

56-1599

Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)

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 Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 2821 North 4th Street N/A not for publication
city or town Milwaukee N/A vicinity
state Wisconsin code WI county Milwaukee code 079 zip code 53212

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Diana Leuburner
Signature of certifying official/Title

7/24/2017
Date

State Historic Preservation Office - Wisconsin
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 commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory Complex

Milwaukee County

Wisconsin

Name of Property

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.
 - other, (explain:)

by Barbara Lopez
 Signature of the Keeper

9-11-17
 Date of Action

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
- structure
- site
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> noncontributing
2	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
2	0 total

Name of related multiple property listing:
(Enter "N/A" if property 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)
INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)
VACANT/not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)
LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Commercial Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)
foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

roof SYNTHETICS

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.)

- 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.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- 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 or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY

Period of Significance

1916-1967

Significant Dates

1916

1917

1919

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Esser, Herman J.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- 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:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.4 acres

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

1 16T 425415 4768964
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

See Continuation Sheet

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	Emily Ramsey	date	February 16, 2017
organization	MacRostie Historic Advisors LLC	telephone	(312) 786-1700
street & number	53 West Jackson Boulevard, Suite 1142	zip code	60604-3619
city or town	Chicago	state	IL

Name of Property

County and State

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)

Property Owner

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

name/title	Robert O. Lemke	date	February 16, 2017
organization	King Drive Commons V, LLC	telephone	(414) 640-2175
street & number	7611 Harwood Avenue	zip code	53213
city or town	Wauwatosa	state	WI

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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Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

Setting

The Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory is located at 2821 North 4th Street in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The factory is located approximately 2.5 miles north of downtown, at one of the highest points in the city, in a predominantly residential neighborhood. Uniform blocks of tree-lined streets, with rows of detached frame houses surround the building. Most blocks have lost one or more houses to demolition, leaving the rows of homes dotted by vacant grassy lots. One block to the east of the factory is North Dr. Martin Luther King. Drive, a main north-south commercial street. The factory is in the center of the West Center Street/North 3rd Street neighborhood, which is bounded by Interstate 43 on the west, Keefe Avenue to the north, Holton Street on the east, and Walnut Street to the south. The Nunn-Bush factory is located on West Hadley Street between North 4th and North 5th Streets. It comprises the southern third of that city block, approximately 2.4 acres. The factory building meets the sidewalk along Hadley, 4th, and 5th Streets. Paved parking areas are located at the southeast corner of the property, and in a narrow strip along the north side.

Buildings

The Nunn-Bush complex consists of two separate buildings: 1) the main manufacturing building (hereafter referenced as the "main building"), which was constructed in phases between 1916 and 1919 with several minor post-1950 additions in the Commercial style; and 2) a boiler house that is composed of a boiler house erected in 1916, and a one-story machine shop addition from 1950.

The main building consists of the original five-story L-shaped manufacturing plant, completed in 1916, and three major additions built between 1917 and 1919. Although the building was historically described as six-stories, the ground-level floor is slightly below-grade in all sections and is currently defined as the basement. The first floor is at the same level as the main north entrance, which was completed in 1985. All historic entrances along the west and south sides lead upstairs to the first floor, bypassing the basement level. Only the 1917 section of the main building has six floors. The first addition is a six-story story wing with one-story office and cutting room to the north, which was constructed at the north end of the original building in 1917. In 1919, a four-story addition was constructed at the east end of the 1917 addition, extending the footprint of the northern wing of the main building to 4th Street. This addition was initially connected to the 1917 addition by a second-story passageway; a larger three-story connector between the 1917 and 1919 additions was built sometime between 1951 and 1953. Around the same time, a two-story loading dock enclosure was added between the original building and the 1917 addition.

The boiler house is located east of the main building, facing Hadley Street. This building is comprised of a two-story brick section with four-story southwest corner tower, built in 1916 as the boiler house,

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Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

and a one-story east addition built in 1950 to house a machine shop.

Both buildings have a concrete foundation and flat roof. The 1917 section of the main building has a barrel roof above its top floor recreation hall/ dining room.

Main Building Exterior

West Facade

The west facade, the smaller of the two primary facades on the main building, fronts onto North 5th Street and is faced with red brick laid in a running bond. The west facade can be divided into three sections—the five-story, seven-bay-wide section at the south end that is part of the original 1916 building; the six-story, three-bay-wide center section that is part of the 1917 addition, and the one-story, two-bay wide north section, also part of the 1917 addition. The south and center sections are nearly identical, with vertical brick piers and brick spandrel panels articulating the window bays. Each pier is topped by a simple concrete capital with oversized dentil trim. A brick parapet wall extends past the piers. The south three bays of the south section and all three bays of the center section feature three double-hung windows within each bay. These three-window bays flank the four north bays of the south (1916) section, which hold four double-hung windows within each bay. Most windows are two-over-two or four-over-four wood windows, and all groupings have a cast concrete sill and metal lintel. The windows on the entirety of the fifth floor appear to have been replaced with one-over-one double-hung metal windows.

The four brick piers of the center section of the west facade extend past the parapet to the sixth-floor level, and are topped with concrete capitals and Prairie-inspired concrete ornament. When this section of the building was built in 1917, these columns marked an open pergola that extended east to the company dining room, and which was recessed from the west wall plane. This open pergola area has since been enclosed with brick at the south two bays and metal windows in the north bay.

The one-story, two-bay-wide section at the north end of the facade was also added in 1917, and echoes the design of the center 1917 addition. The concrete water table, brick piers, and two-over-two, wood windows are continued along this section. Unlike the center and north sections of the façade, the south section does not exhibit the dentil capitals at the top of the piers. The concrete-capped brick, parapet wall features a simple band of brick dentil trim with single stone dentils at the corner of each pier.

The ground floor is consistent along the entire west side and is separated from the upper stories by the concrete belt course with brick dentils below. Two entries are located along this side—one between the one-story and six-story sections of the 1917 addition, and another between the south end of the 1917 addition and the original 1916 building. Each has a flared, cast-concrete arched hood and

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battered corners surrounding a segmental-arch door opening. The south entry contains a paneled wood door, while the doorway in the north entry bay has been bricked in. A basement window opening just south of the south entry bay has also been bricked in.

South Facade

The south facade of the original 1916 building fronts onto Hadley Street and continues the form, materials, and design of the west side. The south side is articulated vertically with eight identical bays, each consisting of four grouped, double-hung windows with metal lintels and a cast concrete sill. Bays are separated with projecting piers running from a water table above the ground floor to the cornice and are topped with a restrained cast concrete capital. The ground floor does not have any door openings or additional ornamentation.

The south facade of the 1919 addition, located north of the boiler house and set back from Hadley Street, is brick laid in a running bond. It is three stories with a full basement and is connected to the east end of the 1917 addition by a three-story brick connector erected in the early 1950s. The connector features a single group of four windows on each floor. The addition exhibits irregular fenestration on the second and third floor consisting of one-over-one, double-hung, metal windows. The ground floor consists of five irregularly-placed, one-over-one, metal, double-hung and two paired metal double-hung windows. There is also an entry door on the first floor, accessible by concrete stair.

East Facade

The overall forms and fenestration patterns of the primary facades of the 1916 building and 1917 additions are continued onto this secondary elevation. The east wall of the 1916 building is clad with common brick, and the 1917 six-story addition also features some common brick and concrete piers. A metal fire escape is located along the center bay of the 1916 section. Between the 1916 and 1917 sections of the building is a two-story utilitarian loading dock enclosure, with a buff color, brick exterior and grouped aluminum windows.

The east facade of the 1919 addition, which is its principal façade, fronts onto North 4th Street and mimics the original manufacturing building in several ways. The wall is faced with red brick in a running bond and consists of three virtually identical bays. This side is articulated by four projecting brick piers intersected by brick spandrel panels. Each pier is topped by a capital detailed with Prairie-inspired concrete ornament. The window openings between the bays feature metal lintels and concrete sills, and are filled with non-historic aluminum windows. The main entry to the addition is located at the south end of the ground floor. The deeply recessed doorway is flanked by brick piers topped with Prairie capitals supporting a simple stone cornice. Regularly spaced, diamond-shaped ornament differentiates the ground floor from the upper stories of the building.

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Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

North Facade

This secondary elevation continues the form and massing of the primary North 5th Street building façade, but does not contain decorative elements. The one-story office and cutting room section consists of eight bays each holding four two-over-two, double-hung windows. All vertical and horizontal spans are flush with the wall and laid in a running bond. The north wall of the six-story section of the 1917 addition, visible south of the one-story addition, also continues the form and fenestration pattern seen on its west side, but with concrete vertical piers and spandrels. A six-story, windowless brick tower is located at the east end.

The north facade of the 1919 addition is also brick laid in a running bond. The brick, however, is of a lesser quality than on the primary façade and the same as on the southern side of this building. The elevation is regularly fenestrated with one-over-one, double-hung aluminum windows. A one-story brick addition was built at the west end around 1985. The addition features a large, quarter-round entrance set on a raised stair platform, with three identical doorways. An accessibility ramp runs down the length of the elevation from the entry. Extending perpendicular to the building is a decorative brick wall that runs 30 feet before turning 90 degrees back towards the east. The wall is used to separate two parking lots and has a door cut in its center for pedestrian access.

