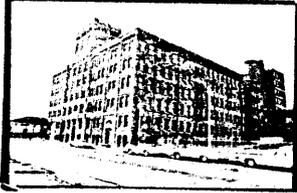


| | | | |
|--|---|---|-----------------------------|
| City, Village or Town: Milwaukee | County: Milwaukee | Surveyor: Resource Design Group | Date: 11/27/82 |
| Street Address: 116 East Walnut St. | | Legal Description: DRINKER PLAT SECS (20 & 29)-7-22-V 1 P 3 Blocks 2 LOTS 2-3-6 & LOT 10-LOT 7 EXC AS 43'70" Block 46 ADJ | Acreage: .70 Acre |
| Current Name & Use: F. Mayer Boot & Shoe Company | | Current Owner: WALTER G. BOHNER & PATRICIA A. | |
| Film Roll No. MI 25 |  | Current Owner's Address: 1718 N. 1ST ST. MILW 53212 | |
| Negative No. 24 | | Special Features Not Visible In Photographs: UTM Reference: 16/425860/4766850 | |
| Facade Orient. | | Interior visited? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No | |

Street East Walnut St.
 Number 116
 Town
 Range
 Section
 Map Name Historic Brewers' Hill 1982
 Map Code 25-24

| Original Name & Use: | Source | Previous Owners | Dates | Uses | Source |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------|-------|------|--------|
| Mayer Boot and Shoe Company Building | A | | | | |
| Dates of Construction / Alteration 1892, 1899 | Source 1892 | | | | |
| Period of significance: 1892, 1899 | 1934 | | | | |
| Architect and/or Builder: H. Schnerzky & Co. | Source | | | | |

| | |
|---|--|
| 3 Architectural Significance <input type="radio"/> Represents work of a master <input type="radio"/> Possesses high artistic values <input checked="" type="radio"/> Represents a type, period, or method of construction <input checked="" type="radio"/> Is a visual landmark in the area <input type="radio"/> Other: _____ <input type="radio"/> None | 4 Historical Significance <input type="radio"/> Assoc. with lives of significant persons <input type="radio"/> Assoc. with significant historical events <input checked="" type="radio"/> Assoc. with development of a locality <input type="radio"/> Other: _____ <input type="radio"/> None Period of significance: 1892-1934 |
|---|--|

| | |
|---|--|
| Architectural Statement: see attached statement | Historical Statement: see attached statement |
|---|--|

| | |
|--|---|
| 5 Sources of Information (Reference to Above) A 1910 SWBCAW INSURENCE MAP B COMMERCIAL HISTORY OF MILWAUKEE, 1910 C MILWAUKEE OF TODAY: THE CREAM CITY OF THE LAKES, 1892 D E F | 6 Representation in Previous Surveys <input type="radio"/> HABS <input type="radio"/> NAER <input checked="" type="radio"/> WIHP <input type="radio"/> NRHP <input type="radio"/> landmark <input type="radio"/> other: _____ |
| | 7 Condition <input type="radio"/> excellent <input checked="" type="radio"/> good <input type="radio"/> fair <input type="radio"/> poor <input type="radio"/> ruins |
| | 8 District: _____ <input type="radio"/> pivotal <input type="radio"/> contributing <input type="radio"/> non-contributing initials: <u>ROG</u> date: <u>5-1-83</u> |
| | 9 Opinion of National Register Eligibility <input checked="" type="radio"/> eligible <input type="radio"/> not eligible <input type="radio"/> unknown <input type="radio"/> national <input type="radio"/> state <input checked="" type="radio"/> local initials: <u>ROG</u> |

ARCHITECTURAL STATEMENT:

Description: The Mayer Boot & Shoe Company building is a "U" shaped, eight-story brick design with mixed stylistic influences. The south front elevation is a symmetrical composition divided into three primary units consisting of 11 structural bays. The center portion is three bays wide, and is the portion which is eight stories high. It projects two stories above the rest of the building and forms a tower with a crenelated parapet. The windows in this portion are round arch openings, paired under large arches on the seventh floor and small groups of three on the eighth floor. All the other windows on the building are segmental arch openings, grouped in pairs on the front facade and evenly spaced on the sides. The structural bays are delineated by pilasters, which terminate at the corbelled cornice near the top. The lower two floors of the south elevation are treated in a different manner than floors three through six. Two-story high pilasters mark the center entry, flanked by two-story round arch door openings in the center of each three side bays. All three entries are Neo-Classic Revival detailing. However, the tower has a Romanesque flavor, creating an overall effect of Victorian eclecticism.

