

United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Weyenberg Shoe Factory  
other names N/A

2. Location

street & number 913 North Spring Street N/A not for publication  
city or town Beaver Dam N/A vicinity  
state Wisconsin code WI county Dodge code 027 zip code 53916

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets    does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant    nationally    statewide x locally. (   See continuation for additional comments.)

Alicia J. Cook  
Signature of certifying official/Title  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer-WI

October 16, 2000  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria. (   See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Weyenberg Shoe Factory  
Name of Property

Dodge County, Wisconsin  
County and State

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the 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.  
    \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.  
 removed from the National  
Register.

Signature of the Keeper    Date of Action  
Edson H. Beall    11/27/66

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as apply)  
 private  
 public-local  
 public-state  
 public-federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)  
 building(s)  
 district  
 site  
 structure  
 object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include listed resources within the count)		
Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/  
Manufacturing Facility

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/  
Industrial Storage

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> C.  
American Movements

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
foundation CONCRETE  
walls BRICK  
roof ASPHALT  
other METAL

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on continuation sheet(s).)

Weyenberg Shoe Factory  
Name of Property

Dodge County, Wisconsin  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

Applicable National Register Criteria  
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the  
criteria qualifying the property for the  
National Register listing.)

Areas of Significance  
(Enter categories from  
instructions)

Architecture

A Property is associated with events  
that have made a significant  
contribution to the broad patterns of  
our history.

B Property is associated with the lives  
of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive  
characteristics of a type, period, or  
method of construction or represents  
the work of a master, or possesses  
high artistic values, or represents a  
significant and distinguishable entity  
whose components lack individual  
distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to  
yield, information important in  
prehistory or history.

Period of Significance

1919

Significant Dates

1919

Significant Person  
(Complete if Criterion B is  
marked above)

N/A

Criteria Considerations  
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

A owned by a religious institution or  
used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or  
structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age achieved  
significance within the past 50 years.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

(Cite the sources used in preparing this form on continuation sheet(s).)

Weyenberg Shoe Factory  
Name of Property

Dodge County, Wisconsin  
County and State

Previous Documentation on File (NPS):  
 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:  
 State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State Agency  
 Federal Agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository:  
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 2.1 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/6 3/5/1/8/0/0 4/8/1/3/8/3/0 3 / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

2 / / / / / / / / / 4 / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Elizabeth L. Miller, Historic Preservation Consultant  
organization for Stone House Development date 10-1-1999  
street & number 147 South Butler Street telephone 608-251-6000  
city or town Madison state WI zip code 53703

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Weyenberg Shoe Factory  
Name of Property

Dodge County, Wisconsin  
County and State

**Property Owner**

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Weyenberg Warehouse Apartments, LLC (c/o Stone House Development)  
street & number 147 South Butler Street telephone 608-251-6000  
city or town Madison state Wisconsin zip code 53703

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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(Rev. 8-86)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format  
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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Section 7 Page 1

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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INTRODUCTION

The Weyenberg Shoe Factory is an exceptionally intact industrial building of the type architectural historian Betsy Hunter Bradley identifies as the "textile mill industrial loft."<sup>1</sup> It is utilitarian in form and detailing and was erected in 1919.<sup>2</sup> The four-story, load-bearing, brick building faces northwest and overlooks North Spring Street (see photo 1). A small, one-story, noncontributing, enclosed loading dock is attached to the northeast-facing facade and dates from circa 1950.<sup>3</sup> The Weyenberg Shoe Company (later the Weyco Group, Incorporated) manufactured shoes in this building until 1994. The firm used the structure as a warehouse until its purchase by the current owner in October 1999.

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<sup>1</sup>Betsy Hunter Bradley, The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 30-31.

<sup>2</sup>"Begin \$140,000 Building," Daily Citizen (Beaver Dam), March 24, 1919, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Map of Beaver Dam, (Pelham, New York: Sanborn Publishing Company, 1924), revised 1945 and 1951, p. 13.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Section 7 Page 2

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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DESCRIPTION

The Weyenberg Shoe Factory is located on the east side of North Spring Street between Prairie and East Main streets in a neighborhood primarily made up of single-family residences dating from the early twentieth century. Beaver Dam's central business district lies southwest of the Weyenberg Shoe Factory, as does the city's principle industrial district.

