

United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service

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JUN 16 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
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 Mansfield, George C., Company Building

other names/site number Gridley Dairy Company; Borden

2. Location

street & number 1300 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street

city or town Milwaukee

state Wisconsin code WI county Milwaukee

N/A not for publication

N/A vicinity

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 X nomination \_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_ nationally \_ statewide X locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

6/16/16

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

Mansfield, George C., Company Building  
Name of Property

Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
County and State

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

*by Barbara Uygat*  
Signature of the Keeper

7-26-16  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(check as many boxes as  
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)

contributing	noncontributing
1	0 buildings
0	0 sites
0	0 structures
0	0 objects
1	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)  
COMMERCE/TRADE/business  
VACANT/not in use

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)  
LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> & EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> 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.)

Mansfield, George C., Company Building  
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**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)

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

INDUSTRY

**Period of Significance**

1908-1959

**Significant Dates**

1908

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Ferry & Clas



Mansfield, George C., Company Building  
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**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.)

<b>name/title</b>	David Gromacki	<b>date</b>	January 2016
<b>organization</b>	Lutheran Social Services of WI and Upper MI, Inc.	<b>telephone</b>	800-488-5181
<b>street &amp; number</b>	647 West Virginia Street, Suite 200	<b>zip code</b>	53204
<b>city or town</b>	Milwaukee	<b>state</b>	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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Mansfield, George C., Company Building  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

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Start description on line below

**Summary**

The George C. Mansfield Company Building is located at 1300 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Milwaukee's downtown Haymarket neighborhood. The four- to five-story plus basement brick industrial building has a rectangular footprint, flat roof, and minimal limestone detailing. The building, designed in the commercial style, is situated at grade at the northeast corner of North 4<sup>th</sup> Street and West McKinley Avenue. The original building, constructed in 1908 by prominent local architects, Ferry & Clas, is a good example of this firm's commercial and industrial design and illustrates their preference for adding stylistic embellishments to an industrial building. The building occupies the southernmost portion of the block and is especially noteworthy for its two major public façades fronting North 4<sup>th</sup> Street and West McKinley Avenue. The four-story original south building was constructed of reinforced concrete known as a "mushroom" system, as evidenced by its interior column head structure. A four-story addition was built along the building's north wall and a second five-story addition now occupies the northernmost portion of the manufacturing facility. Both additions were constructed between 1919 and 1927.

**Site & Setting**

The George C. Mansfield Company Building occupies nearly its entire parcel of land bounded by West McKinley Avenue to the south, North 4<sup>th</sup> Street to the west, a public alley to the east, and a non-historic one-story loading addition and a paved parking lot to the north. The building is two blocks west of the Milwaukee River and was one block west of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway (no longer extant). McKinley Street originally ran adjacent to the primary south façade of the building, but was rerouted further south in the late twentieth century leaving a green lawn in its place today. The location was particularly prized for the George C. Mansfield Company due to its close proximity to Milwaukee's railroad facilities. Railroad access allowed for a wider distribution of goods produced at their 1300 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street manufacturing facility, but also allowed for butter to be brought in from the company's various creameries for reshipment and local sale.

The original George C. Mansfield Company Building, constructed of reinforced concrete to ensure against fire and currently the southernmost portion of the building, has a floor plan of 150 by 60 feet with a four-story brick and concrete cold storage addition at the rear measuring 40 by 80 feet, for a total of 55,000 square feet of interior space. Later additions between 1919 and 1927 expanded the facility to the north. The overall building is square in shape with the exception of a non-historic one-story loading addition facing a paved parking lot to the north. The building is immediately surrounded by commercial and industrial development with some multi-unit residential apartment buildings.

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**Exterior**

The George C. Mansfield Company Building continues to express significant features of early twentieth century industrial dairy production architecture. The building has two primary street-facing south and west façades (one to the south and one to the west), a secondary east alley façade, and a secondary north façade with a non-historic one-story loading addition facing a paved parking lot. A majority of the building is clad in red brick, although common brick is visible along the east and west façades; the foundation is of concrete. The west façade displaying the building's exposed concrete structural frame and brick infill has been painted red. The two street facing façades have been noted for their high style details not common for industrial buildings. Although the original cornice has been removed, the building still retains some of its historic finishes such as decorative limestone entrance surround, segmental arched window openings, and decorative brick spandrel panels. A brick chimney is located at the southwest corner of the building.

*West (Primary) Façade*

The building's primary façade is of red brick with limestone coursing at its base. The regularly fenestrated façade is broken into three visible sections, delineated by the building's varying periods of construction. The original south section has three structural bays, each defined by a pair of single window openings separated by brick piers on the basement through third story, with exception of the main entrance located at the northernmost corner of the original building. The second through fourth story windows feature limestone sills. The third story windows are the most decorative, with a simple segmental arched opening and decorative arched brick header. A rectangular brick spandrel panel is featured below each window opening on the second and third stories. Slightly smaller fourth story windows are grouped in threes with a continuous limestone sill, yet each opening is separated by brick mullions. A limestone course is just below the fourth story spans almost the entire length of the façade with a checkered brick spandrel panel below. All window openings feature a non-historic replacement sash with the exception of one window on the fourth story, which has been infilled with brick. Basement windows have been boarded up. The decorative cornice of the original building is no longer intact.

The building's main entrance is located at the north end of the original south section and features a highly decorative limestone surround. The entrance is slightly recessed with a classical stone arch, featuring carved ears of corn spanning the entirety of the entrance surround. Within the arch is a non-historic aluminum and glass entrance with a set of double doors. Limestone quoins are located to either side of the entrance just below the limestone coursing.

