

## INVENTORY FORM FOR NOMINATED PROPERTIES

Name of property: Reedsburg Brewery (Reedsburg MRA)

Owner: Southwest Wisconsin Petroleum (Ed Meyer)

Address: 401 North Walnut Street

Owner's address: 411 North Walnut Street

City: Reedsburg

County: Sauk

Reedsburg, Wisconsin 53959

### REGISTRATION INFORMATION

#### 160 NRHP Certification (date)

Listed in NRHP (LI)

Determined eligible in DOE process (DD)

Determined eligible in nomination process (DN)

Additional documentation added to nomination (AD)

Boundary increased (BI)

Boundary Decreased (BD)

Delisted (DL)

#### 215 Criteria Considerations

religious property (A)

moved property (B)

birthplace or grave (C)

cemetery (D)

reconstructed property (E)

commemorative property (F)

less than 50 years old (G)

#### 220 Area of Significance (code)

Industry : Brewing

Architecture

#### 230 Period of Significance

1904-1919 (Date of construction 1904-05)

Source: A

#### 340 Review Board Date

10/19/84

#### 70 USGS Quad Map

Reedsburg West Quadrangle

#### 80 UTM Coordinates (Format: 99-999999-9999999)

15-741740-4824450

#### 85 Listed Acreage

Less than one

#### 60 Verbal Boundary Description

City of Reedsburg,

CSM 496, Lot 2 (formerly part of AL 106); also

Lot 2 (formerly AL 100). CSM=Certified Surveyor's Map; AL=Assessor's Lot. This is the official legal description of the nominated property on file with city and county)

#### 200 District Classification

pivotal (P)

contributing (C)

non-contributing (NC)

#### 210 Applicable Criteria

X event (A)

person (B)

X architecture/engineering (C)

information potential (D)

Record No. \_\_\_\_\_

Address: 401 North Walnut Street; Reedsburg

Description

The Reedsburg Brewery, built in 1904 on the site of the original plant, is a four story (plus basement) building constructed of brick with steel beams, concrete arches and cement floors. The 8000 barrel capacity brewery was built by West Side Construction of Reedsburg with plans furnished by the Viltier Manufacturing Company at an estimated cost of \$24,000 (F). Masonry work was done by Henry Fauteck of Reedsburg and machinery was installed by John Schale of the Viltier Manufacturing Company. Although built on the site of the old brewery, the hill had been leveled. The structure was built to be fireproof with water connections on every floor. Several ancillary structures (described below) were constructed at the same time.

Today most of the brewery is four stories; some sections are one story. Windows are 6/6 with brick arched heads. Most of the windows are broken and boarded over from the interior. Some of the window openings on the east facade are bricked up (and have been so since 1912, according to a 1912 photograph)(E). Two windows on a one story section were bricked in at a later date. A brick beltline separates the first story from the upper stories. This same photo shows that there was an additional 1-1½ story section on the south side of the brewery, making this section about five stories tall.

The four story section was the brew house, <sup>and</sup> cold storage. Originally, the first story contained the engine room and boiler room, pressure and racking rooms, and washrooms. Doors between sections were built like refrigerator doors so that correct temperatures could be maintained. The brewing kettle extended to the second floor, which also contained fermenting vats, mash machinery, and hop storage space. The third story contained a 150 barrel water tank and above this level, malt was stored (G). A one story wash house is adjacent on the north. Another one story section west of the brew house was built as a general storage area and originally was separate from the main building. North of the brew house is an office and pitch house of one story. Just north of this is a one story brick bottling works. The bottling works and

Architectural/Engineering Statement of Significance

The Reedsburg Brewery is architecturally significant as an excellent local example of industrial architecture in Reedsburg. The structure reflects early twentieth century design and construction. It is a steel, concrete, and brick structure designed in a simplified Romanesque mode. Unlike other industrial structures in the city, the building has retained its integrity.

690 Bibliographic References (Sources)

- A - Kroll, Wayne L., Badger Breweries, Past and Present (Jefferson WI: 1976), p.119.
- B - Butterfield, C. W., The History of Sauk County (Chicago, Western Historical Society, 1880).
- C - "Reedsburg Free Press", May 7, 1888.
- D - "Reedsburg Free Press", August 30, 1888.
- E - "Wisconsin Industrial Review", March 1912 (Vol. XIII, No. 147), pp 4-11.
- F - "The Reedsburg Times", January 6, 1905.
- G - Sanborn-Perris Maps at State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.

700 Study Units (code)

Industry: Brewing

350 Demolished

360 Date Demolished

yes no

### Historical Background

The history of the brewing industry in Reedsburg stretches back to 1870, when Frank and Florin Meckler built the first brewery in the community, during a period when Sauk County was the chief hop producing district in the state. Known as the Reedsburg Brewery, it continued in operation through various ownership changes at the original site on the corner of Fourth Street and North Walnut Street through the nineteenth century until about 1898 when the firm was purchased by Albert Fuhrman, a German brewer who had settled in Oshkosh in 1882 and became the foreman of the Oshkosh Brewing Company before moving to Reedsburg around 1898. Under Fuhrman's management, the Reedsburg Brewery expanded and operated successfully until Prohibition. Indeed, one history claims that the history of brewing in Reedsburg "was practically a failure until Mr. Fuhrman" (E). Fuhrman's son, Otto, became the master brewer in his father's plant. The firm advertised the use of pure and non-chemical lager beer for medicinal purposes and opened a sample room on Main Street around 1902. Fuhrman was also the ice man in Reedsburg.

