William Wood, The American Woolen Company and the Creation of a Model Mill Village in Shawsheen, Massachusetts

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Abstract

Shawsheen, a model mill village planned and built in Andover, Massachusetts, between 1906 and 1924, was based on the vision of William Wood, then president of the American Woolen Company. It was arguably the most unique textile mill village ever built in New England. The article begins with a discussion of the motivation for the project. It then shifts to a summary of the critical features of Wood's vision and identifies the historic institutional paths that informed him. This is followed by an analysis of how the plan was successfully implemented and an explanation of what happened to Shawsheen over time. The article ends with an interpretation of the significance of the Shawsheen experience in the context of the history of New England mill towns.

Keywords
industrial community, new town, Shawsheen, American Woolen

Introduction

Shawsheen Village was a model mill community built between 1906 and 1924 in Andover, Massachusetts, less than three miles distant from the center of the mill city of Lawrence, Massachusetts. It was placed in the long-settled industrial hamlet of Frye Village which, except for selected historic buildings, was demolished. Based on the vision of William Madison Wood, then president of the American Woolen Company (AWC), the largest textile company in the world, Shawsheen was arguably the most unique mill village ever built in New England.[1] Industrial historian Orra Stone summarized the Shawsheen project as the most significant development in the history of the AWC.[2]

The intent of the article is not to simply present the Shawsheen experience as a stand-alone case study but rather to illustrate how the ideas of several critical mill town planning movements coalesced to create New England's last planned textile mill village. Key influences, both positive and negative, can be seen in David Humphreys' experiences in Humphreysville, Connecticut, Samuel Slater's mill villages in the Blackstone Valley of Rhode Island and Massachusetts, Francis C. Lowell's visions in Waltham, Massachusetts, and the Boston Associates mill cities across New England.[3]

Shawsheen was also influenced by the planning and development of mill communities of the Progressive Era (1890s–1920s). They were part of a new generation of communities that historian Margaret Crawford identified as "New Company Towns."[4] They turned to professional designers and planners and directed them to apply selected concepts of the City Beautiful, Garden City, and City Functional Movements, among others, in their efforts. These professionals, sponsored by both private companies and government agencies, endeavored to create well-designed places that were healthy, safe, and sanitary; where both the mills and the communities operated efficiently; where social and recreational amenities were extensive; and where there was an abundance of greenery and open spaces. They were also tasked with designing built environments to support their clients' need to create a culture in which the residents would become stable, loyal, and committed to the company's purposes.

Several other "New Company Towns" were either planned or developed quite close to the Shawsheen site in Andover. The Norton Company's planning and partial development of Indian Hill Village in Worcester and the Massachusetts Homestead Commission–

sponsored Billerica Garden Village stand out and the Bird Manufacturing Company's plan for Neponset Village in Walpole, though never implemented, was considered exemplary.[5] While there is no record of Wood being aware of these projects, many of their planning elements were utilized at Shawsheen.

The article is based on our research, applied studies, and teaching work related to the planning of New England mill villages, towns, and cities. From an historiographic perspective, it is grounded in the Historical Institutionalist Approach to planning history. More specifically, we identify the paths of institutions as they informed the planning, design, and development of the Shawsheen project.[6] Finally, we are very much aware of the danger in creating a seemingly larger-than-life depiction of William Wood's role in the project and have endeavored to focus more on the ideas that influenced him then on his role in bringing Shawsheen to a reality. However, it is essential to note how he came to a position to undertake the Shawsheen project.

Born in 1858 into an Azorean family who had immigrated to Martha's Vineyard several years earlier, William Wood, through pluck, intelligence, and determination steadily moved up the American economic ladder until, in 1899, at age forty-one, he became the driving force and later, the president of the newly formed AWC. This company would, by 1924, when he resigned, employ 40,000 workers in sixty mills spread among eight states. It was the nation's largest textile company. Considered a masterful manager and innovator, he was given a remarkable degree of independence over corporate decision-making. He also exhibited a keen interest in architecture, landscape architecture, and urban planning which were ultimately expressed through the Shawsheen project. However, as Shawsheen was under construction, the AWC began to lose its direction, market share, and profitability and the board of directors began to lose their confidence in Wood's leadership. Concomitantly, Wood began to show signs of ill physical health and mental instability and resigned as president. His mental condition continued to deteriorate, and he took his own life on February 2, 1926.