The middle block, constructed between 1919 and 1927, is similar in design to the adjoining 1908 building. The façade is divided into two structural bays; the basement through third stories have a pair

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of single window openings separated by brick mullions in each bay with the exception of the northernmost bay of the second story, which has two narrow window openings in the place of one. Third story windows similarly have a segmental arched opening with decorative brick header and fourth story window openings, grouped in threes, and a continuous limestone sill with checkered brickwork below. The addition retains its original stone cornice, which features a crenelated parapet and dentils.

The last addition, also constructed between 1919 and 1927, is at the northernmost portion of the building and is five stories in height. The façade is slightly irregular and its design does not match the rest of the building. The façade is generally divided into three bays delineated by window openings; the second through fifth stories of each end bay are slightly recessed from the face of the building. The limestone coursing continues on this addition and basement windows have been infilled. A pedestrian entrance and infilled loading entrance are located at grade on the far north end. The façade features a sporadic placement of single window openings, grouped window openings, and decorative brick panels featuring varying sized rectangles minimally decorated with limestone detailing. Window openings generally have continuous limestone sills. Single window openings in the center bay sit slightly lower than the adjacent window openings for each story. The northernmost addition features a corbelled parapet, but the decorative cornice is no longer intact.

*South Façade*

The building's primary south façade is of red brick with a limestone beltcourse at its base. The façade, broken into nine structural bays, is regularly fenestrated with non-historic replacement windows and original wood sash, some of which are covered in non-historic sheathing. Several blind window openings infilled with red brick are located on the south elevation and are original to the building. The façade design follows much of the same pattern as the primary west façade, with rectangular brick spandrel panels below each window opening on the second and third stories, segmental arched window openings on the fourth story, and a limestone course below the fourth story with a checkered brickwork spandrel panel below. A one-story recessed loading area with entrances is located along the easternmost bay of the west façade. A concrete pier holds up the corner of the structure today.

*East Façade*

The east wall faces an alley. The north end of this wall is minimally visible from the street, is utilitarian in character, and is of common brick. It is minimally fenestrated, and includes a fire escape. The south end of the wall is of red brick with limestone coursing at its base. Several blind window openings of red brick are located on the east façade and are original to the building. A one-story recessed loading area is located along the south end, while loading entrances have been filled in at the north end.



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*North Façade*

The north façade displays the building's reinforced concrete structural frame with window openings at the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> floors and brick infill at the lower floors. The masonry-clad north wall is completely painted. A non-historic loading addition obscures the original wall of the ground floor. The later north block originally had a west cornice that was also removed.

**Interior**

Typical of early twentieth century industrial cold storage buildings, the George C. Mansfield Company Building's interior is open, industrial, and utilitarian in character with exposed and unpainted mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and fire protection systems with very few finished spaces. Originally completed in 1908, the building was expanded twice in two large-scale building campaigns before 1927, when the building was owned and occupied by the George C. Mansfield Company. The open floor plan formerly served as refrigerated space for the creamery, featuring unfinished concrete flooring, exposed brick perimeter and interior walls, exposed concrete and steel columns, concrete mushroom columns, and exposed concrete ceiling structure.

The building's 1<sup>st</sup> floor is mostly occupied by an office tenant with non-historic floor, wall, and ceiling finishes covering the originally fully exposed features described above. The original George C. Mansfield Company administrative office suite occupies the southwest corner of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and remains largely intact. The administrative offices include an entry hall off of the intact southwest stair, a large open office, and several small offices, all with historic marble and linoleum flooring, plaster walls with historic wood trim, doors, and transoms, and plaster ceilings. The offices also house a large walk-in fireproof vault.

In response to different uses under different owners, the building's floors, walls, and ceilings were continually altered for more than half a century. Many wall, column, and ceiling surfaces are also covered in cork.

**Integrity**

The George C. Mansfield Company Building remains today with basic massing and window openings still intact, as well as much of the original brick and stone detailing. Overall, the building's interior and exterior appear much as they did historically when occupied by the George C. Mansfield Company, the Gridley Dairy Company, and the Borden Company from 1908 to 1959. The most obvious changes to the building include the missing parapet details on the south elevation and the deteriorated or missing original windows that have been replaced by single sheets of plate glass and

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modern materials. The building's main North 4<sup>th</sup> Street entrance is slightly recessed with a classic stone arch that includes carved ears of corn. Internally a number of changes have occurred over time; however, the building remains an industrial building with limited decorative features and finishes. A number of structural columns and expansive beams are character defining industrial elements. The interior walls, columns and floors have numerous inserts of cork presumably for dairy refrigeration. Original administrative and executive offices for the George C. Mansfield Company remain intact at the southwest corner of the second floor. They feature hardwood floors, original woodwork, and original doors with transoms still intact. The building retains historic integrity and clearly conveys its appearance when built and used as a dairy manufacturing and storage facility.

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### Summary

The George C. Mansfield Company Building at 1300 North 4th Street in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is locally significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of Industry for its associations with three leading commercial producers and wholesalers of butter, ice cream, and related dairy products in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: The George C. Mansfield Company, the Gridley Dairy Company, and the Borden Company; The George C. Mansfield Company Building continues to express the rising popularity of ice cream in the early twentieth century and is an early example of a highly specialized and mechanized facility used for producing and storing the product in mass quantities. This history is demonstrated through its association with George C. Mansfield and John Le Feber, two early pioneers in the dairy industry who led the way in sanitation practices such as pasteurization and sanitized glass storage bottles. Mansfield also served as a leader in the ice cream industry through the company's rise from its beginnings as a small creamery in Johnson Creek, Wisconsin, to a large Milwaukee creamery factory employing the most modern sanitation practices and machinery.