The Weyenberg Shoe Factory sits on a poured concrete foundation and has a flat roof, hidden by a parapet. It exhibits the "pilaster and panel" brick walls and "mill construction" framing and flooring characteristic of the textile mill industrial loft. The pilaster and panel wall was designed with its strength concentrated in the brick piers, so that the window openings in the panel walls between the piers could be maximized. Mill construction consisted of heavy timber framing with thick, plank flooring placed directly on the wood beams. Joists and attic were eliminated and ceilings left exposed. This construction stiffened the walls and was slower to burn, giving it its alternate name, "slow-burning construction."

The small, loading dock addition is also flat-roofed. Its exposed walls of reinforced concrete and continuous, steel industrial sash windows place it in the "daylight production shed" mode of industrial design.<sup>4</sup>

The plan of the four-story 1919 main section of the Weyenberg Shoe Factory is rectangular with two projecting sections appended to the

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<sup>4</sup>Bradley, pp. 127-128 and 168.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Section 7 Page 3

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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northeast-facing facade (see site plan attached). The rectangular main section measures 53 feet (northeast-southwest) by 250 feet.

A four-story section measuring 60 feet (northeast-southwest) by 40 feet is attached to the northwest (front) end of the northeast-facing facade. The office, restrooms, freight elevator and a staircase are located in this section. A small, projecting section at the southwest (rear) end of the main block is a stair tower.

Most of the existing windows on the main block of the Weyenberg Shoe Factory are one-over-one, aluminum, single-hung sash although a few of the original six-over-six, metal, double-hung sash with wire glass remain. The replacement windows predate 1978 and may have been installed ca. 1975.<sup>5</sup> The main block of the Weyenberg Shoe Factory displays single, paired and tripled windows, all with stone sills. The single windows are segmental-arched with rowlock lintels. Steel I-beams form the lintels for the paired and tripled windows. A brick soldier course runs between the fourth-floor lintels, creating a thin belt course. A stone belt course encircles the main block at the fourth-floor sill level. An enclosed loading dock on the northwest-facing elevation is unornamented.

The northwest-facing (front) facade of the smaller office section is three-bays-wide and displays paired windows at each story in the center and left-hand (northeastern) bays. Single windows appear in the right-hand (southwestern) bay except at ground level, where the main entrance is located in an enclosed, flat-roofed entrance vestibule. A battered, segmental-arched projecting brick portal

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<sup>5</sup>Building Permit Records, City of Beaver Dam.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Section 7 Page 4

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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with a shaped parapet marks the entrance. Originally open, the portal's entrance opening now contains a glass, metal-framed door and glass sidelights.

Broad brick pilasters articulate the northwest-facing (front) facade of the main block and framing three groups of windows (see photo 2). The fenestration pattern is the same at each story and consists of a centered group of three windows flanked on either side by paired windows. The northwest-facing facade of the stair tower has no openings.

The southwest-facing facade of the main block exhibits thirteen bays of tripled windows (see photo 3). Brick pilaster strips delineate the bays. Only the first story still contains its original six-over-six-light windows. At the right-hand southeastern end of the building, the ground floor window opening has been reduced with concrete block and holds a fixed window (see photo 4).

Brick pilasters separate the southeast-facing (rear) facade of the main block of the Weyenberg Shoe Factory into three bays (see photo 5). Tripled windows appear in the center bay at each story, flanked by paired windows, except at the ground floor. Here, the northeast (right-hand) window opening has been filled with brick and the centered first story opening contains a broad, metal door set in an opening filled with concrete blocks. This alteration dates from 1979.<sup>6</sup> Originally, a spur of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad ran alongside this facade. It was still there as late as 1951.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Building Permit Records, City of Beaver Dam.

