NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Diamond Silk Mill
other names/site number: York Silk Manufacturing Company

2. Location

street & number: Ridge Avenue & Hay Street — N/A ☐ not for publication
city, town: East York — N/A ☐ vicinity
state: Pennsylvania code: PA county: York code: 133 zip code: 17405

3. Classification

Ownership of Property
- [X] private
- [ ] public-local
- [ ] public-State
- [ ] public-Federal

Category of Property
- [X] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☐ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ☐ removed from the National Register.
- ☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Domestic/Multiple Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)
Romanesque

Materials (enter categories from instructions)
foundation Limestone
walls Brick
roof Asphalt
other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The former Diamond Silk Mill is a three and one-half story, fifty foot by three hundred foot (50' x 300') rectangular building with a two-in-twelve pitched hip roof.

The building rests on an approximately two foot (2') wide stone foundation, which supports the exterior bearing wall construction of the building. The interior bays, two (2) transverse and thirty seven (37) longitudinal, consist of ten inches by ten inches (10" x 10") wood timber columns with ten inches by fourteen inches (10" x 14") heavy timber beams.

The floor construction consists of three (3) layers of tongue and groove flooring, installed perpendicular to each other creating a composite floor, averaging three and one-half inches (3-1/2"). The wood floor is topped with a one inch (1") layer of light weight concrete.

The roof sheathing consists of tongue and groove boards spanning perpendicular to rafters. The roofing material consists of several layers of build-up roofing, one-half inch (1/2") composite board with a finished surface of six (6) mill thick seamless rubber roof.

The interior walls consist of four inch (4") steel studs spaced on an average of about one-half inch (1/2") from the inside face of the masonry wall. Steel studs are covered with one-half inch (1/2") Gypsum wallboard, which runs continuous along all interior walls and returns into the window exposing the brick jamb and arch. The existing masonry within this reveal has been painted to complement the color of the drywall.

The underside of the tongue and groove floor boards are concealed by a suspended Gypsum wallboard ceiling at eight feet (8'-0") above the finished floor. The ceiling is supported by steel hat channels and is continuous throughout all floors. The ceiling intersects a bulkhead four feet (4'-0") from the exterior wall. This bulkhead is constructed of drywall and extends vertically where it meets drywall secured to channels on the underside of the original deck.

The main south facade rises three and one-half stories from the foundation to a decorative corbeled brick cornice. The site gradually slopes from east to west exposing a random ashlar limestone water table foundation. This ashlar limestone water table is contiguous on all sides of the building; broken only by openings. The water table does not occur at the pavilion and/or the base of the smokestack.

[X] See continuation sheet

The trusses are constructed of heavy timber members using steel tie rods as truss stiffeners. The trusses as well as the floor beams bear on exterior bearing walls (pilasters).

Generally, there is one (1) window penetration per bay. The windows vary in height from floor to floor; being slightly smaller on the upper floor. They are twelve over twelve (12/12) muntined wood double hung window units set generally two inches (2") in from the face of the masonry. The window units follow a contour of spring arch of the masonry, but are a square head sash with a wood panel in the arched spring. The segmentally arched window openings are set in thirty seven (37) regularly spaced bays. The openings decrease in height from the first to the third floors. The east end has transomed double doors at the center of each level with two (2) window units to the north and to the south of each door.

The north elevation has a three-story pavilion that is located near the center of the building. A white silhouette is painted on the north facade to illustrate the location of the former boiler room.

Slightly east of the center of the building, on the north facade, rises an octagonal smokestack. A one hundred and ten foot (110'-0") high tower rises from both the northeast and northwest corners of the structure. The tower is capped with a hip roof covered in a shingle of a color resembling that of the original slate. Marching along the top of the towers are a series of arched headed windows, generally two feet (2'-0") wide by nine feet (9'-0") high. The stair towers consist of exposed brick walls with a ninety degree (90°) winding stair; supported from landing to landing eliminating the requirements for columns. Located within the center of the winding stair is an open well. Wood guard and rails consist of solid vertical boards painted.

The former office area for the complex was located in the ground floor level, east end of the building. Its location is enhanced with a Romanesque entrance consisting of a brick soldier coursed arch leading to a recessed alcove area ten feet (10'-0") by ten feet (10'-0"). On the inside wall of the alcove area, framed within the large Romanesque opening, are four (4) smaller scale arched windows. This former office area now houses a living unit. The existing coffered wood ceiling as well as stained window casings, jamb returns, sills, and wainscoting remain throughout the majority of the unit. The ground floor level of the building houses living units, as well as storage. The upper floor utilizes a double loaded corridor concept meandering from north to south of the column bays.