The original George C. Mansfield Company Building was completed in 1908 with a four- and five-story addition constructed north of the building between 1919 and 1927. It originally served as the headquarters of the George C. Mansfield Company, a prominent Milwaukee industrial creamery concern, housing the company's administrative offices and cold storage facilities until 1927. The building was designed by Milwaukee architects Ferry & Clas, specifically to support the company's new venture into wholesale ice cream production. The building design was carefully considered in order to provide the most efficient means of production, packaging, storage, and distribution of dairy products. The George C. Mansfield Company became the largest manufacturer of ice cream in Milwaukee at the time it was purchased by, and merged with, the Gridley Dairy Company in 1927, and remained as the largest local supplier of dairy products. By 1928, the Gridley Dairy Company would become part of the world's largest dairy corporation, the Borden Company.<sup>1</sup> The Company continued to use the facility at 1300 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street as the center of ice cream production until 1959, when the Borden Company moved to a larger, all-inclusive facility. At this time, the building was taken over by the Lappin Electric Company and converted to office and storage use. Today, the building is mostly vacant with a single office tenant remaining on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor.

The building's period of significance for Criterion A spans from 1908, the year of the building's initial completion, to 1959, the year the building ceased operations as a creamery and wholesale ice cream production facility.

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<sup>1</sup> "Gridley Dairy, Borden Unite: City Firm is Part of the Largest Milk Concern in World." *The Milwaukee Journal*, June 3, 1928.

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**Milwaukee's Haymarket Neighborhood**

Milwaukee's Haymarket neighborhood is a compact, nine-block area northwest of downtown across the Milwaukee River. The community is bounded by West McKinley Avenue to the south, North 6<sup>th</sup> Street to the west, West Walnut Street to the north, and North Martin Luther King Drive to the east.

Throughout Milwaukee's history, the neighborhood served as one of the city's centers of heavy commercial and industrial development benefiting from its proximity to the Milwaukee River and railroad lines to the east. Located around Haymarket Square (also known as Market Square or Central Market, no longer extant) at McKinley Avenue between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> streets, the neighborhood housed Milwaukee's stockyards and support industries for much of the city's brewing industry, in addition to small businesses, manufacturers, and residential enclaves. Today, the area primarily supports light-industrial uses with new residential spaces.

**The George C. Mansfield Company Building**

The building located at 1300 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street at the corner of McKinley Street was constructed in 1908 for the George C. Mansfield Company; a creamery concern, which originated in Johnson Creek, Wisconsin in 1868. The main building was designed by the prominent Milwaukee architectural firm, Ferry & Clas, and at the time of its construction, was the largest creamery in the country. The building was built for the purposes of manufacturing butter and ice cream, as well as storing and shipping frozen dairy on the Great Lakes and rail systems. The building's prime location in downtown Milwaukee represented the company's first attempt at a presence in the larger wholesale dairy industry and its transition into ice cream production.

The size, capacity of production, and innovative mechanical devices of refrigeration during the production and shipping, made this a profoundly important place. The new facility included a 50-ton refrigerating machine and five-ton ice making system with the capacity to produce up to 20-tons of ice a day for shipping purposes.<sup>2</sup> The modern refrigeration and ice-making machinery located in the building's basement, had the capacity to refrigerate the entire plant including the four-story cold storage warehouse to the rear of the original building. The new facility supported the production of five- to six-tons of butter daily and the capacity to freeze and properly store five thousand gallons of ice cream a day.<sup>3</sup> To ensure a high level of cleanliness, the walls of the ice-cream making department were faced with white enameled brick and the walls and partitions of the refrigeration rooms used for the storage of raw cream and ice cream are covered with a smooth concrete finish; though these spaces

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<sup>2</sup> "The New Mansfield Plant in Milwaukee," *The Ice Cream Trade Journal*, 22.

<sup>3</sup> Ellis Baker Usher, *Wisconsin: Its Story and Biography*, vol. VI (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1914), 1393.

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remain, their finishes have been altered. Four 13 x 20 foot rooms of the new George C. Mansfield Company Building were dedicated to hardening and holding the ice cream. The company first began producing ice cream at another Milwaukee facility (1907; corner of Fourth Street and Grand Avenue; no longer extant) before moving to their new plant on North 4<sup>th</sup> Street as a result of their rapidly increasing trade and need for more space.<sup>4</sup> The new building boasted a modern storage facility equipped to properly handle the cold storage of ice cream.<sup>5</sup> Although they had a number of other creameries throughout the Midwest that produced butter, the Milwaukee plant was the company's only location dedicated to the production of ice cream, in addition to serving as the company's main headquarters for storage and wholesale.

The second and third floors of the main building were used for cold storage for all types of grocery products. These rooms were under public contracts for storage of perishable items such as fruits and poultry. The second floor also contained the general offices of the company, which were "convenient and elaborate, well lighted... [and] finished with hard wood and the main entrance and stairway in marble."<sup>6</sup> A covered wagon shed was located in the rear of the building abutting the 20-foot alley, providing a convenient and sheltered space for teams driving to and from the plant. In addition to manufacturing and storage facilities, the building had a number of modern conveniences such as rest rooms, shower baths, and a complete house telephone system for every department.<sup>7</sup>

Additions were constructed to the north between 1919 and 1927, as the George C. Mansfield Company expanded its business operations. The additions created more manufacturing and storage space for the company. By 1927, the Gridley Dairy Company took over ownership and operations of the George C. Mansfield Company, using the building solely for their ice cream production and storage facility. The company housed their remaining dairy business in their milk plant at 620 North 8<sup>th</sup> Street. In 1928, the Gridley Dairy Company was absorbed by the Borden Dairy Company, but still maintained a separate division within the larger company. The Borden Company continued to use the space exclusively for the manufacture of ice cream from 1928 to 1959. The Lappin Electric Company took over the building in 1959, using it for office and storage purposes.

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<sup>4</sup> *Wisconsin: Its Story and Biography*, 1394; *Cold Storage and Ice Trade Journal*, vol. 18 (September 1907), 47.

