



Heritage Property – Roschman Button Factory



25 Regina St. S.

Built by Richard and Rudolph Roschman, 1886

Designated June 7, 1982: bylaw 82-62, “The Old Button Factory”

An immigrant from Germany in 1870, Richard Roschman (or Roeschman) learned his trade at the Berlin (Kitchener) Button Works of Vogelsang and Shantz, and with his brother Rudolph established his own button manufacturing business in Waterloo in 1878. In February 1886, the town council of Waterloo approved a bylaw that granted Roschman a “bonus” of \$1,800 along with a 10-year exemption from taxes to construct a new factory to house the business of Roschman and Brother on the condition that he employ at least 40 persons for a period of at least 10 years. By October 1886, the solid new two-storey brick structure on Regina Street was completed and occupied.

For over half a century the button factory operated, at one time with over 100 employees; its buttons were sold throughout Canada. The company closed in 1946. The Ontario Glove Manufacturing Co. Ltd. then purchased the building, using it until 1957. Today the space serves as the Waterloo Community Arts Centre.



The Roschman Button Factory, in what may be called Victorian-industrial style, has retained most of its original fabric and inner structure. Its utilitarian design is effectively softened by a few decorative or design elements. The plain roofline is graced with stepped dentils — intermittent, corbelled bricks — under the gable ends and side eaves. The windows and doorways are segmentally arched. Window openings are plentiful, answering a need for good natural lighting inside; doorways also have a generous transom. Original wrought-iron tie-rods span the width of the building at ceiling height.

The Roschman Button Factory is significant as an excellent representative of industrial buildings that were typical of the mid-to-late 19th century. The building embodies the manufacturing past of the City of Waterloo. It also serves as an illustrative case of how heritage buildings can be adapted in a sensitive manner for continued modern use.