

# Ogilvie Flour Mill



Date of Construction	1912-1913
Address	1222 Allowance Avenue SE
Original Owner	Ogilvie Flour Mills Co.
Architect	Canadian Stewart Co.
Contractor	Canadian Stewart Co.
Neighbourhood	South Flats
Legal	4;15;12;30;NE and 2630AM;N

## Description of Historic Place

The Ogilvie Flour Mill is a dramatic and imposing complex of historic milling buildings located on a 2.91-hectare site at the southern extent of the South Flats neighbourhood in the City of Medicine Hat. The collection of buildings, situated adjacent to Allowance Avenue SE, consists of several largely intact brick and concrete buildings on an east-west axis, intersected by a spur line connecting to the CPR line to the east. The site is comprised of a six-storey narrow rectangular brick clad mill, a concrete elevator with a central cupola branded prominently with "Ogilvie's" on the north façade, and a narrow, rectangular brick and corrugated metal warehouse and office situated on the north side of the collection of buildings. The site also has several outbuildings and a gravel parking lot on the north side.

## Heritage Value of Historic Place

As one of the country's most successful mills, the Ogilvie Flour Mill in Medicine Hat is extremely significant as a legacy of one of

Canada's earliest and most successful industries, and is one of the best-preserved historic mills in western Canada. Its existence and integrity stress the importance of the wheat and agricultural industries in Alberta. Erected as the headquarters for western Canada, Medicine Hat's mill opened in 1913, representing an important period of growth for the company. Established by Archibald Ogilvie and his three sons, immigrants from Scotland, their first gristmill was erected at Jacques Cartier, Quebec in 1801. The company was shortly thereafter moved to Montreal to compete with Minneapolis mills, operating as A.W. Ogilvie & Company for over 40 years. By 1895, the Ogilvies, who owned mills and grain elevators throughout Ontario, Manitoba, and what were then the Northwest Territories, was the biggest flour miller in the world. In 1902, a Montreal syndicate purchased the company and it was renamed The Ogilvie Flour Mill Co. Ltd. In the 1910s, Ogilvie was looking to expand into the prosperous wheat belt in Southern Alberta and Saskatchewan. Medicine Hat was selected due to its location on the trans-continental rail line and inexpensive fuel and power. The building was opened in 1913 and produced up to 4,000

barrels per day of flour, as well as poultry feed and bran, and was the primary supplier to British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan. In 1954, Ogilvie acquired Lake of the Woods Milling Company, established in 1887, bringing Five Roses Flour under the Ogilvie name, and the company began manufacturing a complete line of baking flours, cake mixes, and hot cereals. In 1968, the company was purchased by Labatt's. The company remained salient up until the late 1980s, when it was purchased by Archer Daniels Midland, of Decatur, Illinois, at the time the largest milling company in the United States. The mill thereafter became known as the Archer Daniels Midland Mill. It operated until 2013, when the Medicine Hat mill was permanently closed and operations centralized in Calgary.

Ogilvie Flour Mill is further significant as a symbol of the stability and prosperity of Medicine Hat at the height of the Edwardian boom period in the 1910s. The promise of a large 4,000-barrel capacity mill was highly desirable for the community as it provided employment, stability, and prompted a surge of settlement in the working class neighbourhoods of South and River Flats surrounding the mill. The construction of the mill, which began in June 1912, was remarkably efficient, and provided an instant source of local employment. When completed, the site included a flourmill, a flax warehouse, a concrete elevator, and a railway spur that connected to the CPR line; the entire plant was built for a cost of \$750,000. With a capacity to store up to 250,000 bushels in the elevator, the mill machinery and workers were able to process an average of 4,000 bushels per day at its peak during the First World War, prompted by an increase in export to supply the war effort. In 1932, No. 1 northern wheat dropped to \$.42 per bushel, the lowest price since the Middle Ages, and production outputs were significantly impacted. The mill was able to diversify quickly, shipping product to Europe during the Second World War years, and to the Philippines and Asia in the 1950s,

leading to a major expansion and automation in 1955-56. During this time the machinery was upgraded, and a large one-storey addition was made to the warehouse. Staffing was greatly decreased due to this automation, impacting the Medicine Hat economy. In the 1960s, three massive butler bins were installed at the elevator due in part to a new lucrative contract with what was then the Soviet Union. Just prior to its closing, the mill produced 370 tonnes of flour per day, and ran on a small staff.