Shawsheen Village would not have been created if not for its location juxtaposed to the city of Lawrence. The article begins with a concise description of the state of that city in 1912, as William Wood and the AWC were acquiring land for the project. Section 2 examines and explains Wood's vision and concepts. Section 3 is an analysis of the detailed planning, design, and implementation of Shawsheen Village. Finally, section 4 closes with a summary of how Shawsheen has evolved into the present and reflects on its historical importance in terms of the evolution of New England mill towns.

Lawrence, The American Woolen Company, and the Strike of 1912

The city of Lawrence, from its founding in 1847 through to the early 1900s, was arguably the most turbulent mill city in the nation as it went through booms and busts and strikes and lockouts until 1914, when it emerged as the largest textile mill city in the United States.[7] It was also one of the nation's most unhealthy, polluted, and disease-ridden communities.[8] In 1893, the United States entered a five-year economic depression that was particularly severe in the textile industry; mill after mill in Lawrence declared bankruptcy. However, toward the end of the downturn, the still affluent owners of Lawrence's Washington Mill saw an opportunity to combine the assets of seven of the region's bankrupted companies

and created a successful conglomerate called the AWC. Incorporated in 1899, it quickly became profitable as the economy righted itself. As inspiring as this accomplishment was, Lawrence mill workers were constantly living on the edge of despair and their egregious working conditions gained the attention of the Massachusetts state legislature. Many of its members were appalled at the mill workers' circumstances and, as one step toward improvement, voted to require a reduction in the work week from fifty-six to fifty-four hours. The Lawrence mill owners complied, but lowered employees' take-home pay accordingly. The result, beginning on January 11, 2012, was the largest spontaneous walkout in Lawrence's history—a strike that captured the attention of the nation.[9] The pay cut may have been the direct cause of the strike, but there was more to it. For years, most of the workers had lived in slum-like tenements with six to eight people in a sar- dine-tin-sized two-bedroom unit. The 1912 Survey of Lawrence detailed their horrific living conditions and coined the term "huddle fever" to describe the anger, frustration, and rage that came from living in such poor conditions.[10] The workers had suffered enough ill treatment by the time of the pay cut and took their concerns to the street. Thus began the Bread and Roses Strike of 1912.

The strike brought all the social issues of American textile manufacturing—poor housing, unhealthy living conditions, inadequate pay, workday length, child labor—to the attention of people across the nation. After six weeks of strife, Wood and other Lawrence textile mill owners capitulated and provided improvements to the lives of the workers.[11] Unsurprisingly, by that time, Wood was vilified. He never again built another mill in Lawrence but turned his attention to a completely different venture. He would build Shawsheen Village, a model mill village in the neighboring community of Andover.[12] The village would be financed through both Wood's per- sonal funds and $5,500,000 in AWC-issued ten-year notes. A wholly owned AWC subsidiary called the Homestead Association would manage the project.[13] George M. Wallace, Wood's per- sonal assistant, was responsible for day-to-day supervision of the project. Wallace, a former mill hand and waiter, rose to this position through Wood's patronage.[14]

The Vision for Shawsheen

William Wood never fully explained why he became enamored with the idea or his reasons for selecting the Andover location. According to both his biographer and an unpublished student paper written by his son Cornelius, Wood had a strong interest in city planning and building large projects.[15] Evidence of this could be seen in the construction of the AWC mill structures he over- saw and in Arden, his expansive family mansion on a hill overlooking the future site of Shawsheen Village. Well-read and well-traveled, he would have been aware of the City Beautiful and Garden City Movements and of other large manufacturers' efforts to build new villages. Over several years, Wood and the AWC purchased one thousand five hundred acres less than three miles from the AWC mills in Lawrence; six hundred acres were set aside for the village.[16]

A 1923 AWC promotional brochure made Wood's ideas and concepts quite clear. Shawsheen was to be a demonstration of a model city for the "weavers of woolens and worsteds the world over." The village was to have an "air of efficiency." It would be a settlement "where one would find a real home," where children would gain a "real education" and mix with the right people by "type and breeding." The living units would consist of "homey, artistic, charming, quaint, colonial residences." Finally, the brochure emphasized the importance of

“accommodating the needs of office workers.” The village was to be low-density, without tenements, in a well-landscaped setting along a clear-flowing stream. It would be environmentally clean, architecturally designed, self-sustaining, and adjacent—but not socially or culturally attached—to Lawrence.[17]