Main Building Interior

The interior of the main building, which historically was primarily open, utilitarian manufacturing space was divided into smaller office spaces when it was converted for use as the Milwaukee Enterprise Center in the mid-1980s. Changes included the addition of temporary partitions and finishes within the existing open floor spaces. The exposed structural elements—columns, ceiling framing, masonry perimeter walls, wood flooring—remain throughout the interior of the main building. The original enclosed stairs, which feature simple, but handsome tongue and groove beadboard balustrades with ball newel caps, remain. Most importantly, the recreation hall/dining room space on the sixth floor of the 1917 addition is intact, with large open volume, distinctive metal trusses, and wood trim and detailing.

1916 Section

The 1916 section is five-stories above a raised basement. The basement is bisected from east to west by a main, double-loaded corridor. Several smaller office, storage, and work spaces open off of the main corridor. The corridor has walls of painted exposed brick, concrete, and modern non-historic surfaces. Most of the corridor features wood block floors set in a common bond pattern. Ceilings are exposed wood beams and plaster-wrapped main steel beams, with exposed terra cotta block or

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Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
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diagonally laid tongue and groove subflooring. Most rooms in the basement are similarly finished with exposed brick walls and concrete foundations, modern non-historic wall finishes, wood block or concrete floors, and exposed wood and plastered steel beam ceilings.

The first floor features an “L”- shaped double loaded corridor, which begins at an existing historic stairwell at the northwest corner of the section and continues south and then east to the east wall. Opening into the stairwell is a flight of stairs that ascend from the 5th Street (west) entrance. A non-historic partition and doorway separates the entrance stair from the stairwell. A second door leads to the main corridor. The west wall of the corridor has modern, non-historic finishes, but the east side retains its historic wood and glass partition. Spaces off of the main corridor are large and open, divided only by rows of concrete posts. Hardwood tongue and groove flooring covers most spaces, and ceilings feature exposed wood beams. Some spaces along the west side of the section feature non-historic partitions, dropped ceilings, and non-historic floor coverings.

Upper floors of the 1916 section were historically left as open work spaces, divided only by rows of support columns. Currently, these floors are divided with temporary partitions to create a main corridor with individual spaces. Rooms along the outer wall feature exposed brick walls, while nearly all spaces feature exposed beam ceilings and hardwood floors.

1917 Section

The 1917 section has a six-story portion, with a two-story portion to the north. All floors are connected to the original 1916 section to the south. The basement of this section is similar to the 1916 section. It features exposed brick walls and concrete foundations, exposed beam ceilings, and historic wood block flooring throughout.

The first floor was historically primarily open. It currently features a circular, double-loaded corridor, which runs through both portions of the 1917 section. The corridor is largely comprised of non-historic partitions and features non-historic flooring. Ceilings throughout the floor have exposed beams. The main stairwell, added in the 1950s, and the historic entrance for this section is located in the northeast corner of the section; the single door entrance faces north onto a parking lot. A vestibule leads to the main stairwell and retains a historic terrazzo floor with a mosaic tile border. Rooms in this section have finishes similar to the corridor, with exposed beam ceilings, modern non-historic flooring, and both temporary partitions and exposed outer brick walls.

Upper floors two through five were historically open work spaces, but currently have “U”-shaped main, double-loaded corridors. Both corridors and rooms have hardwood floors, exposed beam ceilings, and exposed brick outer walls. Doors and trim are mostly non-historic, but several historic steel fire doors remain in connecting openings between the 1917 section and the 1916 section.

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Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

The top sixth floor is accessed by both the historic stair in the northwest corner of the original 1916 section, and also by the 1950s stair in the northeast corner of the 1917 section. The 1916 stairwell in the southwest corner leads into a narrow room running the width of the sixth floor. To the west are four rooms, currently used for communications equipment, that are higher than the main floor level and are accessed by individual non-historic sets of steel steps; the northernmost room is accessed by a non-historic steel ramp. The narrow room has hardwood flooring and a vaulted ceiling. This room was historically part of the main recreation/dining room that occupies the majority of the floor, but is currently separated by temporary, non-historic partitions. A double-doorway at the south end of the partition opens into a smaller room, which leads into the main space. The main space, formerly the recreation and dining hall, has a barrel vaulted ceiling with exposed steel ribs. The floors are hardwood, the walls are finished with smooth plaster, and the windows and doors have plain, dark-stained trim. The east end of the main space retains the historic layout of rooms that served the main space. Rooms included the main dining room kitchen at the very westernmost end, a men's smoking room lined with historic wood benches in the southeast corner, a lady's parlor along the north side, and a small room on the south side. All rooms have terrazzo floors, plain wood trim and paneled doors, and plaster walls.

1919 Section

The 1919 section is three-stories and is connected to the 1917 section via an enclosed connecting arcade (1951-1953). The main stairwell is located in the southeast corner of the section; it is similar in design to the stairwell in the 1916 section. The basement has a main corridor and several large rooms. All spaces have concrete floors and exposed wood beam ceilings. Larger rooms are divided only by rows of wood support columns.

The first, second, and third floors are similar in layout and finishes. Historically, the upper floors were open work space as in the 1916 and 1917 sections; most partitions in this section are clad in non-historic finishes. All floors have a main corridor running roughly from east to west, with a branching corridor leading to the main stairwell. Several small offices and office suites open off of the corridor. Most of the corridors have hardwood floors, but some have acoustic tile floors. Offices and office suites typically have non-historic floor coverings, but some retain their hardwood floors. On the third floor, spaces in the middle of the floor receive daylight from a north-facing clearstory that runs nearly the length of the roof from east to west.

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Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

Boiler Room and Machine Shop Exterior

South Facade

The most prominent facade of this strictly utilitarian building fronts onto West Hadley Street, and is faced with red face brick laid in a running bond. The two-story and tower sections echo the design of the main building, and are articulated vertically with slightly projecting piers rising from a cast concrete water table above the first floor and capped with simplified concrete, dentiled capitals. The 1950 machine shop addition at the east end is unadorned, with a clay-tile cap along the top of the brick parapet. All three sections consist of two bays with blind windows and a concrete sill.

East Facade

The machine-shop addition is five bays wide; the southern-most bay is a garage-style, roll-up door and a smaller pedestrian door. The center two bays each have large, glass block windows and the two northern bays have oversized blind windows. Projecting piers with restrained capitals are visible on both the north and south corners of the east wall of the boiler room and the tower to the west.

West and North Facades

The secondary west and north facades are clad in common brick and are unornamented. Both are capped by plain coping tiles. The west side is five bays wide and is visually divided into the corner tower and the two-story boiler house. The corner tower is one bay wide and continues the design and materials from its south elevation. A plain first floor base with a plain concrete cap supports the upper wall, which features slightly raised brick piers at the corners that terminate in dentiled capitals with plain concrete caps just below the parapet. The rest of the boiler house wall is plain. The two-story wall has four evenly spaced bays of boarded window openings with concrete sills; an overhead garage door fills the third bay from the north.

The north side is clad in common brick and is divided into the boiler house on the west end and the 1950 machine shop addition to the east. The boiler house is two-stories and three bays wide, with large boarded window openings on the second floor. The machine shop is one-story and has two evenly-spaced boarded window openings.

Boiler Room and Machine Shop Interior

These utilitarian industrial spaces feature no architectural detailing or significant interior spaces. The boiler house holds the mechanical systems that light and heat the building, and the machine shop is an open space with exposed masonry walls and structure.

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Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

The interior of the boiler house is a large open space built to house large boilers, which remain partially in place. All related mechanical systems and piping remain in place and are attached to a frame of exposed steel beams and columns. The boiler house has concrete floors, walls clad in glazed buff brick, and ceiling with exposed terra cotta blocks set between steel beams. The tower is accessed by a flight of steel, open riser, stairs.

The machine shop is an open space with a set of temporary half-wall partitions in the middle forming a small room. The shop has a concrete floor, exposed brick walls, and ceiling with exposed steel trusses and beams.

Integrity

The Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory Complex remains largely intact with no major additions or alterations, except for the construction of a new north entrance pavilion in 1985. All facades of both the main building and the boiler house retain historic features, finishes, and fenestration. Most windows in the main building are historic metal frame or double hung wood sash. Of the two historic entrances on the west side, the northernmost entrance in the 1917 addition is infilled with non-historic brick. The boiler house retains some of its steel frame hopper windows, but most are obscured on the exterior by non-historic plywood.

Inside, the Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory retains most of its character-defining decorative elements, its wood stairs, and its historic top floor recreation/dining hall. Although most floors were originally open, temporary partitions and modern finishes have only partially obscured the historic flooring, and the exposed structure of the walls and ceilings. On the first floor of the 1916 section, a historic glass and wood partition remains intact. In the 1917 section, the original mosaic tile bordered terrazzo floor of the north entrance remains. The significant sixth floor hall retains a high degree of integrity in layout and finishes, including plaster walls, wood and terrazzo floors, wood benches, doors, and casing.

The Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory's interior and exterior retain sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to convey its significance as an important intact example of a major Milwaukee shoe manufacturing company.

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Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

Summary

The Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory is locally significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of Industry as the headquarters and primary manufacturing facility of the Nunn-Bush Shoe Company, one of the largest and longest-running manufacturers of leather shoes in Milwaukee. Established in 1912 as the Nunn, Bush, & Weldon Shoe Company with Henry Lightfoot Nunn (1878-1972) serving as President and General Manager, by 1930 Nunn-Bush was the second-highest producer of fine grade men's shoes in the country. The company opened its own purpose-built factory on North 4th Street in Milwaukee in 1916, (the subject building) and under Nunn's leadership the company flourished through the first half of the twentieth century. At a time when many of the oldest and largest of Milwaukee's shoe manufacturers were closing their doors, Nunn-Bush expanded its operations in Milwaukee, constructing large additions to the original factory building in 1917 and 1919 to keep up with demand. The company utilized the latest methods of shoe production, specializing in the design and production of fine men's footwear at their Milwaukee plant after World War I. The company established a second factory in Edgerton, Wisconsin in 1934, during the midst of the Great Depression, to produce lower-priced lines of dress shoes, but the company's headquarters and main manufacturing operations remained in the 4th Street factory complex through the early 1970s.