Ogilvie Flour Mill is also highly valued for its innovative and progressive design for high efficiency grain production at the turn of the 20th century. Based on the design of a mill in Fort William, Ontario, only larger, the mill was designed and constructed by the Canadian Stewart Company, who were also responsible for construction of mills in Chicago, New York, and Montreal. The original site plan consists of several powerful vertical masses arranged on an east-west axis: a six-storey mill with a two-storey extension to the west, a towering concrete elevator, and a brick clad warehouse separated from the other two buildings by a central spur line. The rectangular plan mill features a what was then innovative reinforced steel and concrete structural system with brick cladding detailed with recessed vertical structural bays and symmetrical fenestration featuring lugsills. The interior of the mill is fitted with heavy timber floors and was powered by steam heat. The dramatic concrete elevator, emphasizing the vertical in form, has 24 circular concrete tanks and 16 interspersed bins, internally equipped with machinery for cleaning grain. The warehouse, situated to the north of the elevator and mill, originally featured brick cladding and has since been covered with corrugated metal cladding.

Ogilvie Flour Mill is also valued as a landmark for its highly prominent, intact massing, and its distinctive, industrial historic design in the South Flats neighbourhood.



## Character-Defining Elements - Ogilvie Flour Mill (1222 Allowance Avenue SE)



- Location adjacent to Allowance Avenue SE in Medicine Hat's South Flats neighbourhood



- Prominent siting along an east-west axis



- Situation on a flat lot with cliffs directly to the south



- Grassed yard with mature trees and a gravel parking lot to the north of the buildings; CPR spur line running from the east between the warehouse/offices and milling building/elevator



- Multitude of contemporaneous out buildings, including one-storey pump house with crenelated parapet and stucco cladding



- Form, scale, and massing as expressed by its: narrow rectangular plan; six-storey height; thirteen structural bays; flat roof; two-storey engine room and one-storey boiler room located on the eastern end of building



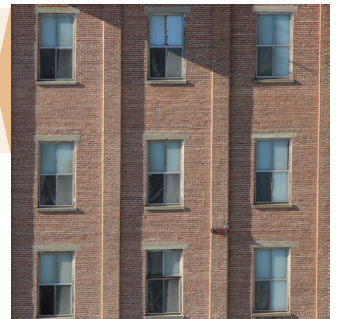
- Masonry construction including: reinforced steel and concrete structural system; multi-coloured pressed brick cladding with white mortar in common bond pattern; concrete foundation



- Industrial Edwardian details such as: stepped parapet roofs on each end of the structure; parged concrete lintels and sills; pilasters with recessed structural bays; symmetrical fenestration openings; corbelled brick cornice



- Fenestration such as: original window and door openings; some original single-hung multi-pane wooden-sash windows on north façade



- Interior features such as: original heavy wooden flooring

## Character-Defining Elements - Ogilvie Flour Mill - Storage Tanks (1222 Allowance Avenue SE)



- Form, scale, and massing as expressed by its: rectangular plan; vertically emphasized and symmetrically interspaced circular silos on each side - 24 circular concrete tanks in total; concrete cupola at centre of elevator on roof; and connector at the top of the elevator and mill connecting the buildings

- Concrete construction including: reinforced steel and concrete structural system; poured concrete superstructure; concrete foundation



- Fenestration such as: original window openings in cupola

- Additional details such as painted Ogilvie brand on south side of building; painted "OGILVE'S" on north side; ghost writing on cupola



## Character-Defining Elements - Ogilvie Flour Mill - Warehouse Building



- Form, scale, and massing as expressed by its: narrow rectangular plan; four-storey height with central three-storey extension; one-storey 1955 addition to west with curved roof

- Concrete and masonry construction including: reinforced steel and concrete structural system; pressed brick cladding under later corrugated metal cladding; multi-coloured combed pressed brick cladding on 1955 addition



- Original fenestration including: original window and door openings; loading bays on west end of 1955 addition

- Additional elements such as: lightning rod, and connector at roofline to mill building



## Statement of Integrity - Ogilvie Flour Mill (1222 Allowance Avenue SE)

### Applicable Significance Criteria

*This site is significant because...*

**Theme / Activity / Cultural Practice / Event** ☒ Yes ☐ No

-As one of the country's most successful mills, the Ogilvie Flour Mill in Medicine Hat is extremely significant as a legacy of one of Canada's earliest and most successful industries and stresses the importance of the wheat and agricultural industries in Alberta. Erected as the headquarters for western Canada, Medicine Hat's mill opened in 1913, representing an important period of growth for the company (**Theme Value – Managing Growth in Medicine Hat**).