After the old plant on the site burned in 1903, Fuhrman contracted with Max Von Viltier of Viltier Manufacturing Company of Milwaukee in May, 1904 to provide plans for a new brewery and to equip it. The 8000 barrel capacity brewery was completed by January, 1905 and production began the following March (F).

In 1912 the plant had the capacity to produce 10,000 barrels of beer but only 5,000 were being produced. Eleven people were working in the brewery in addition to the Fuhrmans. The brewery expanded and built a separate malt house by the railroad tracks prior to 1912. (E)

The brewery closed during Prohibition and when it re-opened, Hans B. Johnson was the new proprietor. P. H. Schweke of Reedsburg bought the brewery in the late 1930's and ran it until 1947. It re-opened in 1949 and this final attempt at operating a brewery in Reedsburg ended in 1950. "Old Gold" and "Champion" beers had been produced and bottled here, about 35-44% of production being bottled beer.

### Historical Statement of Significance: Industry

The Reedsburg Brewery is an excellent and historically significant local example of the development of the brewing industry in a small town in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although success was uneven, the brewery operated continuously from the 1870's until 1950. This long term of operation (through numerous owners) indicates that the brewery played a considerable role in the economy of the city and the current building, constructed in 1904, reflects the period of the greatest success of the industry in Reedsburg. The brewery utilized both local agricultural goods, such as grains and hops, and industrial methods of production, an important function in an area still dependent on farming. The products of the brewery--including "Champi" and "Old Gold" beer--were distributed locally and the plant at one time employed around fifteen people. The period of significance extends from the date of construction until the advent of Prohibition (1919), a period of expansion for Additional Description con't: the brewery.

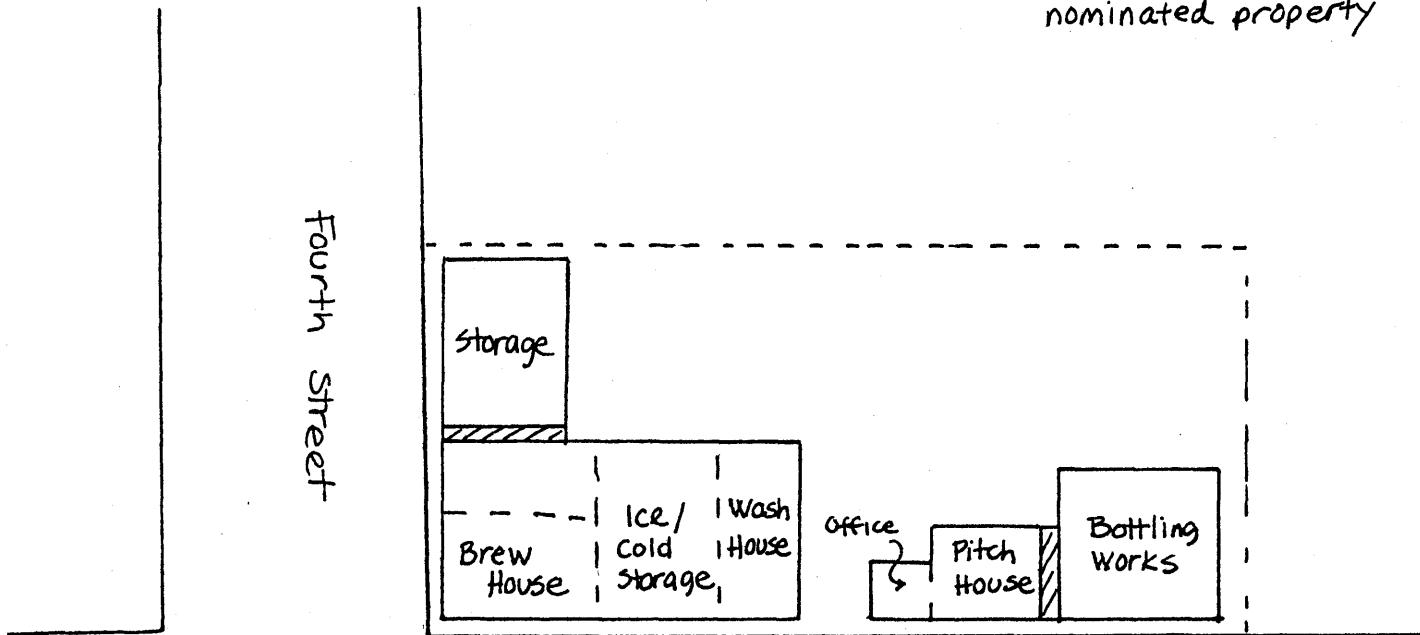
pitch house/office were built free standing; today they are connected by a narrow brick addition but are still separate from the brew house. The pitch house/office has been extensively altered on the exterior and interior. The bottling works and brew house have retained most of their integrity. The bottling works is empty except for one 50 gallon glass lined vat. No machinery is left in the brewery itself. The I-beam and concrete vault structure is still visible in the brewery. One narrow fluted metal column and some ornamental metal scrolled brackets remain in the building. A large hole is where the two story vat was. "Hop storage" and "racking room" remain on the doors of two rooms. No new interior partitions have been put up and the interior walls are brick.

The Reedsburg Brewery is located on the northwest corner of North Walnut Street and Fourth Street. The land immediately west of the brewery is a rocky hill and the rest of the area is a residential neighborhood. Although all of the brewery buildings on this site remain, the malt house was torn down in 1933.

Reedsburg Brewery  
401 S. Walnut St.

/// - connecting additions  
---- boundary of nominated property

→ N



South Walnut Street