<sup>7</sup>Map of Beaver Dam.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Section 7 Page 5

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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The northeast-facing facade is broken up by the office projecting section to the right and the projecting stair tower to the left (see photo 6). Between the projecting sections and northwest of the office section, brick pilasters divide the facade into bays of tripled windows at each story. There are six bays between the projecting sections and three more to the right of (northwest of) the office section. A loading dock area is located at the ground floor between the projecting sections. At the southeast (left-hand) end, a concrete ramp slopes down to two large, garage door openings having concrete block surrounds. This alteration dates from 1994,<sup>8</sup> when the building was converted from factory to warehouse use. A ca.1950 enclosed loading dock is set to the right (northwest) and has two more garage door openings. A band of multi-paned industrial sash windows appears to the right (northwest) of the garage doors and on the southeast face of the loading dock. Behind the loading dock, the wall of the main block retains its original windows. The northeast-facing facade of the office section is six bays wide and displays a single window in each bay at each floor. A single window is offset at each story on the northeast-facing facade of the stair tower, except that there is an entrance door with a concrete block surround at ground level.

On the interior, the original plan of the Weyenberg Shoe Factory is intact and is nearly identical at each floor (see sample floor plan attached). In the main block, each floor is open (see photo 7).

Two rows of heavy, timber posts are evenly-spaced down the length of the main block. Metal pipes and sprinklers, which may be original, are suspended from the ceiling at each story. The use

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<sup>8</sup>Building Permit Records, City of Beaver Dam.

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(Rev. 8-86)  
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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Section 7 Page 6

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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changed from factory to warehouse in 1994 with no apparent change to the interior. The projecting office section carries a dogleg staircase, a freight elevator, rest rooms, additional warehouse space and the office. A second dogleg staircase is located in the stair tower at the southeast corner of the building. Both staircases are wood with closed rails of vertical boards. Sheet-metal-clad doors close off the staircases in case of fire. Most of the finishes in the factory are original and include board floors, exposed wood ceilings, and walls of exposed brick and plaster. The office, located on the second floor of the office section, is the only space lacking original finishes and displays wood paneling and carpeting.

**ALTERATIONS**

The Weyenberg Shoe Factory retains a high degree of integrity on both the exterior and the interior. The alterations to the building are minimal and reversible. On the exterior, most of the original windows have been replaced, but the original openings have been retained, except in a few places at ground level. The loading dock also represents an alteration. On the interior, only the office section has been altered and the changes are cosmetic rather than structural. The changes do not compromise the excellent historic integrity of the Weyenberg Shoe Factory and will be removed in 1999 by the current owner, Stone House Development, which is planning an adaptive reuse project for the property.

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(Rev. 8-86)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format  
(Approved 3/87)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Section 8 Page 1

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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SUMMARY

The Weyenberg Shoe Factory is locally significant under Criterion C as a good and exceptionally-intact example of a textile mill type industrial loft building. This type of industrial building was erected between about 1885 and 1930. The period of significance for the Weyenberg Shoe Factory coincides with the date of construction, 1919. The Weyenberg Shoe Factory's high degree of integrity likely derives from its continued use as a shoe factory until 1994. The building's original owner, now called the Weyco Group, Incorporated, used the plant as a warehouse until October 1999.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRY IN BEAVER DAM

Beaver Dam's industry began with a sawmill, erected by David Drake in 1842. Beaver Dam was then home to four families. Drake built a dam in the marsh adjacent to Beaver Dam Lake using an old beaver dam 50 feet wide and three feet high as his foundation. In the fall of 1842, Drake sold the sawmill and its water power to Reverend Moses Ordway. Ordway improved the dam and built a grist mill in 1843. The grist mill was replaced with a larger plant in 1847. Known as Beaver Dam Flouring Mills, this enterprise produced more than 25,000 barrels of flour annually and continued to operate for more than 40 years, despite suffering several fires. A second flour mill and two grist mills were soon constructed in the vicinity of Beaver Dam.<sup>1</sup>

The 1850s and 1860s saw the establishment of several industries in Beaver Dam that would prosper into the early twentieth century.

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<sup>1</sup>1841-1941: Beaver Dam Centennial, (Beaver Dam: Historical Committee, 1941), pp. 90-92.