-Ogilvie Flour Mill is further significant as a symbol of the stability and prosperity of Medicine Hat at the height of the Edwardian boom period in the 1910s. The promise of a large 4,000-barrel capacity mill was highly desirable for the community as it provided employment, stability, and, prompted a surge of settlement in the working class neighbourhood of South Flats surrounding the mill (**Theme Value – City Development in Medicine Hat**).

**Institution / Person** ☐ Yes ☒ No

**Design / Style / Construction** ☒ Yes ☐ No

-Ogilvie Flour Mill is also highly valued for its innovative and progressive design for high efficiency grain production at the turn of the 20th century. Based on the design of a mill in Fort William, Ontario, except larger, the mill was designed and constructed by the Canadian Stewart Company, who were responsible for the construction of mills in Chicago, New York, and Montreal (**Theme Value – Built in Medicine Hat**).

**Information Potential** ☐ Yes ☒ No

**Landmark / Symbolic Value** ☒ Yes ☐ No

Ogilvie Flour Mill is also valued as a landmark for its highly prominent, intact massing, and its distinctive industrial, historic design in the South Flats neighbourhood (**Landmark Value**).

### Period of Significance

1906 – 1913 Pre-First World War Boom, Age of Optimism

### Chronology of Alterations

1955-56 - Major upgrade to mill – replacement of machinery, new one-storey warehouse built to west of existing warehouse

1961 - Grain bins added

1980 - Warehouse clad in metal

1982 - Interior renovations

Statement of Integrity continued on next page...



## Statement of Integrity - Ogilvie Flour Mill (1222 Allowance Avenue SE)

### Aspects of Integrity

#### LOCATION



Yes



No



Not Applicable

The location of the mill site has not been altered.

#### DESIGN



Yes



No



Not Applicable

The design of the buildings remain largely intact, although the warehouse building to the north has had renovations and recladding that have altered the original form, scale, and massing of the building.

#### ENVIRONMENT



Yes



No



Not Applicable

The environment of the site has remained relatively original.

#### MATERIALS



Yes



No



Not Applicable

The authentic materials of the site are intact.

#### WORKMANSHIP



Yes



No



Not Applicable

The high quality of the workmanship of the buildings is evident in the fact they are collectively over 100 years old and in fine condition.

#### FEELING



Yes



No



Not Applicable

The site continues to convey a powerful historic aesthetic.

#### ASSOCIATION



Yes



No



Not Applicable

The association of the buildings has not been altered.

### Statement of Integrity

*Ogilvie Flour Mill maintains all the aspects of integrity necessary for it to convey its significance / heritage value.*

Ogilvie Flour Mill is in remarkably good condition considering its 100-year-old vintage and use. The site is in nearly original condition with few additions and changes. The Mill building is intact in terms of its form, scale, massing and materiality. The original, multi-coloured pressed brick cladding is in good condition, save for a few areas on the north and south facades where newer construction, equipment, and stairs have been attached or added on to. These areas are showing isolated instances of stress fractures. On the south façade of the Mill, many of the original window openings have been filled in with brick. All of the windows, apart from a select few on the north façade, have been replaced with aluminum multi-light sash windows. The original windows were multi-light wooden-sash windows. An addition was added to the two-storey engine room some time in the post 1960s.

The elevator is in excellent condition, with only minor cracks in the reinforced concrete walls. The painted signs should be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that the paint does not degrade.