Implementing the Vision

The concept plan for the village, to be located at a major highway crossroads, called for the creation of a nucleated central core serving as the retail, commercial, hospitality, civic, and service center. The core would also be the site of the AWC headquarters and would be surrounded in three directions by housing primarily for AWC executives, managers, administrators, technicians, and support staff. To the northeast, beyond the core and residential areas, the industrial district would contain massive mills, a warehouse, the railroad depot, manufacturing support facilities, and a steam plant. Finally, to the northwest would be both Wood and AWC owned and operated model farms providing fresh food for the village and for workers in Lawrence.[18] The concept plan was meticulously followed.[19]

Once built, the core area became the active center of the village with retail shops, professional offices, a community meeting place, a hotel, and a kindergarten. Arguably, one of the most important structures was a two-and-one-half story, “u” shaped building with a clock and bell tower, which housed the post office. Federal government approval as a United States Post Office Station was a critical step in establishing Shawsheen’s identity as a formal place rather than an enclave of the AWC.[20] Beyond the grade school and a local policeman controlling traffic at the main crossroads, it served as the only everyday evidence of a governmental presence in the village.

Across the street from the post office were several businesses rarely found in planned mill communities. Shawsheen was built during a period of rapidly-expanding automobile use and, despite Wood’s efforts to create a walking village, he knew the residents would require their own vehicles. Furthermore, he realized the AWC fleet assigned to the mills would need to be maintained and directed two garages be developed to meet these needs. The garages not only serviced the vehicles but functioned as a place to store them. The garage placed in the center of the village was uniquely styled. Two stories tall, and complete with three Doric columns and a neo-colonial façade, it housed approximately four hundred vehicles.[21] There were few like it in New England. Near the garages were a creamery and a central laundry. The creamery served as an outlet for the sale of dairy products produced at the Wood and AWC farms, while the laundry was intended to meet the washing and drying needs of the village.

Four other significant structures, designed in a Tudor or Georgian Revival style, shared the core of the village. The Balmoral Spa was located along the west bank of the Shawsheen River; its night club, theater, tennis courts, and nearby swimming hole and putting green made it the center of the village’s social life. North of the spa and the post office were two buildings which faced each other and had obvious connections. The Merchants’ Building was a three-story com- mercial-retail-office structure with shops on the ground floor and offices above, leased by firms supporting the AWC’s activities.[22] Facing the Merchants’ Building was Shawsheen Manor, a large former residence-turned-hotel providing accommodations for visitors undertaking business with the AWC.[23]

Finally, the crown jewel of the central core, the Georgian Revival-styled AWC Administrative Office Building. Situated on the east side of the river, this limestone and brick building contained approximately 129,000 square feet of office space and was the heart of the AWC Empire which consisted of sixty mills located in forty-two communities and eight states.[24] The administration building simply dominated all before it.[25]

Taken as a whole, the core of the village was designed to send a clear message. It was a place where the promotion of the company's growth and prosperity was paramount. Even the ornamental frieze on the building's entrance reinforced the message: It depicted an American eagle (the AWC was an American corporation and its leaders were strongly patriotic), a Shawsheen Native American (in commemoration of the area's occupants prior to European settlement), and, per- haps most significantly, a ram's head (a powerful symbol throughout antiquity which the AWC adopted as its logo).

The residential areas, consisting of 251 houses, were designed in a Colonial Revival pattern and clustered in groups of red brick or white painted wood. These exterior materials so defined them that the brick homes came to be called "Brick Shawsheen," while those painted white were commonly referred to as "White Shawsheen." Brick Shawsheen, with stately homes on large, irregular lots, was built west of the village's main street and served as a neighborhood primarily for the families of upper management. Placed at the highest point in the village and interspersed with several remodeled residential structures saved from Frye Village, Brick Shawsheen houses were situated on short streets furthest away from the mills. It was an elegant, quiet, and serene neighborhood. White Shawsheen was intended mainly to meet the needs of middle management and technical and support staff. Although built with the same attention to site details as Brick Shawsheen, the houses and lots were smaller and the streets longer. It was further subdivided into two sections. Middle management lived close to the core, while technical and support staff, the lowest paid of the AWC workers living in Shawsheen, occupied housing "on the other side of the tracks"—the Boston and Maine Railroad line that mainly brought visitors, and materials to and from the village. The only large-scale housing consisted of an apartment complex for single workers and an old age home. Wood clearly believed in class distinctions and followed the military dictum that rank has its privileges.