<sup>5</sup> "The New Mansfield Plant in Milwaukee," *The Ice Cream Trade Journal*, 23.

<sup>6</sup> "The New Mansfield Plant in Milwaukee," *The Ice Cream Trade Journal*, 23.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

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**Dairy and Ice Cream Production in Milwaukee during the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

The George C. Mansfield Company was the largest dairy and ice cream producer in Milwaukee through 1927, operating over sixty creameries in the Midwest at its peak. Early ice cream manufacturing in the late 19th century was generally a small-scale enterprise undertaken by caterers and small retailers; however, by the early 1900s, the high demand for ice cream encouraged existing dairy operations such as creameries and milk plants to add equipment for ice cream production.

In 1908, Milwaukee ice cream manufacturers listed in the Bulletin of the Merchants and Manufacturers Association of Milwaukee included only four names: Ferdinand P. Adler, Conrad Blommer, Luick Ice Cream Company and Geo. C. Mansfield Company. Eleven years later in 1919, the industry had grown to include seven ice cream manufacturing firms operating in Milwaukee. These firms employed 210 persons and produced \$2,970,000 worth of product. Throughout the 1920s the demand and production of ice cream in Milwaukee continued to grow. Milwaukee ice cream manufacturers that attended the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual convention of The National Association of Ice Cream Manufacturers in Cleveland, Ohio in October of 1922 included Bendfelt Ice Cream Company, Blommer Ice Cream Company, Luick Ice Cream Company, and the George C. Mansfield Company. The number of Milwaukee ice cream manufacturers peaked at nine in 1924, and by 1925 total ice cream sales in the city were valued at just over \$3.5 million.<sup>8</sup>

Between 1923 and 1935 the production of ice cream in the state of Wisconsin as a whole increased from six million gallons per year to nearly nine million gallons per year, demonstrating the growing market for the commodity.<sup>9</sup> During this time, the market for ice cream was primarily in urban areas where modern refrigeration was more accessible; however, with delivery of electrical service to rural areas, the market for ice cream was expected to expand along with the industries that produced it.<sup>10</sup>

Ice cream's popularity grew in the mid-twentieth century, and Milwaukee's ice cream producers grew and changed as well. After purchasing the George C. Mansfield Company and its North 4<sup>th</sup> Street facility, the Gridley Dairy Company was subsequently followed by the Borden Company after a series of mergers, continued to use the facility for the production of ice cream until 1959.

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<sup>8</sup> *Business Milwaukee: A Trade Review of 1919*, Compiled by First Wisconsin National Bank, Milwaukee, multiple editions, 1919-1927.

<sup>9</sup> *Wisconsin Industrial Studies: Research Nos. 1-6*. (Madison, WI, 1938), 17.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

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**The George C. Mansfield Company**

George C. Mansfield (1837-1902), born in Middlesex County, Massachusetts, became known as the proprietor of one of the largest lines of creameries in the northwest. After spending time in Boston as an employee of Burr Brothers & Company, Mansfield made his way to Wisconsin in March 1856, in pursuit of growing opportunities in the Midwest. He settled first in Milwaukee where he remained for a year before moving to Janesville and working for his father's barrel factory. In March 1860, Mansfield established a home in Johnson Creek where he ran a small grocery store. He gradually extended his operations into the creamery and dairy fields, eventually establishing an unprecedented operation by 1868. His creamery operation continued to expand until Mansfield owned and controlled the output of sixty creameries in the Midwest; more than any other company in the production of dairy goods. Mansfield not only focused on the dairy business, but also served as the vice president of the National Oil and Pipe Line Company of Beaumont, Texas, and director of the Bank of Lake Mills at Lake Mills, Wisconsin.<sup>11</sup>

George C. Mansfield died in 1902, but his sons, George D. (1863-d. unknown) and Fred C. (1868-1937) were responsible for the innovations and impact that this creamery business had on Wisconsin and the country. After managing ten creameries belonging to the Edgerton Creamery Company from 1893 to 1900, George D. Mansfield returned to Johnson Creek where he became the general manager of his father's company, the George C. Mansfield Company. He continued in this role as general manager until his father's death, when he would then become president and treasurer of the company. Fred C. Mansfield would serve as the company's vice president and secretary.

The George C. Mansfield Company opened a branch location in Milwaukee as early as 1902 to take advantage of the better railroad facilities for shipping and receiving goods. As their operations expanded into the manufacture of ice cream, the company began looking for a larger space in the same prime location to house their growing business. In the fall of 1907, the George C. Mansfield Company began construction of a new plant in Milwaukee costing roughly \$200,000. The new plant was completed on April 17, 1908 and was regarded as one of the finest in the country at the time.<sup>12</sup> The decision to relocate the company headquarters to Milwaukee was to provide more extensive resources to the growing company. Here, they had access to better railroad facilities for handling their large and increasing business, which now included the wholesale manufacture of pasteurized ice-cream in addition to production of their famous Jersey brand of butter. They also began storing eggs and other perishable produce and meat in their cold storage facilities. By 1912, the sales of the company

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<sup>11</sup> *Jefferson County Wisconsin and Its People: A Record of Settlement, Organization, Progress and Achievement*, vol. II (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1917) 23.

<sup>12</sup> *Wisconsin: Its Story and Biography*, 1393.

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Section 8 Page 6

Mansfield, George C., Company Building  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

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amounted to \$1,250,000.<sup>13</sup> The George C. Mansfield Company owned and operated thirty-five creameries by 1913; a number that would increase to sixty at the height of its production.