Founder and president Henry Lightfoot Nunn credited the success of his company to a system of progressive democratic labor practices—including the Nunn Bush Cooperative Association, the Savings and Profit Sharing Fund, and the Share Production Plan—which he conceived and implemented at the Nunn-Bush Milwaukee plant. The 1917 addition to the original factory building, which featured a dining room, recreation room, and outdoor terrace for all employees, reflected Nunn's dedication to fostering good relationships and increasing social interactions between management and labor.

Period of Significance

The period of significance for Criterion A is 1916 to 1967, reflecting the period during which the Nunn-Bush Company maintained its headquarters and primary manufacturing operations in this building. In 1967, the company merged with the Milwaukee-based Weyenberg Shoe Manufacturing Company. Nunn-Bush continued to operate as a separate company, maintaining its brand names, personnel and board of directors for another five years after the merger. In 1972, however, Weyenberg halted production at the 4th Street plant, citing high labor costs.

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Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

Growth and Development of Shoe Manufacturing in Milwaukee (1850-1930)

The late-nineteenth century was a time of tremendous change in the shoe industry. Prior to 1850, shoes were made almost entirely by hand by highly skilled craftsman cobblers, and even the largest cobbler shops in the 1850s were limited in production by the labor-intensive shoe-making process. As a center of the leather tanning industry in Wisconsin, Milwaukee naturally emerged as a leader in shoe and boot manufacturing as well. By the mid-1800s, there were 50 shoe manufacturing firms operating in Milwaukee, which together employed 321 workers and produced nearly \$370,000 worth of footwear annually. The largest of these early shoe companies was the Bradley and Metcalf Shoe Company, established in 1843. By the start of the Civil War, this one company produced 65 percent of the boots and shoes manufactured in Milwaukee, but only employed 70 workers with an average output of 300 shoes a day.¹

Population increases, expanding railroad networks, and the large government contracts issued to Wisconsin shoe manufacturers during the Civil War encouraged shoe companies throughout Wisconsin to expand their operations, but expansion was only made possible by important advances in technology that supplanted the old systems of hand-production. Elias Howe's invention of a sewing machine to sew leather in the early 1860s and the introduction of McKay's pegging machine (to connect the hard soles to the leather uppers) in 1862 revolutionized the shoe manufacturing process. The impact on the rate of production was profound—as Henry Lightfoot Nunn described in the 1946 Nunn-Bush publication on the history of shoemaking, “In 1861 a group of six shoemakers could turn out fifteen shoes a day; by 1863, a single McKay machine was turning out 600 pairs a day.”² By 1900, every major process involved in the production of boots and shoes had been mechanized, and shoe manufacturing had transitioned from a large group of small and mid-sized shops to a much smaller group of large, modern manufacturing plants. The mechanization of the shoe making process also meant that workers were no longer skilled craftsmen, but largely unskilled laborers, including many women and children.³

¹ Barbara Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resources Management in Wisconsin: Volume 2* (Madison: Historic Preservation Division State Historical Society, 1986), 12.1-12.13; Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, Reference #71331, <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Content.aspx?dsNav=Ny:True,Ro:0,N:4294963828-4294963814&dsNavOnly=N:4294963828-4294963805&dsRecordDetails=R:HI71331&dsDimensionSearch=D:71331,Dxm:All,Dxp:3&dsCompoundDimensionSearch=D:71331,Dxm:All,Dxp:3>, accessed January 22, 2015.

² Nunn-Bush Shoe Company, “The history of shoe and shoemaking” (Milwaukee: Nunn-Bush, 1946), 2.

³ *Ibid.*, 2-3; Wyatt, 12.1-12.3.

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Milwaukee's largest shoemaking concerns, including the Bradley and Metcalf Shoe Company (est. 1843), the F. Mayer Boot and Shoe Company (est.1867), and the A. W. Rich Shoe Company (est. 1884⁴), constructed large masonry factories to house their new mechanized operations. Most of the shoemakers were located near the center of the city, close to the tanneries along the riverfront in the Third Ward and in Brewers Hill.

The shoe industry followed the general trajectory of the tannery industry, with strong growth in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Production values in the state rose from \$2.9 million in 1890 to \$13.6 million in 1910. Shoe and boot production in Wisconsin peaked in the late 1910s after World War I, with production values over \$16 million. Wisconsin remained a leading state in shoe production, and Milwaukee continued to lead the state in shoe production. Over half of the \$13.6 million worth of boots and shoes produced in Wisconsin in 1909 were made in Milwaukee factories. During the twentieth century, the trends of centralization, consolidation, and specialization that had characterized the industry in 1900 continued to intensify.⁵

From its peak around 1920, the decline of the shoe industry in Wisconsin was rapid. Increasing competition from foreign and domestic competitors, coupled with the growing use of synthetics over leather, eroded profits for most of Milwaukee's largest shoe manufacturers. The Bradley and Metcalf Shoe Company sold its large factory in the Third Ward in 1914, just 20 years after its construction, and went out of business in 1924. The F. Mayer Boot and Shoe Company halted production in its factory in Brewers Hill in 1934. The A. W. Rich Shoe Company (later the Rich Vogel Shoe Company) closed its turn-of-the-century factory in the Third Ward in 1930.⁶

One notable exception to this story of declining sales and shuttered factories for the shoe industry in Milwaukee was the Nunn-Bush Shoe Company, established in 1912. Although a relative late-comer in comparison to the city's venerable nineteenth-century shoe manufacturers, Nunn-Bush rose to prominence in the 1920s and 1930s to become one of the most successful shoe companies in the state by the mid-twentieth century. By the early 1930s, when many of Milwaukee's largest shoe factories were closing their doors, Nunn-Bush was expanding its operations in Milwaukee, establishing a second factory in nearby Edgerton, and had risen to the position of second-highest producer of fine-grade

⁴ Wyatt, 12.3; Various entries on shoe companies in Milwaukee from the Wisconsin Architectural and History Inventory, <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Content.aspx?dsNav=N:1073-4294963829>, accessed January 20, 2015.

⁵ Ibid.; City of Madison Landmarks Commission, Landmarks Nomination Form for the Badger State Shoe Company, October 30, 1988 and June 27, 1989, Section VII, 1-2.

⁶ Ibid.

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men's shoes in the country, eclipsed only by the Roberts, Johnson & Rand Shoe Company based in St. Louis, Missouri.⁷ In addition to being one of the few shoe companies in the city to specialize in higher-end men's footwear, the company also distinguished itself through its progressive factory management systems, which eliminated the piecework practices that were standard throughout the industry in favor of more stable production and wage systems, and established a cooperative association of workers and managers to make all decisions regarding the operation of the factory.

Henry Lightfoot Nunn and the Beginnings of the Nunn-Bush Shoe Company (1878-1915)

The Nunn, Bush & Weldon Shoe Company (later the Nunn-Bush Shoe Company) was incorporated on June 11, 1912 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin with Henry L. Nunn, Arthur W. Bush, W. E. Weldon, T. J. Kodian and J.B. Buchanan as owners and initial investors.⁸ From the start, Henry Nunn was the company's guiding force, moral compass, and hands-on factory manager.

Born in Bonham, Texas on February 26, 1878, Nunn attended elementary school only through seventh grade. This, and a bookkeeping course at Jones Commercial College in St. Louis, was the extent of his formal education.⁹ In 1899, after his return from service in the Spanish American War, Nunn established the Nunn & Jones Company, a modest menswear retail store in Bonham, Texas. That same year he married Josephine Ewing, with whom he would eventually have six children. Dissatisfied with the professional opportunities in Bonham, Nunn moved back to St. Louis in 1903. Soon after, he found work with the Roberts, Johnson, and Rand Shoe Company. Within the span of two years Nunn was promoted from office manager to superintendent of Roberts, Johnson, and Rand, one of the largest shoe factories in the country. In 1910 he accepted a superintendent of factory position at Harsh & Edmonds Shoe Company, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, but Nunn's experience with the harsh labor conditions in the shoe industry made him wonder if he could do better. In his 1953 autobiography, *The Whole Man Goes to Work*, Nunn wrote:

...I visualized more freedom than had been possible in those places [where I had worked]. I dreamed by day and night of having hands free to treat people exactly as I wanted to treat them. Subconsciously at least I knew that trust beget trust, and I was intrigued with the thought of what heights of efficiency might be reached under such a

⁷ Donald Royson, "1000 Per Cent in Nine Years," *The Rotarian* (March 1930), 18. National Register of Historic Places, Roberts, Johnson & Rand/International Shoe Company Complex, City of St. Louis County, Missouri, National Register #84002670.

⁸ Nunn-Bush Shoe Company, 5.

⁹ Henry Lightfoot Nunn, *The Whole Man goes to Work; the life story of a business man* (New York: Harper, 1953), 3-36

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program. I wanted the liberty of action which only complete management would give to me.¹⁰

After an initial meeting at the Blackstone Hotel in Chicago in 1911, the partners officially incorporated as the Nunn & Bush Shoe Company in 1912, with Weldon as president, Kedian, vice president; Bush, secretary, and Nunn, treasurer. The name was soon changed to the Nunn, Bush & Weldon Shoe Company and later to the Nunn-Bush Shoe Company.¹¹ From the company's inception, it was understood that Nunn would be primarily responsible for the operations of the factory, and that Bush would oversee sales. Weldon, a banker and Nunn's brother-in-law, provided necessary capital and served as financial advisor.