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(Rev. 8-86)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format  
(Approved 3/87)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Section 8 Page 2

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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The Farmers Brewery, established in 1857, was later known as the Binzel Brewery. The Pfestle Brewery opened in 1868, was later owned by Zadia Steil and then by Louis Ziegler. Both breweries closed during Prohibition. The Woolen Manufacturing Company was founded in 1853. In 1867, a large, three-story, brick factory building was erected at High and Center streets. The business incorporated in 1882. The Woolen Manufacturing Company's 100 employees turned out 1,000 yards of fabric daily until closing in 1913.<sup>2</sup>

By the turn of the century, the manufacturing of iron and steel-based products had become the leading industry in Beaver Dam. The J. S. Rowell Manufacturing Company was the first foundry established in Beaver Dam. It opened in 1855 in a small building but grew phenomenally, due to the popularity of the "Tiger slip-tooth seeder" and "Tiger force-feed drill," both of which were patented by J. S. Rowell. The Rowell Manufacturing Company also produced rakes and cultivators. The business incorporated in 1888, with \$100,000 in capital stock. In the early twentieth century, the business was renamed Tiger Drill Manufacturing Company. In 1913, it had two private railroad tracks and employed 250 hands.<sup>3</sup>

The Malleable Iron Range Company, which produced "Monarch" brand ranges and later water heaters, was founded in 1896 in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1902, the business relocated to Beaver Dam, in a large plant located just south of the current site of the Weyenberg Shoe Factory on North Spring Street. By 1913, the Malleable Iron

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<sup>2</sup>Homer Bishop Hubbell, Dodge County, Wisconsin, Past and Present, (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1913), II:302-303.

<sup>3</sup>Hubbell, II:303.

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(Rev. 8-86)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format  
(Approved 3/87)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Section 8 Page 3

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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Range Company was Beaver Dam's largest employer, a position it retained as late as the 1950s. In the 1910s, the firm's 500 employees produced 100 Monarch ranges every day. During World War II, the Malleable Iron Range Company began making military items as well as stoves and water heaters. During the 1950s, the firm employed 700 workers. The plant has since been demolished. Other local foundries produced iron castings for farm implements, construction, railroads and automobile parts during the same period.<sup>4</sup>

The Weyenberg Shoe Manufacturing Company, which opened a factory in Beaver Dam in 1915, had made shoe production a major local industry with the second-largest number of employees by the 1930s, a position this sector held into the 1950s, if not longer. In 1999, one of Beaver Dam's Weyenberg plants was still manufacturing shoes, making it the longest-running factory in the city. Other industrial concerns of twentieth century Beaver Dam were shorter-lived and included Bear Brand Hosiery (at least 1913 until 1926), Beaver Fiber Company (later Badger Fiber Company, rope-makers, 1919 through at least 1941), Beaver Garment Company (dressmakers, 1914 through 1931), Beaver Silo and Box Manufacturing Company (1920s through the 1940s), and Midwest Manufacturing Company (later Humane Stanchion Works; produced barn equipment such as sanitary drinking cups for cattle and horses, automatic feed hoppers and feed bowls, and shovels; 1920 through at least 1941).<sup>5</sup>

HISTORY OF THE WEYENBERG SHOE MANUFACTURING COMPANY

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<sup>4</sup>Hubbell, II:304; and Economic Base Survey of Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, (Beaver Dam: Economic Survey Committee of Beaver Dam, 1956), pp. 105-06.

<sup>5</sup>1841-1941: Beaver Dam Centennial, pp. 120-121.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Section 8 Page 4

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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The Weyenberg Shoe Manufacturing Company incorporated on May 28, 1906 in Milwaukee. Franklin L. Weyenberg would serve as president from 1906 until 1964. The company prospered and by 1914, was exploring options for expanding its operations outside of Milwaukee. Beaver Dam and Hartford (Wisconsin) competed for Weyenberg's first satellite plant. Mr. Weyenberg promised to located the new factory in the community that raised \$5,000 in public subscriptions to help finance the new operation. Beaver Dam business leaders answered the challenge with the support of the newspaper, the Daily Citizen, which printed a series of short articles, exhorting citizens to:

Subscribe today, not tomorrow. . . Beaver Dam has depended almost entirely on iron manufacturers to give employment to the laboring population. . . . The war in Europe has caused a decline in demand and many empty houses in town.  
. . . .<sup>6</sup>

Beaver Dam responded enthusiastically and on December 17, 1914, the newspaper announced that the Weyenberg Shoe Company had decided to open a branch in Beaver Dam.<sup>7</sup>

The old Woolen Manufacturing Company mill building at the corner of High and Center streets was remodeled and the Beaver Dam branch of the Weyenberg Shoe Factory opened in March 1915. By 1918, the

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<sup>6</sup>"Subscribe Today Not Tomorrow," Daily Citizen, November 19, 1914, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup>"Beaver Dam's New Shoe Factory," Daily Citizen, December 17, 1914, p. 1.