**Gridley Dairy Company & the Borden Dairy Company**

The Gridley Dairy Company, originally known as the L.V. Gridley Dairy Company, was incorporated in 1898 by Leander V. Gridley. The company operated as a small independent dairy until 1903, when it merged with a number of other smaller dairies under the direction of John Le Feber (1863-1934). The L.V. Dairy Company gave way to the new enterprise, which would be known simply as the Gridley Dairy Company. Le Feber, was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Dutch immigrant parents who owned a farm just south of Milwaukee. Le Feber would grow up to follow in his father's footsteps. He acquired a farm where he owned a herd of 100 cows and maintained two milk routes. After working for a number of small dairies, Le Feber focused his efforts on running Gridley Dairy, where he remained president for 19 years and then chairman of the board of directors until his death in 1934. Le Feber also served as director of the National Dairy Council and was one of the founders and a past president of the National Association of Milk Dealers.<sup>14</sup>

The Gridley Dairy Company grew to become one of the most important dairy industry firms in the Northwest. Le Feber, unsatisfied with the lack of sanitary methods for handling milk, introduced a practice of delivery milk in glass bottles. They were among the country's leaders in using sanitized glass bottles, and the first dairy west of New York to take this step.<sup>15</sup> Le Feber introduced a number of other improvements to the health and quality of his business throughout his time as president, including leading the way in pasteurization, which he began experimenting with as early as 1898. By 1903, Le Feber had switched the entire Gridley Dairy Company operation to pasteurization.

John Le Feber's son, Lester Le Feber (1894-1974), took over as president of the Gridley Dairy division following his father's switch to chairman of the board of directors in 1922. By this time, the Gridley Dairy Company was the largest milk distributor in Milwaukee, with a total output of sweet cream butter of more than four-million pounds in 1927; two-thirds of which was sold to local trade.<sup>16</sup> The remaining butter was shipped in carload lots to ready markets in New York, Philadelphia, and other eastern cities. By 1928, the company merged with the Borden Company of New York. The Borden Company, which operated in a number of American and Canadian cities, was the largest dairy marketing enterprise in the world with annual sales more than \$150,000,000.<sup>17</sup> The Gridley Dairy

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<sup>13</sup> "The New Mansfield Plant in Milwaukee," *The Ice Cream Trade Journal*, 23.

<sup>14</sup> "John Le Feber, Gridley Dairy Founder, Dies," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, Sept. 16, 1934.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> "Gridley Dairy Company," *Milwaukee Journal*, Nov. 4, 1928.

<sup>17</sup> "Gridley Dairy, Borden Unite," *Milwaukee Journal*, June 3, 1928.



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Company continued to operate as its own entity with no change to the company's officers or personnel. Lester Le Feber, president and director of both Gridley Dairy Company and Racine Pure Milk Company in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was elected a director of the Borden Company in 1935. It was not until 1943, that the company would become known as the Gridley Dairy Division of the Borden Company. Reference to the original Gridley Dairy Company name was fully dropped by 1948.

The Borden Company continued to operate its ice cream manufacture out of the George C. Mansfield Company Building until 1959. Plans were underway in 1958 for a new combined milk and ice cream plant on Highway 100 at Greenfield Avenue in Milwaukee (no longer extant), which would contain the company's two separate operations now located at 620 North 8<sup>th</sup> Street and 1306 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The new building was said to cost approximately \$1,750,000 and would be the "largest and most modern combined milk and ice cream plant ever built in Wisconsin."<sup>18</sup> The new one-story concrete, brick, and tile building was built on a 14-acre tract of land and contained over 100,000 square feet of interior floor space with ample parking for employees.<sup>19</sup>

The Borden Company occupied the new manufacturing space off of Highway 100 until 1994, at which time they closed a number of plants across the country due to a decrease in business operations. The plant was demolished in 1998.<sup>20</sup>

### **Architects Ferry & Clas**

The architectural firm of Ferry & Clas was noted throughout the Midwest for its design of grand, Classical Revival and Beaux Arts style buildings. George B. Ferry (1857-1918) was born in Springfield, Massachusetts, where he received his degree in architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1872. Alfred C. Clas (1860-1942) was a native of Sauk City, Wisconsin. Clas was educated in Milwaukee before an apprenticeship with pioneer Milwaukee architect, James Douglas in 1875. In 1879, Clas went to California to work as an architect and had his own practice by 1880. In 1882, he returned to Milwaukee and had started his partnership with George B. Ferry by 1890.

The architectural firm of Ferry & Clas became one of the leading architectural offices in Wisconsin and the partners designed numerous important Milwaukee landmarks including: the Milwaukee Public Library (814 W. Wisconsin Avenue, built in 1895-1899, NRHP 1974); the Frederic Pabst House (2000 W. Wisconsin Avenue, built in 1890-92, NRHP 1975); the Gustave G. Pabst House (2230 North Terrace Avenue, built in 1906 and part of the North Point South Historic District); and the Milwaukee

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<sup>18</sup> "Borden Company Starts New Building Job," *Milwaukee Journal*, Oct. 17, 1958.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> "Boden Plant Sold," *Milwaukee Business Journal*, Dec. 6, 1998.

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Auditorium (500 W. Kilbourn Avenue, built in 1909). They also designed the State Historical Society building in Madison, Wisconsin (816 State Street, built in 1900, NRHP 1972), in addition to a number of more eclectic residences.

After the dissolution of the partnership in 1910, Clas went on to design most of Milwaukee's city and county parks. He organized the firm of Clas and Clas with his son, Angelo Robert Clas from 1912 until 1921, then reorganized it in 1922 as Clas, Shepherd & Clas with another son, Reuben F. Clas, and with John S. Shepherd. Work was executed under that name until 1931 when Shepherd withdrew, and the firm was then reorganized again as Clas & Clas, Inc., with the elder Clas remaining as president until the time of his death in 1942.

The George C. Mansfield Company building was one of many commercial and industrial buildings that Ferry & Clas designed. Their commercial and industrial designs employed characteristics of classical design, imparting a distinctive sense of architectural interest. It is an important surviving example of a sophisticated industrial building with two prominent street facing façades. Although original features such as the cornice no longer survive, the building retains other features of architectural interest, including the highly decorative limestone entrance surround at the west façade, and is a good example of a Ferry & Clas-designed manufacturing facility.