The company secured the necessary equipment, leased space in the Kopmeier Building at 409-419 Third Street in Milwaukee, and began operations in 1912. Initially, the firm employed 175 people and produced a maximum of 600 pairs of shoes a day—a modest output by 1912 standards.¹² By 1915, the company had outgrown its first home and began plans for a purpose-built factory at the corner of 5th Street and Hadley Street, just north of its current location, which would allow a significant expansion in operations. Nunn commissioned noted Milwaukee architect Herman J. Esser (1865-1957) to design the factory and adjacent boiler house.

The Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory (1916-1950)

A notice in the November 11, 1915 edition of *The Iron Trade Review* reported that “The Nunn & Bush Shoe Co...is having plans prepared by Herman J. Esser, architect, for a permanent location at Hadley and Fifth Streets. The factory will be six stories, with ells, 117x149 feet, of steel and brick, with mill floors. The power plant will be two stories, 30x60 feet.”¹³ The total cost was estimated at \$75,000. By spring of 1916, the factory and adjacent boiler house were completed. On April 22, 1916, *American Shoemaking* reported that the company was moving in to its new home. “This firm,” the article noted, “has a good reputation in Milwaukee. They pay good prices for labor and have no trouble getting skilled workmen. The cutting room is already underway, also the sole leather room, and the other departments are cleaning up to move as soon as possible. This firm is one of the leading

¹⁰ Nunn, *The Whole Man goes to Work; the life story of a business man* (New York: Harper, 1953), 50.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹² *Ibid.*, 53; “Koehler, “A History of the Boot and Shoe Industry,” 99.

¹³ *The Iron Trade Review*, 11 November 1915, 962.

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shoe factories in Milwaukee.”¹⁴

Henry Nunn no doubt relished such high praise for his company, coming as it did on the heels of the introduction of Nunn-Bush’s first progressive labor policy in 1915, which he named the Nunn Bush Cooperative Association. The Association was Nunn’s response to a recent shoe strike in Milwaukee and the threat of a strike at his factory, and it was a response that was ultimately successful in keeping the company free from labor strikes for the next 40 years. The Nunn Bush Cooperative Association, later known as the Industrial Union of Master Craftsmen, was first fully implemented at the company’s new factory when it was completed in 1916. The objective of the Association was to bring about a “better understanding between the employee and the employer, higher wages, greater production, general welfare of the employees, the elimination of injustice, and a square deal for all alike.”¹⁵ This Association was comprised of both labor and management representatives, who together through consensus decided all questions of conditions of employment, discharge, wage rates and discipline.¹⁶ The management pledged to use only that authority which had been accepted by labor if labor agreed never to strike or lockout the factory.¹⁷ The formation of the Cooperative Association eliminated many of the conflict situations that plagued factory owners and bolstered unions. Nunn believed that if arbitrary decision-making could be eliminated from management then workers would willingly compromise. He determined that if management engaged with employees as equals, making decisions as a single body, the business would benefit from having those decisions wholeheartedly implemented, instead of begrudgingly obeyed. Nunn considered the elimination of arbitrary decision making his “greatest single contribution to management.”¹⁸

Once settled in the new factory, the Nunn-Bush Company’s production increased from 600 shoes per day to around 4,000 pairs a day. The following year, the company completed construction of a large six-story wing on the north end of the existing factory, which housed offices, a large cutting room, and fitting, welting, lining, and finishing departments.¹⁹ A singular feature of this addition, which was also designed by Milwaukee architect Herman J. Esser, was a rooftop structure with an outdoor terrace, a large recreation hall, dining room and kitchen. The company offered hot meals to employees (sold at cost), a comfortable dining room, a recreation hall that was used every two weeks for dances and other social functions, and a ladies dressing-room on each floor. All social functions, including company

¹⁴ *American Shoemaking*, 22 April 1916.

¹⁵ Koehler, “A History of the Boot and Shoe Industry,” 100.

¹⁶ Nunn, 80.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *American Contractor*, 26 May 1917, 66.

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outings, were open to all employees and their families. Both management and labor were encouraged to participate. Nunn believed that social interactions between the two divisions would help alleviate any perceived differences and ultimately create a more productive work environment. The company's head of personnel remarked in 1921, "The lunch room has been a fine investment. No employer can do anything better than to give a hot meal at noon to better conditions."²⁰

At the same time the addition and dining room were being planned, Nunn also established a Savings and Profit Sharing Fund for workers at the Milwaukee plant.²¹ This was a retirement fund available to all employees who "achieve a long service record" with the Nunn-Bush Shoe Company, even if they did not intend to leave the work force after leaving the company.²² Nunn-Bush contributed to the fund annually as did any participating employee who had been with the company more than three continuous months. Five directors administered the fund, with two representing management and three representing labor. Withdrawal amounts and penalties were based on years of service.²³ In an industry still dominated by the hourly wage and offering nothing in the way of benefits, a plan such as this—open to any qualifying employee, both male and female—was revolutionary.

The company's Milwaukee plant continued to expand its operations through the late 1910s. In 1919, Herman Esser designed the last major addition to the main manufacturing plant, a three-story section that served as a holding space for finished shoes that had yet to be sold and shipped.²⁴

The factory was initially built to produce unlined men's work shoes in the Goodyear welt method, and work shoes remained the primary focus of the company until it received multiple contracts to produce boots for the army during WWI. After the war, the decision was made to manufacture only "Fine Grade" dress shoes for men. By 1919, Nunn-Bush Shoe Company manufactured nothing but fine men's footwear in the Milwaukee plant.²⁵ At that time the company employed 1,047 men and women and produced 6,500 pairs of shoes a day.²⁶ These high-end shoes were also manufactured using the Goodyear welt method. This method required that each shoe be handled by as many as 210 individual employees and required the action of as many as 170 machines.²⁷ By 1930, according to *The Rotarian*,

²⁰ Koehler, 100.

²¹ Koehler, 104.

²² Ibid.

²³ "A Shoe Company's Profit-Sharing Plan," *Printers' Ink* vol. 110 (1920): 116.

²⁴ *American Contractor*, 13 September 1919, 54; Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, dated 1937.

²⁵ *Printer's Ink*, vol. 110 (1920):116

²⁶ Ibid.; *Chicago North Shore and Milwaukee Rail Road*, vol. IV, no. 1 (November 1920): 9.

²⁷ Nunn-Bush, "The history of shoe and shoemaking," 8.

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Nunn-Bush had become the second highest producer of fine grade men's shoe's in the country.²⁸

Flush with success, the company made plans to expand beyond Milwaukee. In 1934, the company completed construction of a new factory in Edgerton, Wisconsin, which produced only lower-priced men's shoes, named the "Edgerton" line.²⁹ Meanwhile, Nunn push forward with his progressive labor policies at the Milwaukee plant. In 1935, he initiated his most ambitious program, the Share Production Plan. Once a worker had completed two consecutive years of employment with Nunn-Bush, they were considered "associates" and were eligible to participate in the production share plan.³⁰ In this plan, associates were guaranteed 52 paychecks a year with a wage based on a fixed percentage (36.5%) of the value of the goods the workers produced. Estimated annual production values were determined based on previous years' production. Each week an associate could withdraw 1/52 of his anticipated annual income. Steps were taken to ensure the uniformity of paychecks as well as to guarantee payments did not exceed actual earnings.³¹ This system provided employees with regular, definite wages despite factory closings or seasonal variation in production. In 1938, the *Milwaukee Journal* reported that the program was a surprising success:

While the average shoe worker is employed seven and a half to eight months a year and averages about 28 hours a week, Nunn-Bush labor works 50 weeks a year and from 1935 to 1937 had an average work week of 40 hours.... the average income of the Nunn-Bush worker last year was higher than any wage reported in the shoe industry.³²

Despite his democratic ideals, Nunn made the point, both during the plan's development and after, that the idea of shared production was first and foremost a capital interest of the business. The typical factory was making an effort to appease employees through 'welfare' and expecting loyalty. Nunn approached the labor conflict from a different angle, acknowledging that the "greatest gains for both capital [management] and labor as well as the consuming public can best be attained through cooperation."³³ The acceptance of the changes was slow and participants on all sides were resistant; however, eventually the concepts proved fruitful and the business thrived.

In 1939, Nunn was selected as Milwaukee's "outstanding citizen of the year" and in 1940 the

²⁸ Royson, 18.

²⁹ Mark Wilson Scarborough, *Edgerton* (Arcadia Publishing; 2014), 40-42.

³⁰ During the two-year apprentice time workers were paid hourly.

³¹ Nunn, *Partners in Production*, 9 and 10.

³² "Where Capital and Labor Are Partners," *The Milwaukee Journal*, 3 November 1938.