Most of the executives had lived in high-cost housing scattered throughout greater Boston where they were paying, primarily due to the shortage of housing caused by World War I, between 50 and 200 percent more in housing costs than they would be charged at Shawsheen.[26] Bringing them together in a well-built community with reasonable rents would reduce commuting times and lessen cost of living anxiety. Moreover, residents would have informal opportunities to bond, share ideas, and become more strongly committed to the AWC culture. And finally, it would demonstrate that Wood, who had dramatically increased the pay and improved the working conditions of AWC laborers in 1919, had not forgotten the needs of the executives and senior staff.[27] Wood's personal values and attention to detail, as well as his intention to control the narrative, are vivid in these residential areas. He envisioned Shawsheen as a carefully landscaped, pedestrian friendly, walking village. To ensure this ideal, he directed that no garages would be built in the residential area and no parking would be allowed on the streets. All automobiles would be stored in garage spaces in the town center. Wood had a dislike of outdoor clothes lines, raised garbage containers, and overhead wires. Therefore, all clothes washing would take place in a central laundry in the town center, and all garbage

containers and wires would be placed below ground. Finally, Wood saw fencing and porches jutting toward the street as restricting the creation of an open and friendly sense of community. Therefore, fencing was forbidden and porches would be placed on the sides or rear of the residential units. The planning and design of the residential areas were clearly of interest to him.

Wood directed seven hundred acres of open land to be dedicated to model farms immediately to the north and northwest of Brick Shawsheen. To help the public understand his intent, the farm managers indelibly etched the phrase "A Model Dairy for a Model Town" on each of their glass bottles. For example, as early as 1923, the AWC's pure-bread Ayreshire cattle were producing some of the highest quality milk, at some of the highest volumes, in the nation. The sale of one of its prized bulls to a California rancher in 1924 was so newsworthy, it was featured in the *Los Angeles Times!*[28]

The industrial area, with approximately two thousand six hundred workers moving about each day, was a highly energetic place. To feed these workers, the AWC built a cafeteria that could seat eight hundred people at one setting. After work hours, the building was transformed into a one thousand-seat movie theater. Above all, the industrial section was massive. It included a five- story steam plant providing power to the entire village, a ten-story warehouse with the capacity to store forty million pounds of wool, and the Shawsheen Brush Mill, which provided lumber for the construction of the village.[29] Most impressive were its two mill buildings, Shawsheen Mill Number One and Two,[30] collectively providing eight hundred fifty thousand square feet of pro- duction space. These buildings were designed quite differently than the standard stolid, heavy- looking brick buildings found in the earlier Waltham-Lowell style of mills. They were constructed with extensive glazing and lightly colored concrete mullions, resulting in a simple, more airy character and a sense of openness. They may have been two of the tallest buildings in the village, but via the topography, landscaping, façade treatments, and placement at the edge of the village, they did not overwhelm the townscape.[31]

While the residential districts were private areas, the remainder of the village welcomed workers each day, coming and going mainly using trains or trolleys. Ironically, in this period of street- car suburbs where white-collar workers commonly traveled from the outskirts to urban job sites, the opposite was the case in Shawsheen. The recreation facilities, cafeteria and restaurants, hotels, shops, dance hall, community center, and post office were all intended to be patronized both by residents and visitors. Nowhere was this more evident than in the presence of a five thousand-seat stadium near the village center. It could accommodate more than half the residents of Andover! Both the commercial core and industrial sections were places of great street activity for more than sixteen hours per day, serving multiple publics. Early morning found the mill workers disembarking from the trolleys and trains, midmorning would be a time for shoppers to visit the retail establishments after their children had walked to school, mid-day would find business being conducted at the restaurants, toward evening the recreational fields would be active, and in the evening, patrons could attend a movie show.

The absence of civic and spiritual places was quite striking. In the original village plan, no public schools were planned. However, as families filled the residential units, it became apparent this was a shortcoming. After noting the Andover schools lacked capacity, Wood, in 1923, decided to donate five acres for a grade school if the town of Andover paid for the

facility. Andover citizens quickly agreed to the proposal and a new school was built on a hill near Brick Shawsheen.[32] The net result of the construction was positive; as with the post office, it contributed to the branding of Shawsheen as a distinctive physical place.[33] In a cultural sense, it was common ground, the one place in the village where the children of all economic classes in Shawsheen could regularly mix and mingle and, by so doing, help to create social cohesion. Wood made no provisions for spiritual activities beyond allowing religious services to be held in the community hall. Perhaps he thought the nine existing churches in Andover would serve the residents, or perhaps he was concerned about unskilled mill workers, rather than seeking spiritual guidance in Lawrence, coming to Shawsheen and negatively influencing the sense of community he was trying to establish. In any case, in virtually every other place in New England where the mill owner or agent resided in the same village as his workers, he was a major participant in religious matters. Wood saw no reason to follow that model in Shawsheen. In short, he saw little need to have outside influences, whether civic or religious, involved in Shawsheen. Wood and his company owned the land, determined the land uses, selected the residents, and provided most of the jobs. It is almost as if Shawsheen functioned as a secular feudalistic village controlled by the lord of the manor.[34]