### **Comparable Buildings**

The George C. Mansfield Company Building is the best surviving example of a large-scale butter and ice cream production facility in Milwaukee during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A number of creameries existed throughout Wisconsin at the turn of the century, although surprisingly few were located in Milwaukee County. Those that were mentioned were located in Waukesha or Franklin, nearly 30 minutes outside the City of Milwaukee. Industrial development in the Haymarket neighborhood during this time was typically concentrated around the Milwaukee River and included a number of brewery, lumber, and tanning operations.

Other extant ice cream manufacturing buildings in Milwaukee from this period include the Blommer Ice Cream Company Building at 1502 West North Avenue and the Luick Ice Cream Company Building at 1325 North Van Buren Street, at the northern edge of downtown. Of these, only the Blommer Ice Cream Company Building retains architectural integrity. Other major competitors of the George C. Mansfield Company included Bendfelt Ice Cream, which had a terra-cotta clad building at 207 E. Capitol Drive (no longer extant).<sup>21</sup> A number of other small dairies and creameries existed in

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<sup>21</sup> Milwaukee Public Library Digital Collections, Milwaukee Historic Photos, "Bendfelt Ice Cream."

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the area during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century before dairy wholesale became a popular commodity. Many of these small dairy operations have since been demolished.

The Luick Ice Cream Company Building was constructed ca. 1921. Founded in 1897 and specializing in ice cream by 1903, the company grew to become one of the largest ice cream manufacturers in the U.S.<sup>22</sup> In 1920, Luick Ice Cream Company sold 1.5 million gallons of ice cream.<sup>23</sup> The National Dairy Products Company took over Luick Ice Cream Company in 1927. Beginning in 2001, their building was renovated for housing. This renovation significantly altered the building's exterior façades and the building no longer retains architectural integrity.

The Blommer Ice Cream Company building was constructed in 1910 with additions in 1927 and has been found to be potentially eligible under Criterion A for its association with a commercial dairy industry. The Blommer Ice Cream Company was among the largest ice cream producers in Milwaukee and by 1926 had four branch factories with regional distribution throughout the entire southern half of Wisconsin and in Northern Illinois. The new factory completed in 1927 had the capacity to produce 1,500,000 gallons of ice cream daily. Unlike the George C. Mansfield Company, the Blommer Ice Cream Company was devoted entirely to the production of ice cream.

### **Conclusion**

The George C. Mansfield Company building is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A in the area of Industry for its association with Milwaukee's most prominent and successful industrial creameries. This company's expansion to a wholesale creamery offering a range of dairy products and with a particular focus on ice cream production, ushered in an era of innovation. The Company used modern sanitation practices including pasteurization and sanitized glass storage bottles, and its efficient production, packaging, storage and distribution systems helped the company grow to one of the most successful of its era. The building retains sufficient integrity and is clearly identifiable to its period of significance as a manufacturing building.

\_\_\_ End of Statement of Significance

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<sup>22</sup> Milwaukee Public Library Digital collections and "C.B. Schmidt scoops challenges at old ice cream facility" *Milwaukee Business Journal*, Mar. 24, 2002.

<sup>23</sup> Milwaukee Public Library Digital Collections.

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**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The George C. Mansfield Company Building occupies nearly its entire parcel of land bounded by West McKinley Avenue to the south, North 4<sup>th</sup> Street to the west, a public alley to the east, and one-story loading addition and a paved parking lot to the north.

**Boundary Justification:**

The boundaries encompass the entire parcel of land associated with the George C. Mansfield Company Building at 1300 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

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Mansfield, George C., Company Building  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

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Name of Property: Mansfield, George C., Company Building

City or Vicinity: Milwaukee

County: Milwaukee

State: Wisconsin

Photographer: John Cramer

MacRostie Historic Advisors

53 West Jackson Blvd., Suite 1142

Chicago, IL 60604

Date Photographed: 05/2015

Location of Original Digital Files: Historic Preservation Division, Wisconsin Historical Society,  
Madison, WI

- 1 of 18: West and south façades, looking northeast
- 2 of 18: West façade, looking northeast
- 3 of 18: West façade entrance detail, looking northeast
- 4 of 18: South façade, looking north
- 5 of 18: South façade, looking northwest
- 6 of 18: East façade, looking west
- 7 of 18: North façade, looking southwest
- 8 of 18: North façade, looking southeast
- 9 of 18: First floor entrance, looking southwest
- 10 of 18: First floor office, looking east
- 11 of 18: Second floor original offices, looking north
- 12 of 18: Second floor original offices, looking southwest
- 13 of 18: Second floor original office stair, looking west
- 14 of 18: Typical stair, looking west
- 15 of 18: Typical interior space, looking west
- 16 of 18: Typical interior space, looking north
- 17 of 18: Typical interior space, looking west
- 18 of 18: Typical interior space, looking east

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Figure 2: Second Floor Plan

Figure 3: Third Floor Plan

Figure 4: Fourth Floor Plan

Figure 5: Fifth Floor Plan

Figure 6: Basement Floor Plan

Figure 7: *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, 1910 (George C. Mansfield Company Building outlined in blue)

Figure 8: *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, 1951 (George C. Mansfield Company Building outlined in blue)

Figure 9: Current Bing Map showing and aerial view of the George C. Mansfield Company Building at 1300 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street as it stands today

Figure 10: First floor existing condition floor plan showing the George C. Mansfield Company Building's dates of construction

Figure 11: Rendering of the George C. Mansfield Company Building prior to its completion (*The Ice Cream Trade Journal*, "The New Mansfield Plant in Milwaukee," March 1908)