³³ *Ibid.*

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Milwaukee Journal named him one of the ten men and women who had made “the most distinctive contribution to better living in the United States.” In 1947 Nunn resigned as President of the company, but continued to have an active role as an Advisory Council member until his retirement in 1950. Throughout this period, Nunn wrote and lectured nationwide on his labor and management ideas. In 1951, he traveled abroad to the Netherlands and France as part of an industrial management mission with the Economic Cooperation Administration under the Marshall Plan. He published two books reflecting his concept of human relations in management: *The Whole Man Goes to Work* (an autobiographical work) in 1953, and *Partners in Production* in 1961. In 1959 he taught a course on this subject at San Diego State College, having moved to La Jolla, California in 1953. Henry L. Nunn died at his home in California in 1972.³⁴

Later Years of the Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory, 1950-1985

In 1947, the three senior officers of the Nunn-Bush Shoe Company—President Henry L. Nunn, Vice President A. W. Bush, and Secretary J. C. Johnson—all retired from the official board and formed an Advisory Board. J. B. Buchanan, the youngest of the initial owners and investors in Nunn-Bush, became president of the company, with Charles G. Nunn, Henry’s nephew, serving as vice president. The company continued to produce fine men’s leather shoes at the Milwaukee plant through the 1950s and 1960s, with sales of \$19.4 million by the mid-1960s. Changes to the Esser-designed plant during this time were minimal: a one-story machine shop was constructed on the east side of the boiler house in 1950; a two-story loading dock enclosure was added between the north and south wings of the main building between 1951 and 1953; and the second-story passageway between the 1917 and 1919 additions was replaced with a three-story connection between 1951 and 1953. These minor additions were not designed by Esser (who had retired in 1930) and are utilitarian in nature; although constructed during the time that Nunn-Bush occupied the factory, these additions are not significant elements of the factory.

In 1967, Milwaukee-based Weyenberg Shoe Manufacturing Company purchased the Nunn-Bush Shoe Company for \$6 million; however, Nunn-Bush continued to operate as a separate company, maintaining its brands, personnel, board of directors, and ownership of the Milwaukee plant.³⁵ Five years later, rising labor costs and increasing competition from foreign imports led Weyenberg to close

³⁴ Henry L. Nunn Papers, 1852-1973, Wisconsin Historical Society Descriptive Finding Aide, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi/f/findaid/findaid-idx?c=wiarchives;cc=wiarchives;view=text;rgn=main;didno=uw-whs-mss00380>, accessed January 19, 2015.

³⁵ “Weyenberg to Acquire Nunn-Bush,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 29 June 1967.

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Nunn-Bush's Milwaukee plant. The Edgerton plant closed in 1988. By the mid-1980s, the Nunn-Bush factory in Milwaukee was serving as the Milwaukee Enterprise Center, a joint venture of the City of Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Area Technical College, and The Wisconsin Foundation for Vocational, Technical, and Adult Education. The one-story addition on the north end of the building, with a large new entrance, most likely dates to the mid-1980s when the Milwaukee Enterprise Center moved in.³⁶

Comparable Extant Shoe Manufacturing Buildings in Milwaukee

The rapid growth in Wisconsin's shoe and boot industry between 1860 and 1920 and the increasing specialization and centralization within the industry is reflected in the number of large shoe factories that were constructed throughout the state in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Milwaukee emerged early on as the leading city in shoe and boot production in the state and remained so through the industry's peak in the late 1910s. According to Barbara Wyatt in *Cultural Resources Management in Wisconsin*, "of the \$13.6 million worth of good produced by Wisconsin firms in 1909, \$7 million was from Milwaukee factories (about four million pairs of shoes)."³⁷ Many of the industry's largest companies, including Bradley and Metcalf Shoe Company, the F. Mayer Boot and Shoe Company, and the A. W. Rich Shoe Company (later Rich Vogel Shoe Company), constructed sprawling masonry factory complexes in the city during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Smaller boot and shoe factories, such as the F. Kuehn Boot and Shoe Company Building, also abounded in Milwaukee. Because of the rapid decline of the industry during the Great Depression, most of these companies had vacated their factories by the mid-1930s.

The Wisconsin Historical Society's Architecture and History Inventory identifies nine extant shoe factory buildings in Milwaukee constructed between 1892 and 1930, including Nunn-Bush. A brief description and comparative analysis of these buildings is below.

Mayer Boot and Shoe Company Building, 100 East Pleasant Street (constructed 1892; additions in 1899, 1906 and 1912)

The Mayer Boot and Shoe Company Building was designed by architect H. Schnetzky & Co. and completed in 1892, with several additions between 1899 and 1912. The factory is a large 5-6 story U-shaped brick building with an eight-story crenelated tower marking the center entrance. The building exhibits a mixture of stylistic influences ranging from Romanesque Revival to Neo-Classical. Although the building retains excellent architectural integrity, Mayer had ceased production at the plant by 1934 and the building has served other uses not associated with the shoe industry for nearly a

³⁶ "21 Small Businesses Operating in Milwaukee Enterprise Center," Milwaukee Sentinel, 24 January 1987.

³⁷ Wyatt, 12.3.

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century. The building was individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 under the Multiple Property Listing for Resources of N. 3rd Street and Brewers' Hill. (NRIS 84003728)

Bradley and Metcalf Shoe Company Building, 141 North Water Street (constructed 1894)

The Bradley and Metcalf Shoe Company Building was designed by architect Walter A. Holbrook and completed in 1894. The six-story brick factory is decorated with foliate panels at the first floor cornice, lotus leaf capitals, and features a large granite column at the main corner entrance. The building retains good architectural integrity and is a contributing building in the Historic Third Ward Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 (NRIS 84003724). The building operated as a shoe factory for only 20 years—Bradley and Metcalf sold the building in 1914 and the company dissolved in 1924. For the next 55 years, the building was occupied by the Yahr & Lange Drug Company. The building was redeveloped as condominiums in 1997—exterior alterations include replacement windows and projecting metal balconies on the primary (street-facing) facades.

F. Kuehn Boot and Shoe Company Building, 1134 South 1st Street (constructed 1894, addition 1899)

The F. Kuehn Boot and Shoe Company Building is a modest three-story factory building featuring a stone foundation and walls clad in cream city brick. The building is minimally ornamented with brick pilasters and a decorative cornice on the west façade. The first floor windows have been replaced but the upper floors retain multi-light metal sash. Permits identify John Paulu as the designer of the 1899 addition and he may have designed the original building as well. The building was constructed for the F. Kuehn Boot and Shoe Company, which was established in Milwaukee in 1865.

Fred Vogel, Jr. Building, 231 East Buffalo Avenue (constructed 1896)

The Fred Vogel, Jr. Building was designed by architect Carl F. Ringer and completed in 1896 for the Beals & Torrey, a wholesale distributor of rubber and leather footwear and manufacturer of the B-P line of men's shoes. Beals & Torrey became the Beals-Pratt Shoe Manufacturing Company in 1920 and left the building shortly thereafter. The five-story building's primary facade features a neo-classical base with square columns and an unornamented entablature; the upper stories are clad in orange brick. The fifth story windows are decorated with a colonnade of ionic columns. Secondary walls are unornamented common brick. The windows, including the large storefront windows and main entrance on the façade, are non-historic replacements. The building is a contributing building in the Historic Third Ward Historic District (NRIS 84003724).

The A. W. Rich Shoe Company Building, 333 East Chicago Street (Constructed 1900)

The A. W. Rich Shoe Company Building was designed by Robert A. Messmer & Sons and completed in 1900 for the A. W. Rich Shoe Company, which was founded as a wholesale dry goods firm in 1867. The company expanded into shoe production in the 1870s and was known for its "wigwam" slippers and "rustic" oxfords. The five-story brick factory at the corner of Milwaukee and Chicago Streets

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featured red brick trim and pilasters, and was described by the *Milwaukee Journal* as one of the “neatest looking factory building in the city.” As with most of the city’s largest shoe manufacturers, A. W. Rich fell on hard times in the 1920s and 1930s, and the factory was vacant by 1932. The building was purchased in 1998 by Eppstein Uhen Architects to serve as their corporate headquarters. The new owners undertook a major rehabilitation of the building between 1999 and 200, utilizing the federal historic tax credit program (NRIS 84003724).

Simplex Shoe Manufacturing Company Building, 102 East Keefe Avenue (constructed c. 1920)

The Simplex Shoe Manufacturing Company was incorporated in late 1920 by several members of the Weyenberg family, which founded the Weyenberg Shoe Manufacturing Company in 1893. The company’s three-story brick factory at 102 East Keefe Avenue was designed with a capacity to produce 2400 pairs of children’s shoes daily.³⁸ It is not known how long the firm was in operation at the plant. A large, modern addition has been constructed on the east side of the factory, and all the windows are boarded over. The building is very simple in design, with little architectural detailing.

Weyenberg Shoe Company Building, 234 East Reservoir (constructed 1920)

The Weyenberg Shoe Company Building was completed in 1920 as the primary headquarters and manufacturing facility of the Weyenberg Shoe Company, which was established in 1893. The company carved a niche by manufacturing combat boots for soldiers during World War 1 and continued to focus on heavy work shoes in the post-World War I period, expanding its operations to include manufacturing plants in Beaver Dam, Portage, and Hartford, Wisconsin and Ludington, Michigan. In the 1940s, the company began transitioning from work shoes and boots to production of fine men’s dress shoes, closing the Ludington plant in 1942 and the Hartford Plant in 1953. In 1964, Thomas W. Florsheim became controlling stockholder and president of the company and took the company public in 1965. The company was renamed Weyco, Inc. in 1976. It is not clear when Weyco left the six-story brick factory building at 234 East Reservoir. The building has been converted into condominiums, with non-historic replacement windows and projecting metal balconies.

Mid-States Shoe Company, 2769 North 32nd Street (1930)

Constructed in 1930, this four-story U-shaped brick factory was occupied by the Mid-States Shoe Company, a permutation of several earlier shoe companies—Beals and Torrey, later Beals-Pratt Shoe Manufacturing Company, became the Walter J. Booth Shoe Company in 1925 and was renamed again as the Mid-States Shoe Company after a merger with the Ideal Shoe Company. By 1941, the building had been purchased by machinery manufacturer Briggs & Stratton and absorbed into their adjacent complex. The building features unornamented brick walls and most of the large window openings have been infilled.