In many New England towns, there were hostilities toward mill owners and the idea of developing manufacturing. This did not happen in Andover. In fact, the town had welcomed manufacturing enterprises since its formation as a Puritan Era village. Andover already housed four mill villages as Shawsheen was being planned. However, there were some concerns over the possible loss of farmland, changes to Frye Village, the possible construction of tenements, lack of clarity concerning fiscal impacts, and Wood's less than stellar reputation. By the 1920s, as the project evolved, these worries lessened. The farmers realized the project would not directly threaten their output, many of Frye Village's structures would be saved, housing density would be low, and no tenements would be built. In terms of fiscal impacts, the AWC quickly became the town's largest taxpayer and provided significantly more revenue than it required in services.[35] Concerning Wood's character, the fact that his personal estate would overlook the village and he was person- ally overseeing the project reassured residents the village would not be citified. At one point, townspeople were concerned that Wood would request the state legislature to annex Shawsheen to Lawrence. Wood assured them this would not happen.[36] The project was well received.

Shawsheen had an array of characteristics that appealed to the incoming residents. Rental costs were lower than in surrounding towns, the housing was designed for comfortable family living, the commute from homes to the workplace, along shaded walkways, was less than fifteen minutes, social organizations and recreation activities were plentiful, and there was easy access to distant points by train, trolley, and auto routes. Yet, every day the residents would realize they were living in Shawsheen not by choice, but as a condition of employment. It was not their home as much as simply a place where they lived. They were told in which section of the village they would live, were prohibited from making exterior changes to the structures or the landscape, and were required to park their vehicles in a garage in the village center. Individually, these elements could be considered almost trivial. However, they contributed to a subtle form of paternalism using town planning, architecture, and landscape architecture elements as means to shape behavior.[37] This paternalism extended further to village governance. Beyond participating in the meetings of the Shawsheen Village

Improvement Society, founded by Wood's son Cornelius and Wood's personal representative George M. Wallace, and semi-annual village meetings, the resi- dents had little power to influence the form or operations of the village. Perhaps not surprisingly, with the backing of Wood and Wallace, the Society undertook an extensive array of highly suc- cessful projects. In fact, its projects closely matched the key objectives of Village Improvement Movement.[38] Wood family members also took on leading positions in the village bank, drama club, and women's club. Not all the executives were pleased to be living in this environment: there were pockets of resentment.[39]

What was missing in the village was housing for the mill workers. From the outset, William Wood determined that no housing for common laborers would be provided. They would live in Lawrence and be transported to and from the site. To this end, both a trolley stop and a train sta- tion, complete with three-hundred-foot-long platforms on each side of the tracks, were placed within the shadow of the industrial complex.[40] The trolley line was the primary means by which the mill workers moved from their tenements in Lawrence to the Shawsheen mills. Carrying these workers twice per day, such that all arrived on time, was no simple feat. The railroad line carried visitors and some workers but was primarily used to haul raw materials and finished products between Lawrence and Boston. The net result was that Lawrence, already one of the most densely populated cities in the nation, had to absorb thousands of additional workers and their families.

The laborers' reaction to Shawsheen was quite muted for several reasons. Following World War I, during which the AWC made record profits, and in its aftermath, when it saw record sales resulting from pent-up civilian demand, Wood dramatically reformed AWC labor policies by decreasing working hours from fifty-four to forty-eight hours per week, increasing workers' pay by 30 percent and creating a package of insurance and medical benefits. These benefits, coupled with working in a new environment and having opportunities to partake in the village's ameni- ties, must have improved employees' daily lives. To a degree, the AWC began to embrace some of the concepts of the Welfare Capitalism Movement.[41] On the other hand, a 1923 article in *Lawrence Labor*, the voice of union workers, identified that group's position on the village by describing it as "Suckersvillage," "a suburb for Billy Wood's Lickspittles," and "a feudal village for his most faithful and intelligent slaves."[42]