Figure 12: Historic photo of the south façade (right) and west façade (left) of the George C. Mansfield Company. Building after it was purchased by the Gridley Dairy Company. (OldMilwaukee.net, date unknown)



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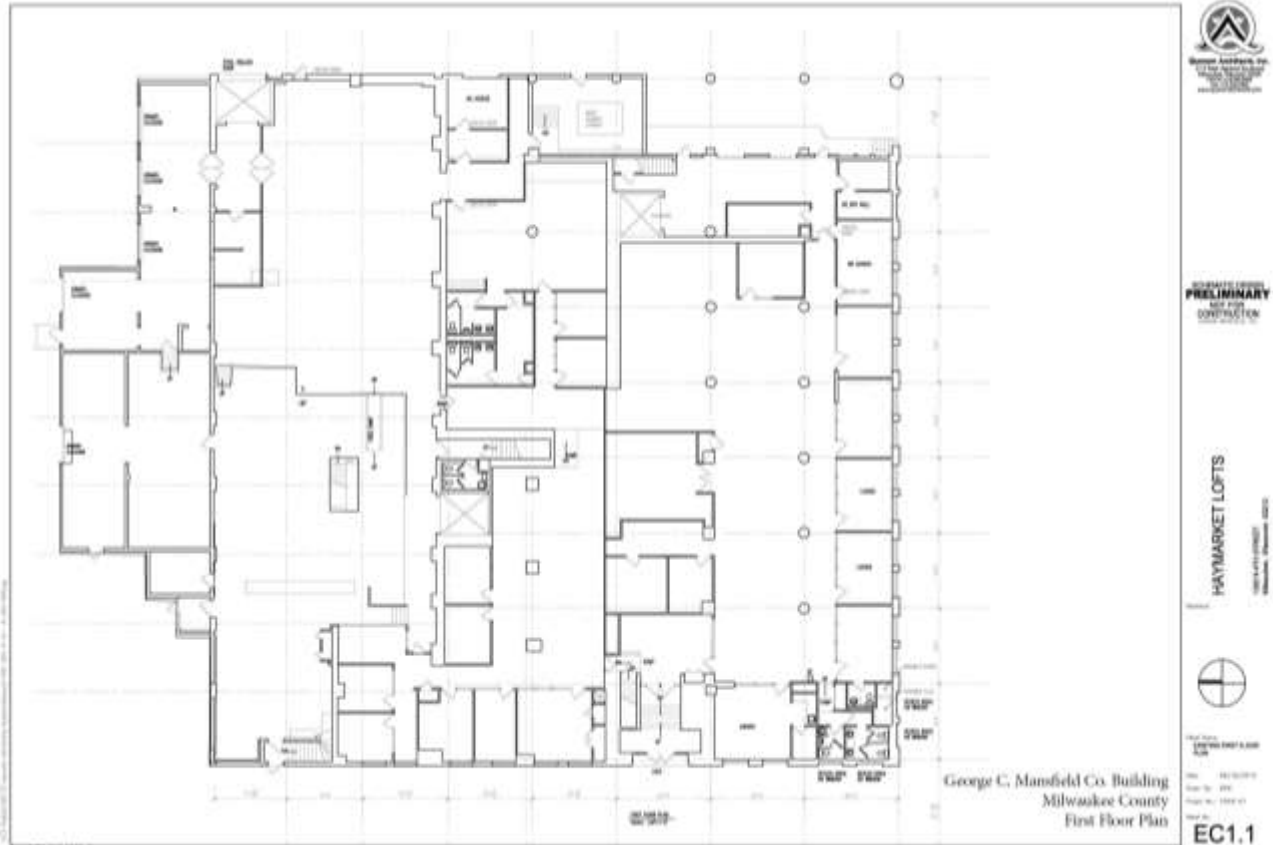


Figure 1: First Floor Plan

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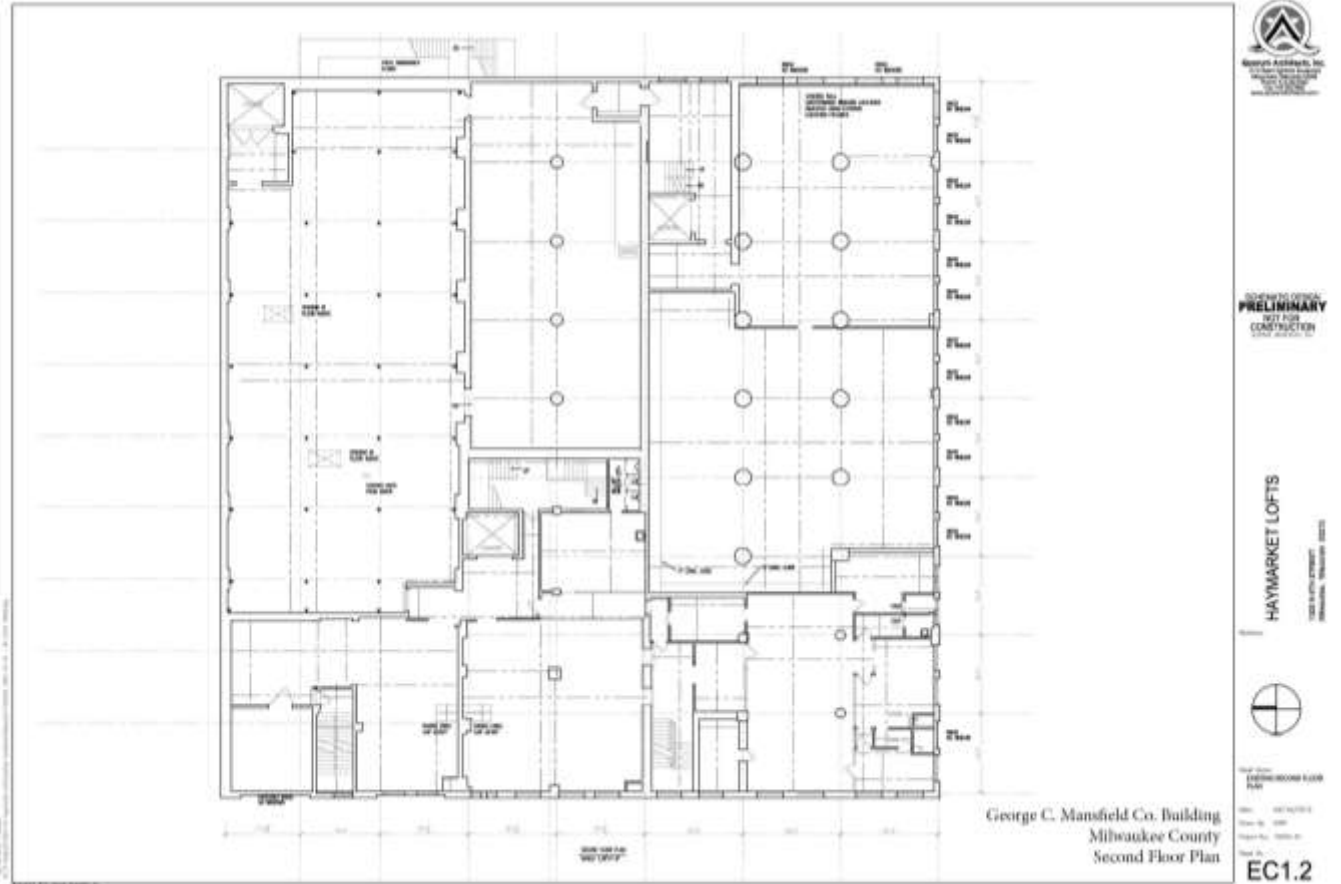