³⁸ “Simplex Process for Making Children’s Shoes, *Shoe and Leather Reporter*, Vol 141 January 13, 1921, p43.

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Although the list above includes several large, intact shoe manufacturing complexes—including the Mayer Boot and Shoe Company Building, the Bradley and Metcalf Shoe Company Building, and the A. W. Rich Shoe Company Building—that are comparable in size, scale, and detailing to the Nunn-Bush complex, the Nunn-Bush Shoe Factory is the only one of these large industrial buildings that served for the majority of its existence as an operating shoe factory. The 1917 addition to the original factory building, with its dining room, recreation room, and outdoor terrace for all employees, is also unique among shoe manufacturing operations in Milwaukee and exemplify Nunn's dedication to fostering good relationships and increasing social interactions between management and labor.

Herman J. Esser, Architect

Esser was born in Madison, Wisconsin in 1865. In 1888 he graduated from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. After graduation, Esser worked with various architects in New York before returning to Milwaukee in 1890.³⁹ As one of the city's earliest college-educated architects, he joined the architectural firm of Henry C. Koch and Company as a full partner.⁴⁰ Esser left the Koch firm in 1899 to pursue work as an independent architect. A 1919 article mentioned that Esser was responsible for designing a majority of the shoe manufacturing plants in the Milwaukee area during that time, although no specific commissions other than Nunn-Bush have been confirmed.⁴¹ Esser worked in a variety of architectural styles and designing a wide variety of building types, including single-family homes, large industrial buildings, public works projects, department stores, and churches, mostly in Milwaukee. Prominent examples of his Milwaukee commissions included the Pfister and Vogel Leather Company Office (1912) at 647 West Virginia Street, the Public Service Building (1903) at 231 West Michigan Street, the Stroh Die Molded Casting Company Building (1910), at 525 East Michigan Street, the Robert A. Johnston Co. building (1920) at 4023 West National Avenue, and the Gimbel Brothers Department Store (1901).⁴² Correspondence in the AIA Historical Directory indicates that Herman Esser retired from the practice of architecture in 1930, citing health problems. He died in his Milwaukee home in 1957 at the age of 92.⁴³

³⁹ Department of City Development, "Historic Designation Study Report: Edmund Stormowski Duplex" (City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 2002), 9.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Box Factory Progressing: Movement Launched by Shoe Manufacturers," *Boot and Shoe Recorder* (November 15, 1919), 103.

⁴² *Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 18, 1957; *The Milwaukee Journal*, January 17, 1957.

⁴³ File of Herman J. Esser, AIA Historical Directory, <http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/AIA%20scans/C-E/EsserHermanJ.pdf>, accessed January 23, 2015.

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Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

Conclusion

The Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory, constructed in 1916 with additions in 1917 and 1919, is locally significant under National Register Criterion A in the Area of Industry as the headquarters and primary manufacturing facility of the Nunn-Bush Shoe Company, one of the largest and longest-running manufacturers of leather shoes in Milwaukee. Established in 1912 as the Nunn, Bush, & Weldon Shoe Company, by 1930 Nunn-Bush had grown to be the second-highest producer of fine grade men's shoes in the country.

The company opened its own purpose-built factory on North 4th Street in Milwaukee in 1916, and under Nunn's leadership the company flourished through the first half of the twentieth century. At a time when many of the oldest and largest of Milwaukee's shoe manufacturers were closing their doors, Nunn-Bush expanded its operations in Milwaukee, constructing large additions to the original factory building in 1917 and 1919 to keep up with demand. The company utilized the latest methods of shoe production, specializing in the design and production of fine men's footwear at their Milwaukee plant after World War I.

Founder and president Henry Lightfoot Nunn credited the success of his company to a system of progressive democratic labor practices—including the Nunn Bush Cooperative Association, the Savings and Profit Sharing Fund, and the Share Production Plan—which he conceived and implemented at the Nunn-Bush Milwaukee plant. The company later established a second factory in Edgerton, Wisconsin in 1934, during the midst of the Great Depression, to produce lower-priced lines of dress shoes, but the company's headquarters and main manufacturing operations remained in the 4th Street factory complex through the early 1970s.

The period of significance for Criterion A is 1916 to 1967, beginning with the year of construction for the original building and ending when the company was sold to Weyenberg, reflecting the period during which the Nunn-Bush Company developed its signature brands and operated as an independent shoe manufacturer.

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Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

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Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

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Section 10 Page 1

Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

Verbal Boundary Description:

The Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory is located at 2821 North 4th Street in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The Nunn-Bush Factory comprises the southern third of that city block, approximately 2.4 acres. The nominated boundary is bounded to the east by N 4th Street, to the south by W Hadley Street, to the west by N 5th Street and to the north parcel line beginning at the northwest corner and moving in a straight line in an easterly direction where it meets the east edge of the parcel. This creates a rectangle and excludes an extraneous parking lot at the northeast corner of the parcel.

Boundary Justification:

The nomination boundaries encompass the parcel of land historically associated with the Nunn-Bush Company Factory in Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, excluding extraneous land.

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Section photos Page 1

Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

Photo Log

Name of Property: Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory

City or Vicinity: Milwaukee

County: Milwaukee **State:** Wisconsin

Photographer: John Cramer

Date Photographed: April 2015

- Photo 1 of 19:** West and south facade, looking northeast.
- Photo 2 of 19:** West facade, looking southeast.
- Photo 3 of 19:** West facade, looking east.
- Photo 4 of 19:** East facade, looking west.
- Photo 5 of 19:** Boiler house and machine shop east facade, looking northwest.
- Photo 6 of 19:** South facade, looking north.
- Photo 7 of 19:** Alley facade, looking east.
- Photo 8 of 19:** Alley facade, looking east.
- Photo 9 of 19:** North facade, looking south.
- Photo 10 of 19:** Typical interior (1950s loading dock), looking east.
- Photo 11 of 19:** Typical interior (1916 block), looking west.
- Photo 12 of 19:** Typical interior (1916 block stair), looking east.
- Photo 13 of 19:** Typical interior (1917 block), looking west.
- Photo 14 of 19:** Typical interior (1917 block), looking east.
- Photo 15 of 19:** Typical interior (1917 block), looking west.
- Photo 16 of 19:** Typical interior (1917 block), looking north.
- Photo 17 of 19:** Typical interior (1980s connector), looking north.
- Photo 18 of 19:** Typical interior (machine shop).
- Photo 19 of 19:** Typical interior (boiler house).

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Section figures Page 1

Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

Figure 1: Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory, looking northeast, 1930.

Figure 2: Architectural elevations of 1917 addition by Herman J. Esser.

Figure 3: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1937.

Figure 4: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1951.

Figure 5: Site Plan, 1953.

Figure 6: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1969.

Figure 7: Section through building looking south showing cafeteria/recreation hall on the 6th floor, 1953.

Figure 8: Nunn-Bush ladies bowling league costume party in 6th floor cafeteria/recreational hall, 1930.

Figure 9: Article from *Fortune* Magazine, November 1938.

Figure 10: Nunn-Bush shoe advertisement, 1936.

Figure 11: Site Chronology Plan

Figure 12: Site Plan and Photo Key

Figure 13: First Floor Plan

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Section figures Page 2

Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

Figure 1: Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory, looking northeast, 1930.



Figure 2: Architectural elevations of 1917 addition by Herman J. Esser.



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Section figures Page 3

Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

Figure 3: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1937.