Shawsheen was the only planned mill village built in New England that failed to address the housing needs of the common workers at least to some degree. While Wood may have not have personally known the depth of depravity, he had to have at least a reading knowledge of the living conditions in Lawrence. In retrospect, several plausible reasons could be offered for his neglect of the workers' residences. Wood and the AWC were not solely responsible for the living conditions in Lawrence; the company was formed more than fifty years after textile production began in the city. During that earlier time, housing quality was neglected by the mill owners, specula- tors, and the city. In effect, the AWC had inherited the foundation of these problems. By 1921, the AWC employed fifteen thousand workers in its three major mills in Lawrence. This amounted to 39.3 percent of all textile workers in that city. The remaining workers were employed in the Pacific Mills (eight thousand), the Arlington Mills (seven thousand five hundred), and in many small companies.[43] The housing problem belonged to all of them. In terms of the workers as a collective, Wood had little direct, personal evidence of their concerns. He was hardly an executive who managed the mills by walking around or regularly mixing with workers. As

historian Edward G. Roddy wrote, "It is doubtful that Wood had ever driven, let alone walked along the pitiful streets and alleys that were homes to most of his employees."[44] The same could be said of all the other major mill owners. In fact, not one of them lived in the city. Lawrence, to them, was just another site where they owned a factory, a location where they placed their economic resources but rarely their social capital.

Wood's policy of excluding worker housing in Shawsheen may have been simply that the issues, on whole, were too overwhelming. Nowhere could he have found a better example of the difficulty of building a model mill community with thousands of workers than the Pullman experience. Beginning in 1880, George Pullman, president of the Pullman Palace Car Company, began building a model mill community in Hyde Park, Illinois, not far from bustling Chicago. It was so widely praised that in 1896, it was voted the world's most perfect town at the Prague International Hygienic and Pharmaceutical Exhibition. In a physical sense, it was a beautifully designed town providing extensive amenities. At the same time, it was extremely paternalistic, feudalistic, autocratic, and anti-democratic. Following the end of a horrific and lengthy strike that began in 1884 when wages were cut but rents were not, the United States Supreme Court in 1888 ordered Pullman to sell the town on the grounds it was ill-suited for its workers.[45] Wood, given the often turbulent relations between the AWC and its Lawrence workers, would have noted the difficulty of developing a new village with labor force housing without creating a similar situation. Perhaps he would have agreed with Henry Ford who, upon observing similar unrest elsewhere, wrote, "We will solve the city problem by leaving the city."[46] Indeed, on a small scale, Ford did just that. In 1918, he began to develop his Village Industries Program to be placed in seventeen farm communities across Michigan.[47] Finally, Wood, like visionary mill developer Frances C. Lowell, may have thought the only way he could achieve a high quality of life for his workers would be to build a new model community in a place where none had previously been built.[48] In sum, however, the decision to ignore the need for worker housing in Shawsheen was a misguided decision.

The AWC in Turmoil

By 1923, Shawsheen—complete, occupied, operational, and beautifully designed—was seemingly a success. The AWC administrators had moved from Boston, white collar and technical workers were in place, the mills were in production mode, the trains and trolleys were running, recreational fields were full, and there was an active nightlife in the core. However, at the same time, Wood's leadership skills began to waver and the AWC, once all-powerful, began to lose market share. Its physical plants were aging, its basic product lines were losing their appeal, extensive conflicts existed between executives and the sales force, and the company was hemorrhaging cash.[49] Coupled with these business issues, Wood was also facing family tragedies. Wood's youngest daughter died of influenza in 1918 and in 1922, his son was killed in an automobile accident. In 1924, a year in which the AWC lost more than nine million dollars, Wood suffered a stroke, and he resigned his position.[50] Two years later, in February 1926, he committed suicide.[51]

With this change in leadership, the AWC immediately began a cost reduction program. One of its first measures was to close the Administration Building and move the senior staff back to Boston.[52] Neither the AWC investors nor the staff were displeased. The building's closure signaled the start of the AWC's dissolution of investment in its non-manufacturing holdings

including Shawsheen. It was no longer a company village, but a village with a company.