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(Rev. 8-86)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format  
(Approved 3/87)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Section 8 Page 5

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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company had outgrown this plant and began planning a new building.<sup>8</sup> The city of Beaver Dam agreed to provide the site and selected the current parcel on North Spring Street. The cost to purchase the property was \$16,500, which the city raised by subscription.<sup>9</sup>

Construction on the existing Weyenberg Shoe Factory began on March 24, 1919. The Hutter Construction Company of Beaver Dam served as contractors. At the time, the Weyenberg Company stated its intentions to build three more buildings of the same capacity as well as two clubhouses on the site. These plans never came to fruition.<sup>10</sup> The existing factory was occupied in August 1919. The Weyenberg Shoe Manufacturing Company continued to prosper, opening another plant in Portage (Wisconsin) by 1922 and additional branches in Hartford (Wisconsin) and Ludington (Michigan) by 1936.<sup>11</sup>

In 1936, local businessmen convinced the company to locate a second factory in Beaver Dam. The company acquired the old Bear Brand Hosiery Company building on Madison Street and remodeled it. In February, 1937, the Weyenberg Shoe Manufacturing Company moved in.<sup>12</sup>

From 1937 until at least 1965, the firm maintained a workforce of 700 persons in its two Beaver Dam factories. Men's dress shoes were produced in both plants. Around 1942, the Ludington plant, which made work shoes, closed. The factory in Hartford, where

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<sup>8</sup>1841-1941: Beaver Dam Centennial, p. 177.

<sup>9</sup>"Decide on Plan for Site Fund," Daily Citizen, February 26, 1919, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup>"Begin \$140,000 Building."

<sup>11</sup>1841-1941: Beaver Dam Centennial, p. 177.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.



NPS Form 10-900-a  
(Rev. 8-86)  
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(Approved 3/87)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Section 8 Page 6

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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women's and children's shoes were produced, ceased operating in 1953. During the 1970s and the 1980s, the company reduced shoe production further and began to purchase shoes made in foreign countries. By 1990, the number of employees had fallen to 325 and only the plants in Beaver Dam continued to manufacture shoes. In 1990, the name of the company was changed to the Weyco Group, Incorporated.<sup>13</sup> In 1994, production ceased at the North Spring Street site. In 1999, shoes are still manufactured at the Madison Street factory. The North Spring Street plant served as a warehouse until October, 1999.

#### ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Weyenberg Shoe Factory is locally significant under Criterion C as a good and exceptionally-intact example of an industrial building type: the textile mill industrial loft. This building type was constructed in the United States between about 1885 and 1930. The period of significance for the factory is the same as its date of construction: 1919.

The form of the textile mill industrial loft had its origins in the textile mills of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Technical improvements in weaving and spinning developed in England in the 1760s required the use of a mechanical system of pulleys and belts, rotating shafts and gears, which were linked together and driven by steam or water power. Economic efficiency dictated the layout of the mechanized textile mill, creating a long, narrow, multistory building with open floors and

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<sup>13</sup>Beaver Dam Sesquicentennial History Book: 1991, (Beaver Dam: History Book Committee, 1991), pp. 73-74.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Section 8 Page 7

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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high ceilings to accommodate the machinery and provide sufficient light and ventilation. On each floor, a single, rotating wooden shaft operated the textile machinery. Belts, pulleys and shafts running through the floors connected the horizontal shafts to the source of power. The first mechanized textile mill in the United States was erected in Pawtucket, Rhode Island in 1790. Conditions in New England proved ideal for mechanized textile manufacturing.