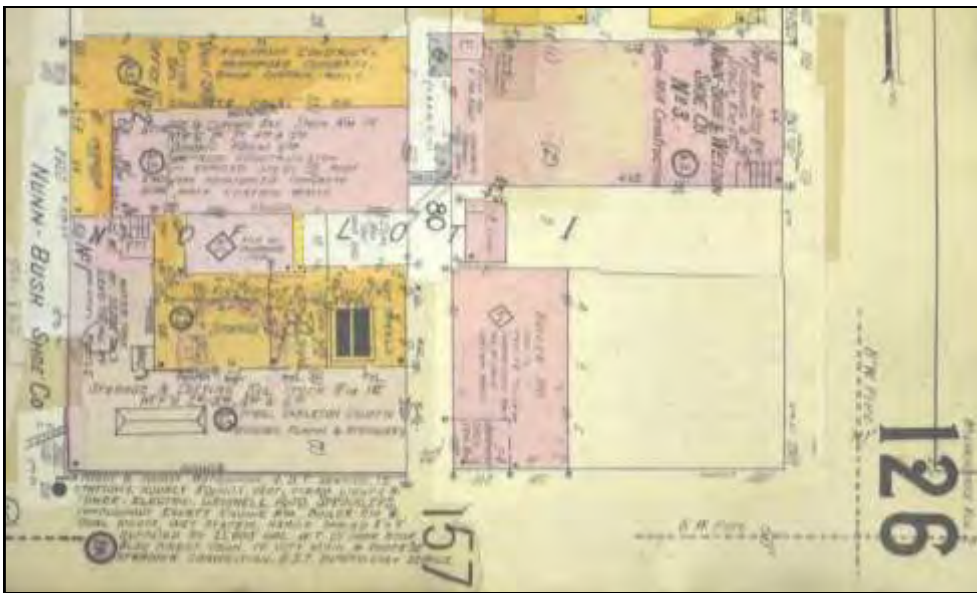
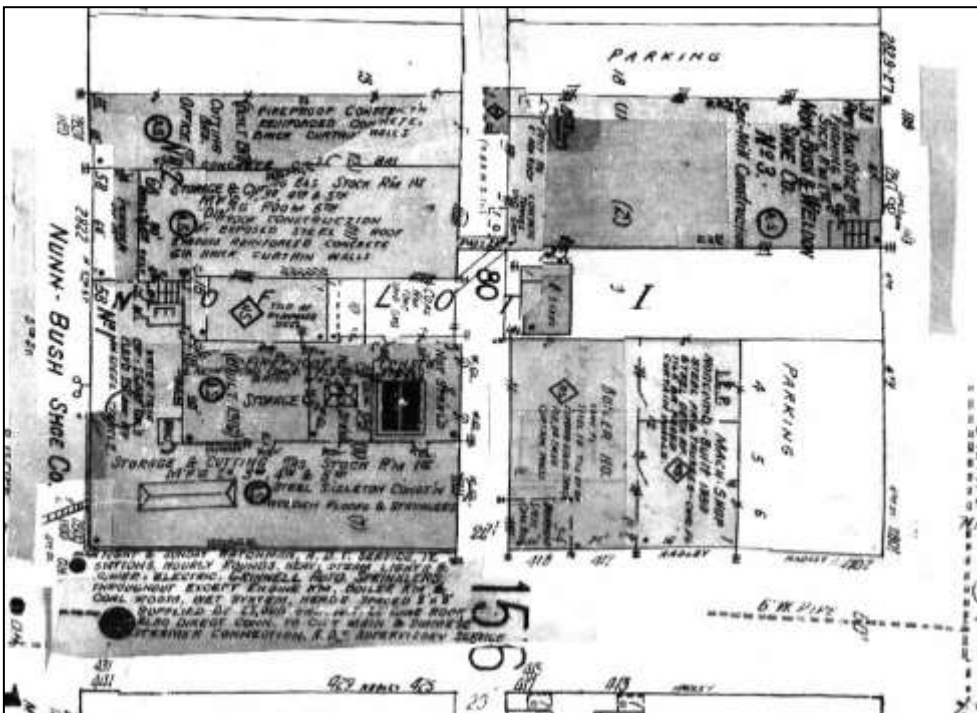


Figure 4: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1951.



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Continuation Sheet

Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

Section figures Page 4

Figure 5: Site Plan, 1953.

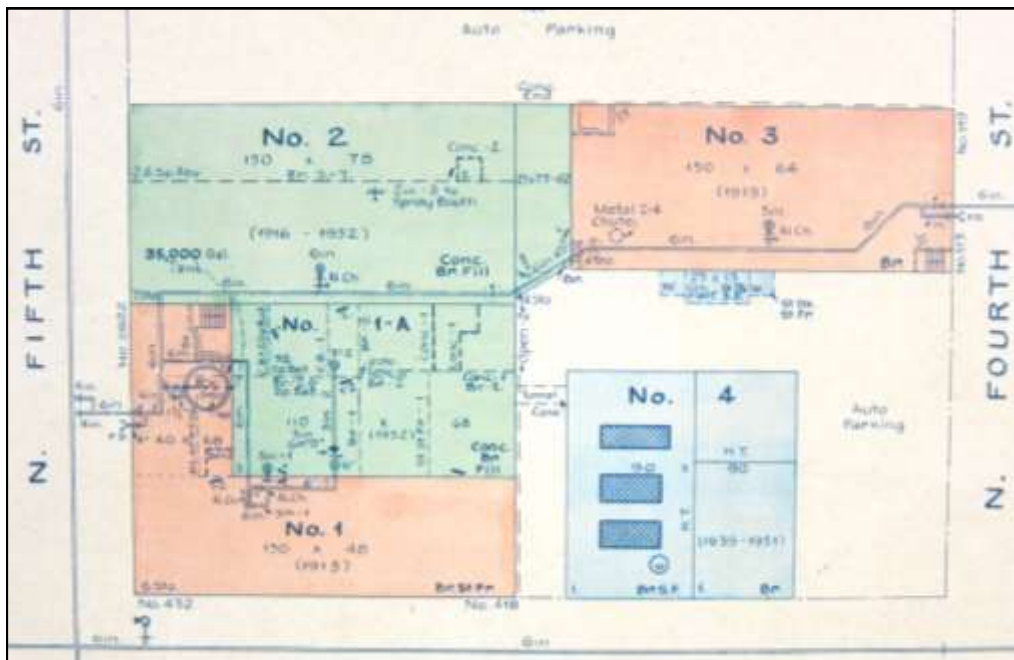
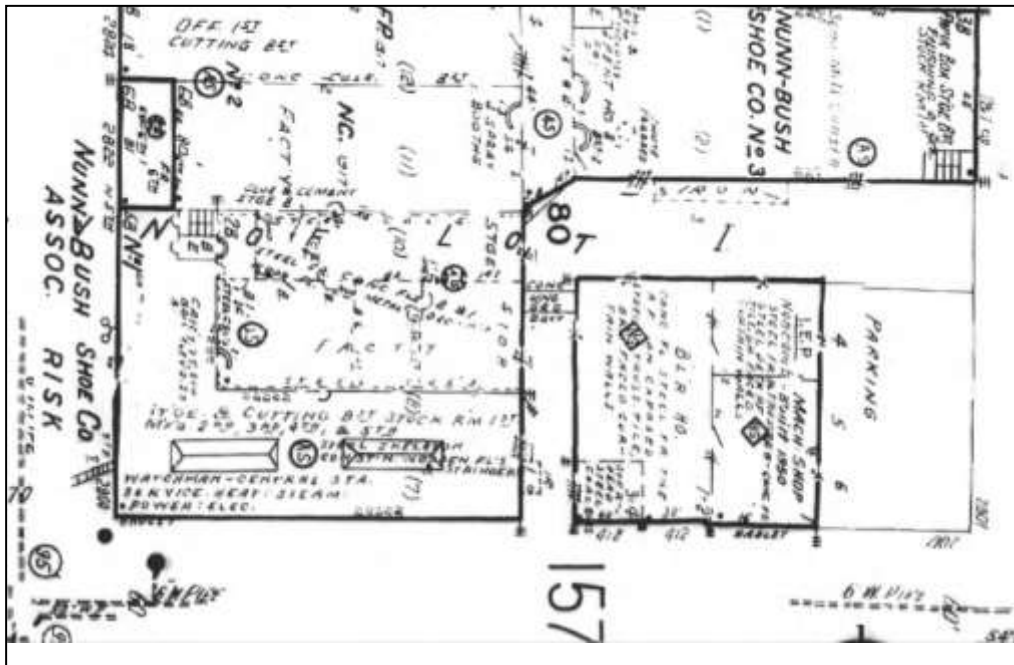


Figure 6: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1969.



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Section figures Page 5

Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

Figure 7: Section through building looking south showing cafeteria/recreation hall on the 6th floor, 1953.

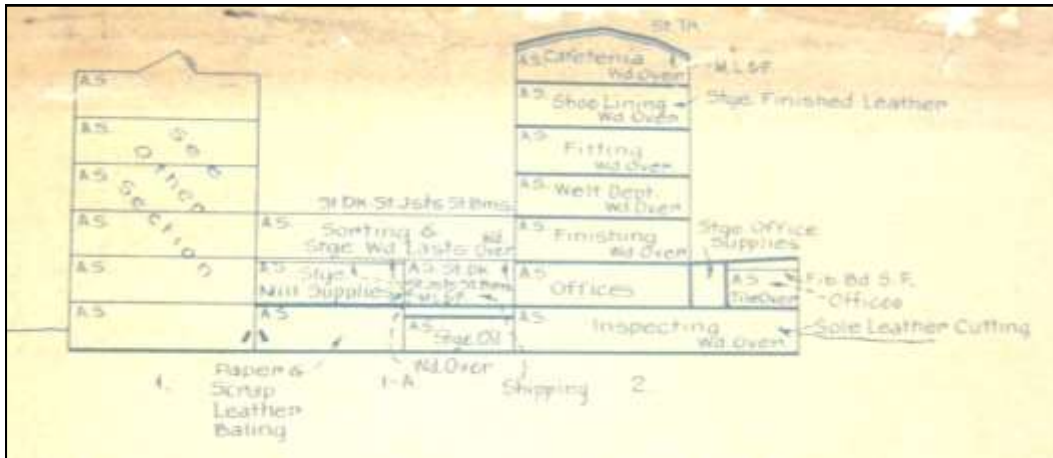


Figure 8: Nunn-Bush ladies bowling league costume party in 6th floor cafeteria/recreational hall, 1930.



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Section figures Page 6

Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

Figure 9: Article from *Fortune* Magazine, November 1938.



WHEN IT'S NOONTIME AT NUNN-BUSH
... President Nunn joins his "co-workers" in the big cafeteria on the sixth floor of the factory. The cafeteria was started twenty-two years ago by the management, but was turned over to the workers' union in 1923. For the last few months it has been operating at a loss; recently, rather than have one of their number laid off, the women who work in it asked for a 7.5 per cent pay cut. Such doings are fairly typical of Mr. Nunn's "industrial democracy." Nunn is a rigid vegetarian, eats peanuts instead of bread, and frequently tops off his meal with a taffy-like apple confection called "Aplets," which he urges companionably on favored visitors. Several members of the female office staff have been converted to vegetarianism, and they join him every noon at his special "vegetarian table." He plans to open a vegetarian restaurant in downtown Milwaukee shortly—a "really high-class restaurant," says Mr. Nunn, "named Ambrosia House."