The Significance of the Shawsheen Experience

As an experiment, it worked to a significant degree. In a physical planning sense, the application of several of the principles of the Garden City Movement concerning land use, the balance between manufacturing and agriculture, the placement of open spaces and recreation, farmland, and walkability were quite effective. In an architectural and landscape architectural sense, it demonstrated a mill village could be aesthetically appealing to both residents and workers. From a sustainability and health perspective, it had model characteristics linking local agriculture to workers' nutrition, providing state-of-the-art infrastructure systems, and offering extensive recreation facilities. In terms of the Village Improvement Movement, the villagers were able to convince the town of the need for a school, better traffic control, and sewer system improvements. Through its relationship with the town of Andover, Shawsheen demonstrated that conflicts between mill villages and the host town need not exist. City Functional characteristics were evident in the creation of a comprehensive plan designating the placement of land uses, infra- structure systems, recreation facilities, and road networks. Moreover, the form of house lots was carefully designed and the aesthetic features of the housing units were clearly stipulated.

Shawsheen also had shortcomings. Foremost, Wood and the AWC did not accept any responsibility for improving the living conditions of the workers who commuted to the village each day. It simply shifted the issue onto the already overcrowded city of Lawrence. Shawsheen, in many ways, had characteristics of a feudalistic village. As a result, many residents did not consider the village as their home, but simply as a place where they lived. Shawsheen even separated its residents by job categories, thus encouraging classism. The village was more of a mosaic of separate interests than a place of community. In sum, William Wood's intentions to create a model industrial village were never realized.

From a social perspective, as at Pullman, there were tensions concerning the live-work environment. Despite such positive features as subsidized rents, high-quality housing, the plethora of amenities, and the natural setting, the residents were not living in a community of their choice. And, despite the limited paternalistic rules, they were still living in a village where they had no political means to influence decisions impacting their lives. Each day they were reminded of who controlled their destinies as they walked by the manor on the hill, the AWC administration building, or the mills. From an economic perspective, as much as Wood proselytized over the value of the village to the AWC, the board members remained unconvinced. To them, it was simply a tangential and expensive activity.

The significance of Shawsheen in terms of planning history rests on the fact that so many practical examples and historical movements coalesced to influence its vision, plan, design, and development from the beginning of the nineteenth century to those of the first quarter of the twentieth. In a pragmatic social planning sense, for example, they could be found in the commitment of Wood and the AWC to elements that can be traced as far back as the work of David Humphreys and Humphreysville (1804). These elements included commitments to adequate housing, educational opportunities, a healthy and sanitary work and living environment, and providing local farm products to the workforce. In a site planning sense, the linear layout of the main streets had echoes common to Rhode Island mill villages as

exemplified by Slatersville (1803). Concerning town–village governmental relations, both the AWC and the town of Andover, similar to the experience of the Boston Manufacturing Company in Waltham (1813), created a climate of mutual support and respect. And, as found in Lowell (1821), the AWC endeavored to create a distinct mill district that was close to but separate from family housing.

Similar connections can be made to the various planning movements that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century and lasted well into the 1920s. The most notable examples of the City Beautiful Movement were the design and placement of the post office and the AWC administration buildings. The post office structure, beyond providing mailing services, housed spaces for community functions, worship services, and the village nursery school. It was also the location of the Home Association, the subsidiary responsible for overseeing the AWC's investments in the village. In essence, the building functioned as the village civic center. The administration building was massive, monumental, opulent, and iconic. Four stories tall, it was complete with a substantial recessed gallery and seemingly colossal columns. Its placement before an emerald-colored green added to the impression that it was special.

Concerning the Village Improvement Movement, the village could have served as a twentieth- century model of its aspirations. In terms of community spirit, Shawsheen was a place of joiners complete, for example, with girl and boy scout organizations (and their own architecturally designed meeting house), a women's club, a sewing club, and a parent–teachers organization. It was also the home of sports leagues dedicated to bowling, golf, and tennis activities, among others. In terms of improved hygiene, the association was instrumental in leading a village effort to upgrade sewers. Arguably, its most impressive effort was convincing the town of Andover to build new grade school in the village. Finally, it was a strong proponent for expanding the creation of gardens and tree cover throughout the community.