A network of rivers provided ample water power, capital was abundant, labor sufficient and the damp climate strengthened cotton fiber. The textile industry flourished, especially in Massachusetts, into the late nineteenth century. The building form that had developed for textile mills in Britain was widely used in New England. As other industries in the United States mechanized, many adopted the long, narrow, multistory building form of the textile mill and continued to use it into 1930s.<sup>14</sup>

As defined by architectural historian, Betsey Hunter Bradley, the "industrial loft" was a long, narrow, multistory industrial building designed to optimize natural light and ventilation. Prior to 1930, the typical industrial loft had brick walls with heavy timber framing. In the late 1910s, steel-reinforced concrete construction began to be utilized in industrial loft buildings. Paired with continuous, steel industrial sash windows, this was called "daylight" construction because the amount of wall space devoted to windows doubled. Daylight construction became widely used for other kinds of industrial buildings, especially the sprawling, one-story "production shed" built in the first decade of the twentieth century. The multi-story industrial loft was more expensive to erect than the one-story production shed and daylight construction was more expensive than brick-and-timber. Therefore,

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<sup>14</sup>Ken Breisch, Serge Håmbourg, et al., Mills and Factories of New England, (New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1988), pp. 24-26.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Section 8 Page 8

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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factory owners, always striving for economic efficiency, did not adopt daylight construction for loft buildings until the 1920s, when the cost of steel dropped and long, straight lengths of timber grew scarce due to the harvesting of old-growth forests. Daylight industrial lofts continued to be built until around 1940.<sup>15</sup>

During the 1920s, use of the electric fork-lift truck became widespread. As a result, the concrete-floored, one-story, production shed type of industrial building was increasingly preferred over the multi-story industrial loft after 1930. Improvements in artificial lighting, such as the introduction of fluorescents in 1938, and the increasing efficiency of air-conditioning, led to the development of the "controlled conditions plant." A one-story, steel-reinforced concrete structure, the controlled conditions plant had glass-block or other fixed windows, or was windowless. It was the preferred type of industrial plant after 1940, although daylight production sheds continued to be built into the 1950s.<sup>16</sup>

The "textile mill", as defined by Bradley, is a specialized subtype of industrial loft building designed for a specific manufacturer.

It was especially suited to light manufacturing industries, such as shoe making. The textile mill industrial loft was constructed between 1885 and 1930. Plans for textile mill industrial loft buildings appeared in various publications, such as the 1885 edition of Frank Kidder's construction manual, Architects and Builders Pocketbook. The pilaster-and-panel brick exterior and the wood framing and flooring known as mill construction was standard for textile mill industrial lofts because it minimized the effects of machinery vibration, resisted the spread of fire and provided a

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<sup>15</sup>Bradley, pp. 104-07, 146 and 156.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 161-163.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Section 8 Page 9

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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high level of natural lighting and ventilating at a relatively low cost. Timber-framing had high tensile strength (resisting breaking and bending well), elasticity, was easy to work and allowed more flexibility in plant layout than masonry walls. Fire-resistive elements in the textile mill industrial loft included: the brick and timber construction; the elimination of ceiling finishes, attics and combustible interior furnishings such as shelving; the isolation of staircases and offices in towers apart from the factory floor; plank doors clad with sheet-metal; steel-framed, wire-glass windows, which were shatter-proof; and sprinklers with a water tank on the roof. The flat roof, a standard feature of mill construction, added to the stability of the structure, increased its fire resistance and provided outdoor space that could be used for noxious processes or for employee recreation. Ceiling height ranged from 12 to 14 feet, increasing with the width of the building.<sup>17</sup>

The exterior appearance of the textile mill industrial loft, generally termed "astylistic utilitarian," was the result of the engineer's concept of beauty, which was based on function and utility rather than the formality or picturesqueness that architects of the day found beautiful. Industrial buildings were detailed to imply strength, stability and efficient manufacturing organization. This was achieved through simple, functional designs that showcased the quality of the materials used and expressed the construction on the exterior. On textile mill industrial lofts, the pilaster-and-panel brick walls were articulated both vertically and horizontally, with pilaster strips, spandrels and belt courses. Pilaster strips were often truncated at floor or window level on the top story, truthfully showing that, above that point, brick piers no longer supported the structure. Engineers emphasized the

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 27, 30-33, 113, 125-135.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Section 8 Page 10

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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structure by placing ornament at load-bearing locations, such as window lintels, and pilaster capitals and bases. In contrast, architects recommended enriching industrial buildings around prominent features, such as entrances and towers. In the 1910s and 1920s, European modernist architects were inspired by American industrial designs.<sup>18</sup>

The Weyenberg Shoe Factory is a fine example of a textile mill industrial loft, incorporating and retaining many of the features described above. It is a long, narrow, four-story building with pilaster-and-panel brick walls and utilizing mill construction. The layout is open but for two rows of heavy timber posts. The 12-foot-high ceilings are exposed and feature a modified form of mill construction, common after 1900, in which the timber posts have metal caps and hangars to accommodate additional framing members, strengthening the structure while maintaining its fire-resistance.

The sprinkler system remains in place. Sheet-metal clad doors enclose the staircases in towers, one of which is incorporated into the office section, where the freight elevator and restrooms are also housed, keeping them separate from the manufacturing spaces.

On the exterior, truncated brick pilasters, a brick soldier course and stone belt courses express the building's construction. Both engineer- and architect-inspired ornamentation appears, in the steel-I-beam lintels and the front entry's battered piers and shaped parapet. The windows originally held wire-glass, some of which has been preserved. The Weyenberg Shoe Factory retains excellent integrity.

The Weyenberg Shoe Factory is now the only industrial building remaining on North Spring Street. The Malleable Iron Range Company plant, a sprawling complex that was located south of the Weyenberg

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 202-232.

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Section 8 Page 11

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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Shoe Factory, has been demolished. An earlier industrial district is located on Madison Street, along the east bank of Beaver Dam Lake. Weyco Group's "Lakeside" plant, as the second shoe factory is known, is located here in a structure that was built for the Beaver Dam Cotton Mill (construction date unknown). This building housed the Bear Brand Hosiery factory from at least 1913 until 1936.<sup>19</sup> The Lakeside plant is a four-story, brick industrial loft with several additions. Single, paired and grouped windows light the floors. The Lakeside plant displays good integrity, although various openings have been altered. The Weyenberg Shoe Factory on North Spring Street exhibits better integrity and appears to be a finer and more representative example of a textile mill industrial loft.

CONCLUSION

The Weyenberg Shoe Factory is locally significant under Criterion C as a fine, highly intact example of a textile mill industrial loft building. Buildings of this type are now being recognized as important precursors of the Modern Movement style of architecture and they constitute an important American architectural legacy. Never-the-less, such buildings are increasingly threatened by obsolescence and insensitive remodeling activities. Unfortunately, the utilitarian nature of these buildings has kept them from being valued in the same way as more architecturally assertive buildings and the result has been a steady decline in their numbers. This trend can be seen in Beaver Dam itself, where nearly all the city's other examples of this building type, such as the Malleable Iron

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<sup>19</sup>Hubbell, I:302; and 1841-1941: Beaver Dam Centennial, p. 177.

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Section 8 Page 12

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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Range factory that was once located next door to the Weyenberg Shoe Factory, have now been demolished. This nation-wide trend is especially to be regretted because these buildings were usually very well built and were purposely designed to house a wide variety of activities and are thus well suited to modern conversion and reuse projects. Thus, the Weyenberg Shoe Factory is of local architectural significance because it is the best surviving Beaver Dam example of this historically important resource type and its significance is further enhanced by its high degree of integrity.

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Section 9 Page 1

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Section 10 Page 1

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All of Outlots 78 and 79 located in the Third Ward, City of Beaver Dam and the North 39.00 feet of vacated East Main Street as vacated in Volume 849 of Records, page 13, all in the City of Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin.

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the Weyenberg Shoe Factory coincide with those of the legal parcel on which it sits and encompass the resources historically associated with the Weyenberg Shoe Factory.

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Section Photos Page 1

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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Photo 1 of 8

Weyenberg Shoe Factory

Beaver Dam, Dodge County, WI

Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, May 13, 1999

Negative on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin

View of northwest-facing (front) facade, looking southeast.

Photo 2 of 8

View of northwest-facing (front) facade, looking east.

Photo 3 of 8

View of southwest-facing facade, looking northeast.