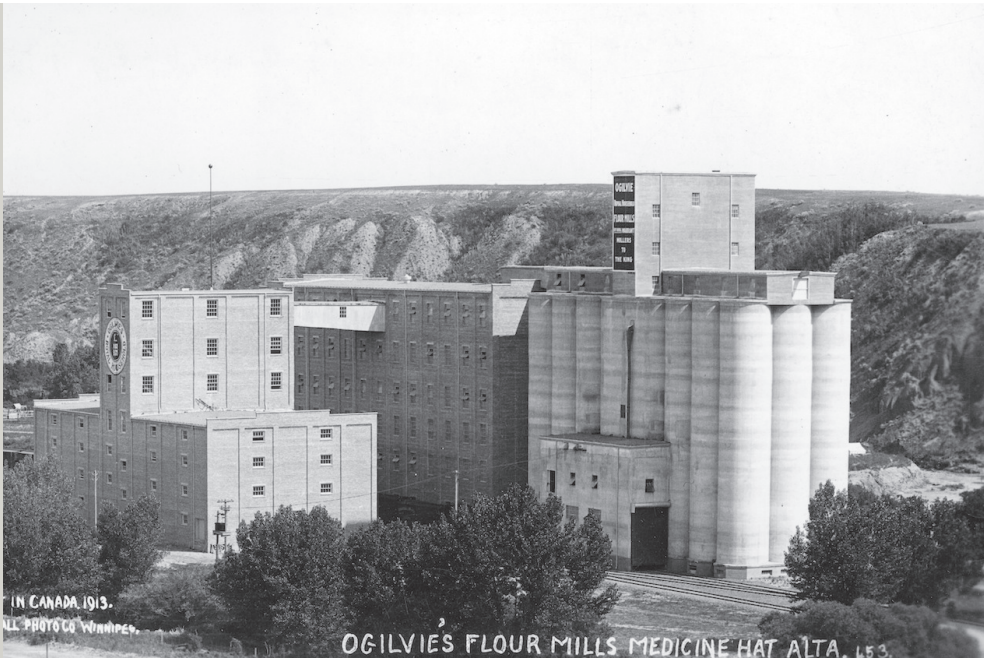
The Warehouse has retained its form, scale, and massing; however, the brick cladding was covered with corrugated metal cladding in 1980. Many of the original window openings were closed off at this time and those that remained operable, were replaced with aluminum-sash windows. The 1955 one storey addition to the west of the warehouse is sympathetic to the original design and, is in good condition.

Several of the out buildings on the site are historic and should be monitored as to their condition on a regular basis.

Additional Images - Ogilvie Flour Mill (1222 Allowance Avenue SE)

The Ogilvie Flour Mill shortly after construction finished on the structure in 1913

Esplanade Archives, Medicine Hat, Alberta.  
0424.0013.




The south elevation of the Ogilvie Flour Mill



Donald Luxton & Associates  
August 2013

## Heritage Evaluation Form - Ogilvie Flour Mill (1222 Allowance Avenue SE)

 <b>Medicine Hat</b> <b>The Gas City</b> <b>Heritage Evaluation Form</b>	Site Number	Category A
	Community District South Flats	
	Designation	

<b>Site Name(s):</b> Ogilvie Flour Mill			
<b>Municipal Address:</b> 1222 Allowance Avenue SE		Date of Construction:	<sup>Y</sup> 1912-13
<b>Consultant(s):</b> Donald Luxton & Associates Inc. <b>Heritage Committee:</b> Heritage Resource Committee <b>Heritage Planner:</b> Chris Reddy		Evaluation Date:	<sup>Y</sup> 13 <sup>M</sup> 05 <sup>D</sup> 17
			<b>Total</b>
			90

History (H)	E	VG	G	F	P		(H) SCORE
H.1 Associations/Patterns		X				20	30
H.2 Age		X				10	
<b>Comments:</b> H.1 Ogilvie is a rare, intact example of one of the largest extant historic mills in western Canada H.2 Constructed in 1912/1913.							

Architecture (A)	E	VG	G	F	P		(A) SCORE
A.1 Style/Type/Design	X					40	40
A.2 Designer/Builder		X				10	
A.3 Construction Technology		X				10	
A.4 Interior Details				X		2	
A.5 Alterations		X				-5	
<b>Comments:</b> A.1 The site is an excellent example of Edwardian industrial architecture. A.2 The builder and designer, Canadian Stewart Company, was responsible for building mills across Canada and the US A.3 Constructed using red pressed brick and reinforced concrete. A.4 Original wooden floors. A.5 Some windows infilled with brick or replaced with new. Doors replaced. Additions to Mill and Warehouse buildings.							

Urban Context (C)	E	VG	G	F	P		(C) SCORE
C.1 Landmark/Character	X					15	20
C.2 Streetscape/Landscape	X					15	
<b>Comments:</b> C.1 The unique architectural style of the mill makes it an easily identifiable neighbourhood landmark. C.2 The mill stands out on the streetscape of the neighbourhood.							