The Garden City Movement inspired the carefully articulated land use planning, the low-density character of the village, the integration of well-designed roads, the inclusion of natural features and recreation areas, a desire to create an aesthetically pleasing built environment, and the formation of an agricultural belt consisting of a series of large farms separating the village from populous areas. There were three key areas, however, where there were significant differences. First, William Wood and the AWC, as the developers and major property holders, viewed Shawsheen as a profit-making venture. If profits from rentals increased overtime, then the returns would belong to either Wood or the AWC. The point here is that, unlike the principles of the Garden City Movement, there were no direct connections between the returns on investment in Shawsheen and community well-being. The community investments were undertaken in the con- text of self-interested philanthropy. Second, unlike the movement's commitment to providing worker housing, Wood made little effort to house the employees that would work in the mills. It was to be a place defined by class separation. Third, while the village was surrounded by agricultural areas, the residents had no idea of whether they would remain so. There were other working farms in the area that could provide dairy and food products. Furthermore, they would have understood Wood and the AWC had previously purchased farmland to develop Shawsheen itself. There was nothing to stop Wood and the AWC from expanding their settlement and manufacturing production into these areas. In short, the Shawsheen citizens would have no

ability to influence the future use of these open spaces.

Elements from the City Functional Movement were evident in the comprehensive planning of the village, the controls over land use, the aesthetic standards, and the placement of infrastructure. Most notable was the transportation system. The village planners, in anticipation of increased automobile traffic, created provisions calling for improved major roads connecting to distant cities along with garage and parking facilities. The trolley and rail connections were placed quite close to the mills and village center and were well designed. All these facilities were easily accessed by pedestrians. The integration of these elements, quite remarkably, is reflective of intermodal transportation systems still in vogue today. As well, Shawsheen more than paid its fair share of municipal costs each year. Elements of the New Company Town Movement could be found throughout the village ranging from welfare capitalism programs related to rent reductions, and life, accident, and sickness insurance to professionally designed structures and landscapes and extensive recreation and self-improvement opportunities.

Except for the City Beautiful Movement concepts, which were only evident in the village center, all the described elements of the other movements wholistically coalesced to create an aesthetically pleasing character in a village which functioned quite well. Arguably, the Garden City Movement elements related to green space, public parks, tree-lined streets, gardens, open spaces, and extensive sidewalks were most important. Through these elements, the village became physically linked and connected.

Three long-standing negative threads cast a dark shadow over the Shawsheen project. From the time of Humphreysville forward, many mill communities were governed using feudalistic practices. Under the control of William Wood and the AWC, so was Shawsheen. Second, while the paternalistic controls were not as onerous as in Pullman, they still were strong enough to discourage a sense of topophilia. Third, Wood and the AWC were virtually oblivious of the Housing Reform Movement's efforts to promote decent worker housing.

After closing the administration building in 1925, the AWC gradually sold off its non-mill-related assets over the next twenty-five years. The Wood family moved more quickly, divesting all its properties except for its Arden estate in 1926.[53] However, the village remained prosperous and the Shawsheen Mills continued to manufacture cloth into the 1950s, when the AWC was sold to the Textron Company.[54] Today, the Garden City–related concepts and the architectural character of the village remain significantly unchanged. The mills are full of small knowledge-based companies, the former administration building and school are condominiums, the village center is full of activity, many of the recreational facilities still exist, and the brick and white housing areas have retained their character. The village was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1970. In sum, William Wood did not fully embrace any of the movements or ideologies informing mill town planning in the 1920s. Rather, he selectively applied concepts that emerged from them.

Two sources have noted that Wood was intending to build Shawsheen to a much larger scale. The first was in a widely circulated AWC press release, dated December 4, 1919, announcing the formation of Shawsheen Village. The article reported that within two years the village would house 5,000 residents.[55] In 1924, J. B. McPherson, writing in an article published in the

Bulletin of the National Association of Wool Manufacturers, noted that Wood was considering a future expansion of Shawsheen to one thousand homes.[56] Assuming both articles were accurate then it would appear that Wood had some semblance of the idea of building a much larger community. And given that Wood had met the housing needs of his executive and managerial staffs, it is possible he would, in a next phase, focus on the housing needs of the AWC workers. Sufficient land juxtaposed to Shawsheen and owned by Wood and the AWC was available, the AWC still had sufficient cash reserves and the company had experience in building well-designed worker housing elsewhere. Indeed, the AWC had built 250 housing units for its workers in a settlement called Presidential Village proxemic to its Assabet Mill in Maynard, Massachusetts, beginning in 1903. These units were built on lots with room for gardens. They were complete with company-paid public water and sewer systems, designed in thirteen different architectural styles, the entire village was creatively landscaped and rental costs were affordable. A Boston Globe article written in 1909 concluded it had elements of a model mill village.[57] Perhaps if Wood had remained president, had stayed healthy and the AWC continued to be profitable, worker housing would have been built. If this had occurred, the requirement that executives had to live in the village could have been revised and the villagers could be empowered to govern, thus making Shawsheen a true model mill village.

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