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Continuation Sheet

Section figures Page 7

Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

Figure 10: Nunn-Bush shoe advertisement, 1936.

October, 1936 31

Are NUNN-BUSH SHOES too Good?



Some Nunn-Bush machines and some Nunn-Bush workers actually tell us. But the steadfast loyalty of men who wear Nunn-Bush shoes is gratifying proof that it pays to build a definitely superior product. The many things we have learned about fine shoe comfort and fine shoe stitching are too technical to be easily described. But they can be experienced.

Live in a pair of Nunn-Bush shoes for ninety days and we will never have to sell you again. You'll BUY your next pair, two pairs, ten pairs, a hundred pairs — as many as you may need throughout the entire balance of your life.

It is only a short step to the superior comfort and smarter appearance of Nunn-Bush ANKLE-FASHIONED* OXFORDS. Who can take it?

*Ankle-Fashioning is exclusively Nunn-Bush. A method of making the uppers fit a more perfect, more shapely foot, means so much to shoe comfort and appearance, it "breaks" again to a shoe.

NUNN-BUSH • MILWAUKEE
NEW YORK • LOS ANGELES
Please WRITE FOR POSTAL TELEGRAPH
to name of your local Nunn-Bush dealer.

The Windsor
STYLE 1001

Most Styles
\$7.50 to \$11
\$7.75 to \$11.00
West of Rockies

Nunn-Bush

Ankle fashioned Oxfords

MADE BY SALARIED CRAFTSMEN
...NOT HURRIED PIECEWORKERS

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section figures Page 8

Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

Figure 11: Site Chronology Plan



Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
2821 North 4th Avenue
Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

National Park Service



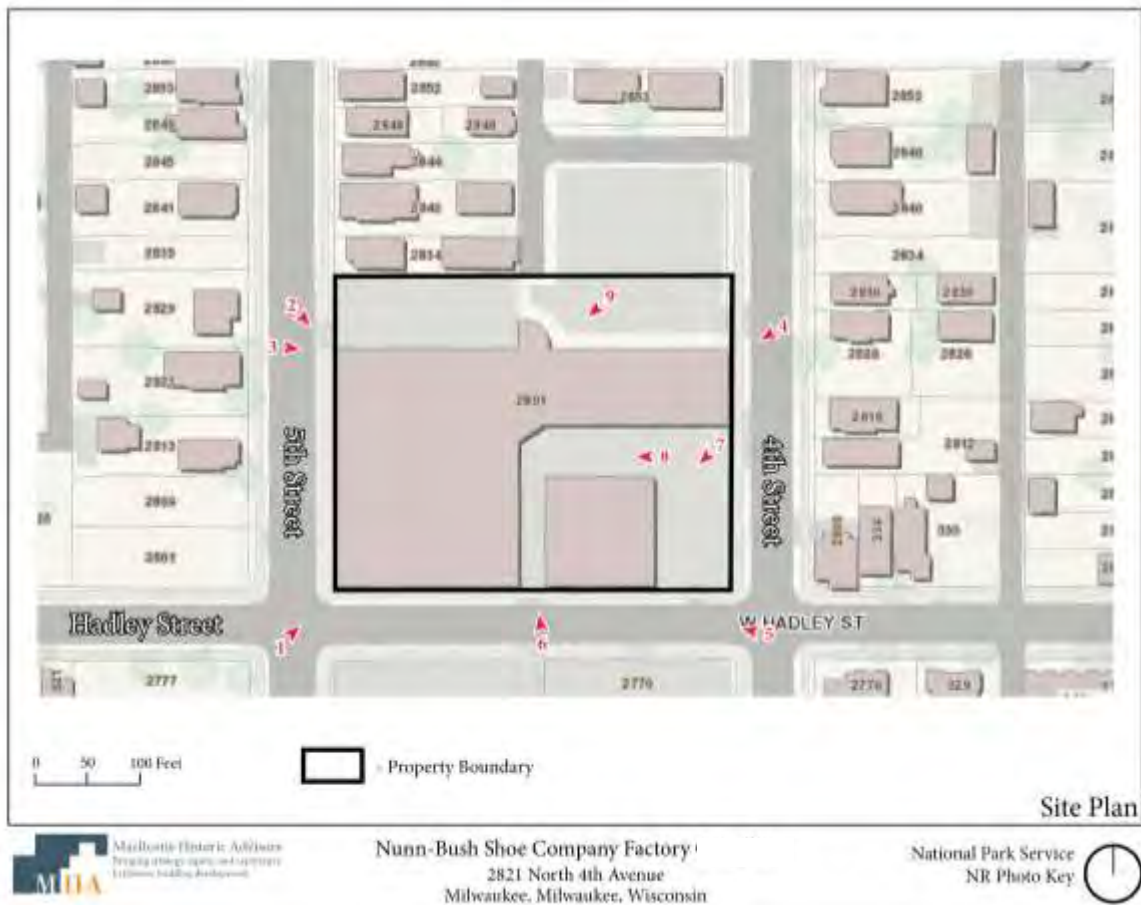
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Section figures Page 9

Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

Figure 12: Site Plan and Photo Key



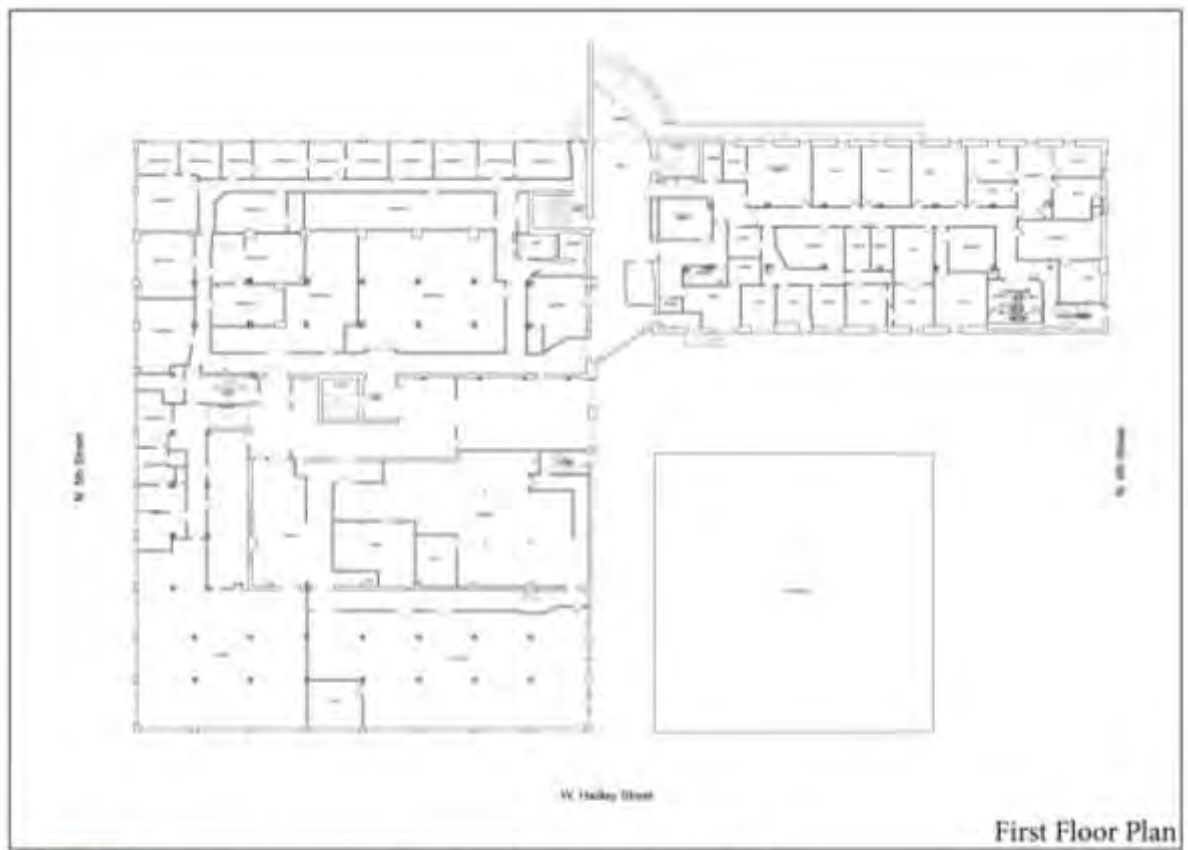
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Section figures Page 10

Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

Figure 13: First Floor Plan



National Historic Preservation Act
Preserving Historic Sites, Buildings,
and Objects of National Significance

Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory
2821 North 4th Avenue
Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

National Park Service











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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: Date of Pending List: Date of 16th Day: Date of 45th Day: Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Recommendation/
Criteria

Reviewer Barbara Wyatt Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2252 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



WISCONSIN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY



TO: Keeper
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Peggy Veregin
National Register Coordinator

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination

The following materials are submitted on this Twenty-fifth day of July 2017, for the nomination of the Nunn-Bush Shoe Company Factory to the National Register of Historic Places:

<u>1</u>	Original National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form
<u>1</u>	CD with NRHP Nomination form PDF
<u> </u>	Multiple Property Nomination form
<u>19</u>	Photograph(s)
<u>1</u>	CD with image files
<u>1</u>	Map(s)
<u>13</u>	Sketch map(s)/figures(s)/exhibit(s)
<u> </u>	Piece(s) of correspondence
<u> </u>	Other:

COMMENTS:

<u> </u>	Please ensure that this nomination is reviewed
<u>x</u>	This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
<u> </u>	The enclosed owner objection(s) do or do not constitute a majority of property owners
<u> </u>	Other: