	Survey Date: 3/2016



2016, looking northeast



ca. 1900, looking north

Description

The Ames Mill complex occupies a large parcel along the west side of the Cannon River at the 4th Street Bridge. It includes a the main timber-frame, four-story mill above the mill dam that features a low-pitched roof and uniform rows of windows; a one-story, flat-roofed, concrete block finished-products warehouse, a concrete-block elevator, and a flat-roofed masonry office block that also served as a filling station in the mid 20th century. The buildings rest on deep limestone foundations attached to the river wall. Despite interior upgrades, the building has had relatively few major exterior alterations, although windows were reduced in size in the 1950s and an original fifth-story monitor roof was removed at an unknown date. Its recent rehabilitations have been successful in maintaining its historic appearance.

History

In 1855-56 Northfield founder John North built a timber dam on the east side of the Cannon River. It powered a sawmill on the west side of the river and a flour mill on the east side; this was Rice County's first flour mill. The flour mill was sold to Charles A. Wheaton in 1859 and both mills to Captain Jesse Ames in 1865. Ames and his sons built a new west-side flour mill in 1869 and converted it to steam power in 1879. The firm was noted for its high-grade "New Process" flour, utilizing the middlings purifier, at the peak of the wheat boom, and the arrival of the railroad in 1865 provided new markets for Northfield products. An elevator was added in 1873 and the mill reached an output of 400 barrels per day

MINNESOTA HISTORY / ARCHITECTURE INVENTORY FORM
NORTHFIELD COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
Rice County, Minnesota

by 1880. A new timber dam was completed in 1884. The dam was replaced with a concrete structure in 1918. In 1918, the Theobald Flour Mills Company of Cleveland, Ohio purchased the mill and manufactured Theota and Peter Pan Flour. In 1927 the Campbell Cereal Company of Owatonna began to produce Malt-O-Meal Cereal in the mill. The original east-side flour mill, on Bridge Square, was razed in 1916. By 2010 Malt-O-Meal was the fifth largest cereal manufacturer in the United States.

Significance and Evaluation

The well-conserved Ames Mill provided impetus for the settlement and continued growth of Northfield and is associated with its earliest business leaders. The earliest existing building (1869) dates from the first period of the city's development, 1856-1880. The mill is associated with the historic contexts, "Commerce, 1856-1945" and "Industry and Agriculture, 1956-1945" (Northfield Preservation Plan, 1992).

This property was listed on the NRHP in 1979 as contributing to the Northfield Commercial Historic District. A prominent landmark at the Cannon River mill dam, the building exterior continues to retain historic significance and integrity and is contributing to the historic landscape setting of the district.

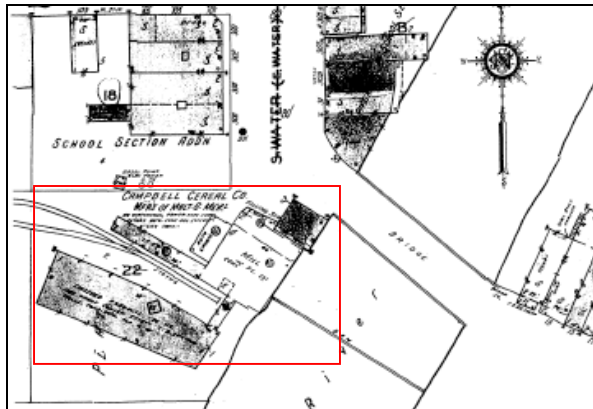
Significance and Historic Context(s)

Edwins, Steve, ed. *Northfield Downtown Guidebook*. Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission, 1982.

"Northfield Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1979.

Northfield Historical Society. Photograph and research files. Northfield, Minnesota.

Sanborn and USGS Map



Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., 1930, updated 1943.



USGS Northfield 1984



Ames Mill, ca. 1915, looking northwest.



Ames Mill, looking south.