Photo 4 of 8

View of southeast-facing (rear) facade, looking northwest.

Photo 5 of 8

View of northeast-facing facade, looking west.

Photo 6 of 8

View of northeast-facing facade, looking southwest.

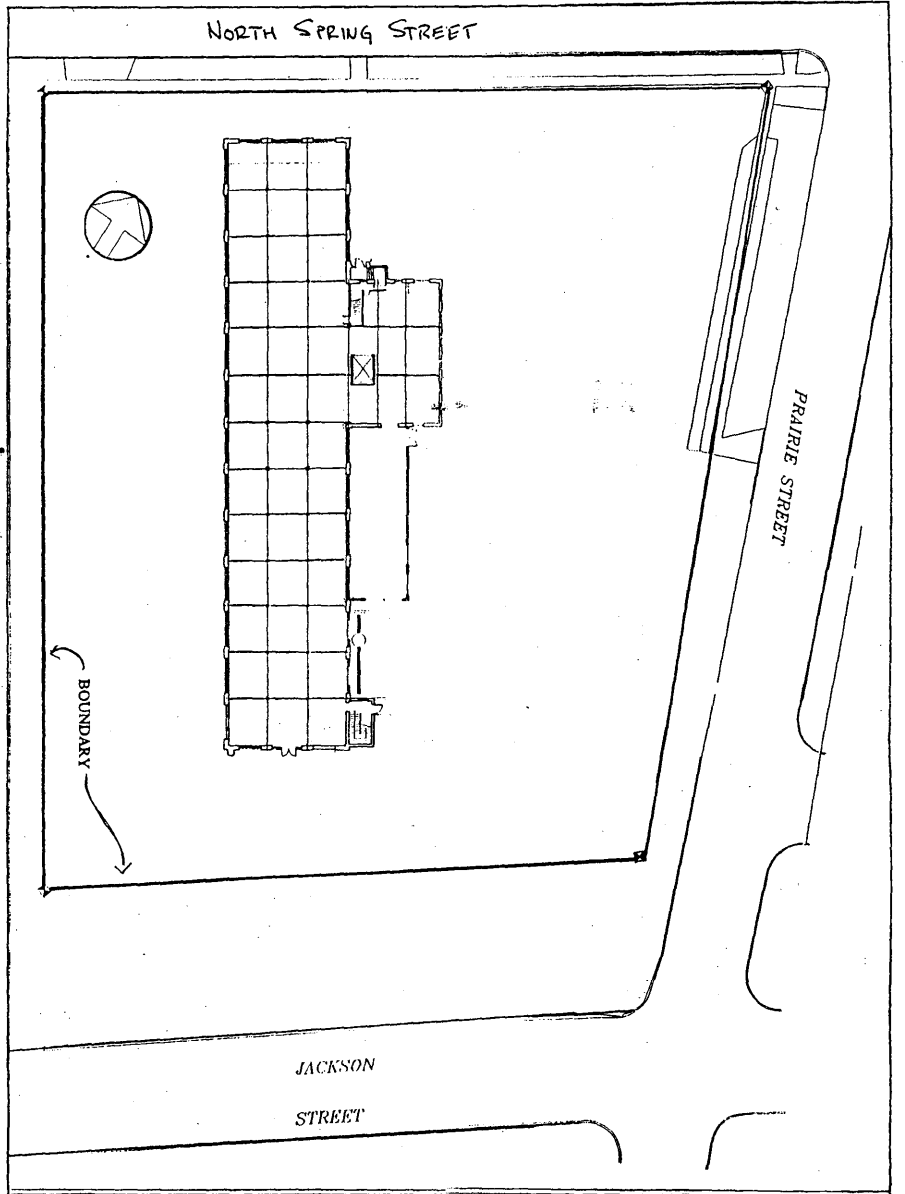
Photo 7 of 8

View of fourth-floor factory space, looking northwest.

Photo 8 of 8

View of the staircase in the stair tower.

WEYENBERG SHOE FACTORY  
BEAVER DAM, DODGE COUNTY, WISCONSIN



Miller Architectural Group Inc.

WEYENBERG SHOE  
FACTORY  
913 North Spring Street  
Beaver Dam, WI

Contributing  
 Noncontributing

No scale