To provide vertical transportation , a twenty five hundred (2,500) pound hydraulic elevator was installed in the center of the building. The existing stair towers on the east and west ends of the building as well as the center stair remain, and are used for ambulatory tenants as well as emergency egress, A double door vestibule arrangement leading to the main entrance was installed at the center of the north facade. Mailboxes and security systems are located within the vestibule. Directly within the inside door of the vestibule is located the office area for the complex. Building services are located in the ground floor of the building.

See continuation sheet

Upon exhaustive investigation, the developer was unable to satisfy the parking requirements for the City. Therefore, it was determined that the razing of the original powerhouse building, as well as the later additions, would be required. On September 14, 1989, recordation documents were submitted to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, outlining the extent of the demolition. The location of the former powerhouse building on the north facade of the building, as well as its overall height, one-story, proved demolition to be acceptable and would not have had an adverse affect on the overall project.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
INDUSTRY
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
1900-1930

Significant Dates
1900

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Dempwolf, John A.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Diamond Silk Mill played a significant role in reflecting the outstanding architecture of a local architect, as well as, being a leading industry at the turn-of-the-century. The Diamond Silk Mill was one (1) of four (4) silk mills constructed between circa 1899 and 1904. Of the four (4) turn-of-the-century mills, the Diamond Silk Mill was a far superior example of fine architecture, designed by the very talented local architect, John A. Dempwolf. The building historically represents a fine example of a silk mill whose industry has played a leading role in the growth of York, and aided Pennsylvania's leading national role in the Silk Mill Manufacturing Industry. As referenced in the National Register Form, for the Ashley & Bailey Silk Mill, prepared by Historic York Inc., silk mills played an important role in the growth of Lancaster's largest turn-of-the-century industry, the manufacture of umbrellas. As industries outside the city grew, the increased demand for labor fostered the development of East York.

The National Register Form, for the Ashley & Bailey Silk Mill noted that it was significan that a company from Paterson, New Jersey, would choose York in which to locate a branch mill. Silk manufacturing began in Paterson as early as 1840, and by 1900 it was the center of the nation's silk industry; producing twenty four and two-tenths-percent (24.2%) of the value of all silk goods produced in the United States. Paterson became the center of the silk industry for a number of reasons which were: its close proximity to New York City (the main silk market), the abundant waterpower produced by the Passaic River, the city's early start of power manufacturing, and the large supply of unskilled labor; much of which came from Italy and other European Countries. The 1900 Census of Manufacturers stated that the tendency of the silk industry was to spread from centralized areas to outlying locations. This explains why the silk goods sold there were produced in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. New York silk manufacturers moved their machinery to these two (2) states because of cheaper rents and a large supply of labor in these areas. In 1900, the value of silk and silk goods sold and produced in these two (2) states accounted for almost two-thirds (2/3) of the total for the United States.

☒ See continuation sheet

According to the National Register Form, for the Ashley & Bailey Silk Mill, York itself was a logical choice for silk manufacturing because of its close proximity to Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The local silk industry fed Lancaster's most important turn-of-the-century industry, the manufacture of umbrellas. In 1900, Lancaster had six (6) umbrella factories, a few being cottage industries employing fifteen-percent (15%) of the city's industrial work force. Lancaster, by the 1920's, produced more umbrellas than any other city in the United States. Two (2) of Lancaster's surviving umbrella factories, Rose Brothers & Company and Follmer Clogg & Company, are already listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The manufacture of silk steadily grew to become one of York's most important industries. In 1900, only two (2) silk mills were in operation in York. By 1904, four (4) silk mills in York employed eleven hundred twenty one (1,121) people and were putting out products worth over three million dollars ($3,000,000.00). The amount of capital invested in these four (4) mills was one million six hundred seventy thousand dollars ($1,670,000.00). By 1913, there were seven (7) silk mills in operation. The silk industry reached its peak in 1928 with twelve (12) silk mills. The number of operating mills decreased in the early years of the Depression, and finally the manufacture of silk declined in the late 1930's; due to the introduction of synthetic fibers. Most silk mills in York did not have the equipment to produce these new products.

It is evident from this chronology, that the majority of silk mill construction occurred in three (3) phases. The first phase occurred circa 1900 when four (4) silk mills were built. The Diamond Silk Mill, the Monarch Silk Mill, and the York Silk Mill were all constructed in 1900 or 1901. The Ashley & Bailey Silk Mill was built circa 1899.

The second phase of the construction occurred between circa 1911 and 1923. During this period of time, three (3) silk mills were built. These include: the E. & H. Levy Company Silk Mill, the Souter Silk Company Mill, and the Rutland Silk Company Mill. The E. & H. Levy Company is significant in that, during its entire operation, it only manufactured silk ribbons. It was the first silk mill in York to specialize by making only one (1) silk product.