The current structure is the result of many additions and remodelings. The original building of 1880 stood at the corner of First and Walnut. It was a two-story structure with hipped roof having dormers on the First Street side and a gable on the Walnut Street side. This first factory was four bays wide. In 1884 when the stock company was organized with Mayer and his sons as officers, ~~and~~ an addition was built to the east of the original. It likewise was two stories high with dormers. It continued the facade and lengthened it by seven bays. An additional eight bays were constructed before 1892.

By 1892 the growth in business required another addition. The corner section at First and Walnut was rebuilt entirely into a five-story structure, 42' x 135', at a cost of \$20,000. The architect was H. Schnetzky and Company. Entrance into the five bay front was through a simple central arch, almost two stories high. A parapet with pyramidal roof served to accent the corner bay at First and Walnut, while similar treatment finished off the rear of the building along the First Street facade. This west portion exists today but modified. In 1895 an additional story was added at a cost of \$3,000.

In 1899, what remained of the low, two-story factory to the east was lost to another rebuilding. A five-story structure was added at the cost of \$30,000 and was designed by architect E.R. Liebert. Later additions and modifications were made to the factory but the main facade on Walnut Street has remained uniform. Both the central addition and easternmost five-bay section are six stories high. Fenestration is horizontally consistent in each of the three units. A strong cornice line serves to cap the building. This is surmounted in the central unit by a one-story tower. The easternmost unit repeats the central arch opening of the earlier, west unit from 1892. Further additions were built along First Street in 1906 and 1912.

The integrity of this facility is exceptional. The exterior has virtually retained its original appearance from when the last addition was constructed in 1912. The interior production spaces have also maintained their integrity as evidenced by the original support members and finishes

F. MAYER BOOT AND SHOE COMPANY (116 East Walnut Street)

Significance: Aside from the Schlitz Brewery and the tannery complexes, the Mayer Boot & Shoe Factory is the largest remaining industrial building in the Brewers' Hill area. Its central tower and crenellations give it a Romanesque quality. Its use of classical details at the three entrances tie it to the classicism that was becoming influential in the 1890's. In this respect it is similar to the Gallun Tannery entrance. As stated in the description, this facility is an evolution of enlargements and additions which began with the first five bays of the northeast corner of East Walnut and North 1st Street with expansion through 1912. Even with these changes, the use of similar materials and the repetition of proportions and design motifs the facades appear to be a unified effort (see map). The two architects who designed portions of the Mayer Plant, Schnetzky and Liebert, were adept in the changing styles and familiar with industrial construction. During the 1890's Schnetzky designed an ice house for the Val Blatz Brewery, a mill for Schroeder Lumber Co. and executed the Romanesque McGeoch Building as well as the classical Natatorium on South Fourth Street. The two were in partnership from approximately the early 1890's to 1897 when Schnetzky retired.

HISTORICAL STATEMENT:

Frederick Mayer was born in 1823, coming to Milwaukee from Darmstadt, Germany. In 1852 he started a retail shoe business at 318 West Water Street which was enlarged several times. In 1880 he established a shoe manufacturing business in a two-story building at North First and East Walnut Streets (B). The shoe and boot company was formally organized in 1884 with capital of \$200,000. Mayer was president with three sons working under him: A.J. was vice-president, George P. was secretary-treasurer, and Fred, Jr. was superintendent. At that time, a two-story addition was made to the original building, followed by the first portion of the present building in 1892. After several expansions, plant capacity rose from the original 150 pairs of shoes per day to 3,000 pairs per day. F. Mayer Boot & Shoe Company was well known for its "Milwaukee oil grain goods" said to be unrivaled for comfort, wearing quality, and ability to keep out the wetness. By 1893, the company employed 125 workers (C). Mayer, Sr. died in 1897. The business was in the building until 1934; it remained in use for shoe manufacturing until 1938, after which many other firms have occupied it. Various procedures of the shoe manufacturing business occupied the building: basement - sole leather; first - packing; second - finishing; third - fitting; fourth - stitching; fifth - cutting; and sixth - storage (A).

The Mayer Boot & Shoe Company represents one facet of the giant tanning industry which made Milwaukee a leader in the country. The Brewers' Hill area saw the largest concentration of tanneries along the banks of the Milwaukee River. Manufacturers such as the U. Schoenecker Boot & Shoe Company and the Mayer plant were located in proximity to the supply of tanned leather. By 1910, in a period of prosperity for the leather industry as a whole, Mayer had expanded nationwide and established a five-story building in Seattle to meet the demand for shoes along the West Coast and Alaska

SOURCES:

Commercial History of Wisconsin. Milwaukee Press Club, 1910, p. 96.

Milwaukee of Today: The Cream City of the Lakes. Milwaukee, no date, p. 84.

MAYER BOOT AND SHOE COMPANY