The third and final phase of silk mill construction was from circa 1927 and 1935. During this period, five (5) mills were built. These include: the Eberton Silk Mill, the H. W. G. Silk Mill, the Tioga Silk Company Inc. Mill, the Kroy Corporation Silk Mill, and the Blue Bird Silk Mill.

While the circa 1900 silk mills do not have exclusively distinctive shape and design, when compared to contemporary industrial building, they do share several characteristics. For example, all were located at or near the city lines; encircling the city in effect.

See continuation sheet

Also, the City's early silk mills were tall, narrow buildings, standing three (3) to four (4) stories on sloped lots. Some, however, were built to conform to square lots. The U-shaped Monarch Silk Mill and the L-shaped E. & H. Levy Company building are two (2) examples. The York Silk Mill originally had a linear plan before an extensive wing was added to create a U-shape. These mills are constructed of brick and have heavy timber frames on the interior.

All of the pre-1920 silk mills have survived to the present and have fared well in terms of integrity. Among the exceptions is the York Silk Mill (circa 1900), where vertical steel buttresses added at the west end of the south elevation interfere with the typically smooth rhythm of window openings. At the Monarch Silk Mill (circa 1901), nearly all of the first floor windows have been filled in with brick, and a more recent windowless addition has been constructed across the plant's open end. The Rutland Silk Company Mill (circa 1917) has been stripped of its architectural integrity. The Diamond, Ashley & Bailey, E. & H. Levy, and Souter Mills have had relatively few alterations. However, the Souter Silk Company Mill (circa 1912) is a smaller mill that has few of the defining characteristics described above. The Diamond Silk Mill stands alone in terms of its stylistic features.

The Diamond Silk Mill was designed in 1900 by John A. Dempwolf, York County's leading architect. Among his notable works in the City of York are, the County Courthouse (1898), Central Market (1887), and the Fluhrer Building (1911). His designs can also be found in Harrisburg, Gettysburg, northern Maryland, and Pittsburgh.

John A. Dempwolf was responsible for designing a number of York's turn-of-the-century mills and factory buildings. Many of them display Romanesque arches, like those on the Diamond Silk Mill. The mill's most notable stylistic elements are the two (2) towers, which resemble those on York's Central Market Building. All in all, the Diamond Silk Mill is one of Dempwolf's most distinctive industrial buildings. Because it is one of the tallest buildings in York's east end, it occupies a prominent position on the city's skyline.

The significance of the Diamond Silk Mill is both multifaceted and complex. It is significant in its relationship to Lancaster's largest turn-of-the-century industry, umbrella manufacturing. It is also significant in the development of East York, as it was one (1) of the first major industries in this area. The building itself is an intact representative example of local Romanesque Revival Industrial Architecture, and has very good integrity. For these reasons, it is truly a significant historic building.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Gold, David. "The Eagle Parachute-An Interesting Personnel Parachute of the 1940's", Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society, Vol. 88, No. 3, (1984) 86-107.

Northwest York, 1884-1984, 100th Anniversary Celebration (York, PA: 1984) 12.

Prowell, George R., History of York County, Pennsylvania (Chicago: J.H. Beers & Company, 1907) Vol. II 208-209, 231-232, 768-769.

Twelfth Census of the United States-1900 Census of Manufacturers (Washington, DC: United States Census Office, 1902) Vol. I, 206-207, Vol. II, 803, Vol. III, 197-233.

Wiley, Mary T., "Follmer, Clogg, and Company Umbrella Factory", National Register Nomination (Lancaster: Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster, 1986).

York City Directories, 1898-1938.

"Ashley and Bailey Company Silk Mill", National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Historic York, Inc. 1990).

☐ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- [X] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- [ ] previously listed in the National Register
- [ ] previously determined eligible by the National Register
- [ ] designated a National Historic Landmark
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- [X] State historic preservation office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [ ] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [ ] Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 9

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	18	354840	4426320
B			
C			
D			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Deed Book 95F, Page 47.

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Boundary was selected based on the original lot size for the factory. Boundary as noted in Deed Book 95F, Page 47, is bordered by Hay Street on the south side, Ridge Avenue on the west side, North Franklin Street on the east side, and the former Pennsylvania Railroad Tracks, presently Conrail, on the north side.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John J. Calabrese, President

organization Calabrese Associates Architects, Inc. date February 11, 1992

street & number 18 South Decatur Street telephone (717) 687-0156

city or town Strasburg state PA zip code 17579

Diamond Silk Mill
York County - zone 18
York Quad
E 354840 N 4426320