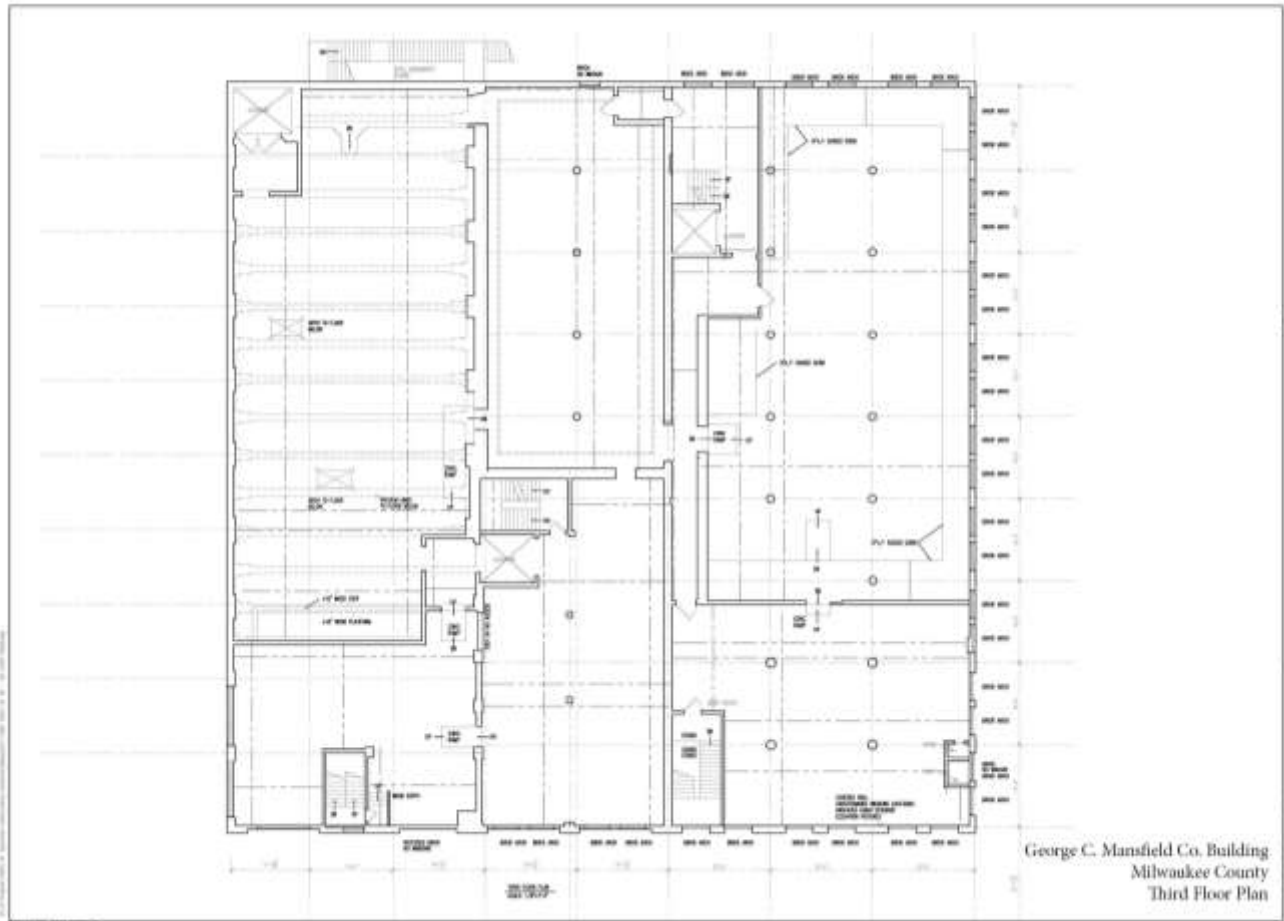
Figure 2: Second Floor Plan

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Mansfield, George C., Company Building  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County



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Figure 3: Third Floor Plan

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Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

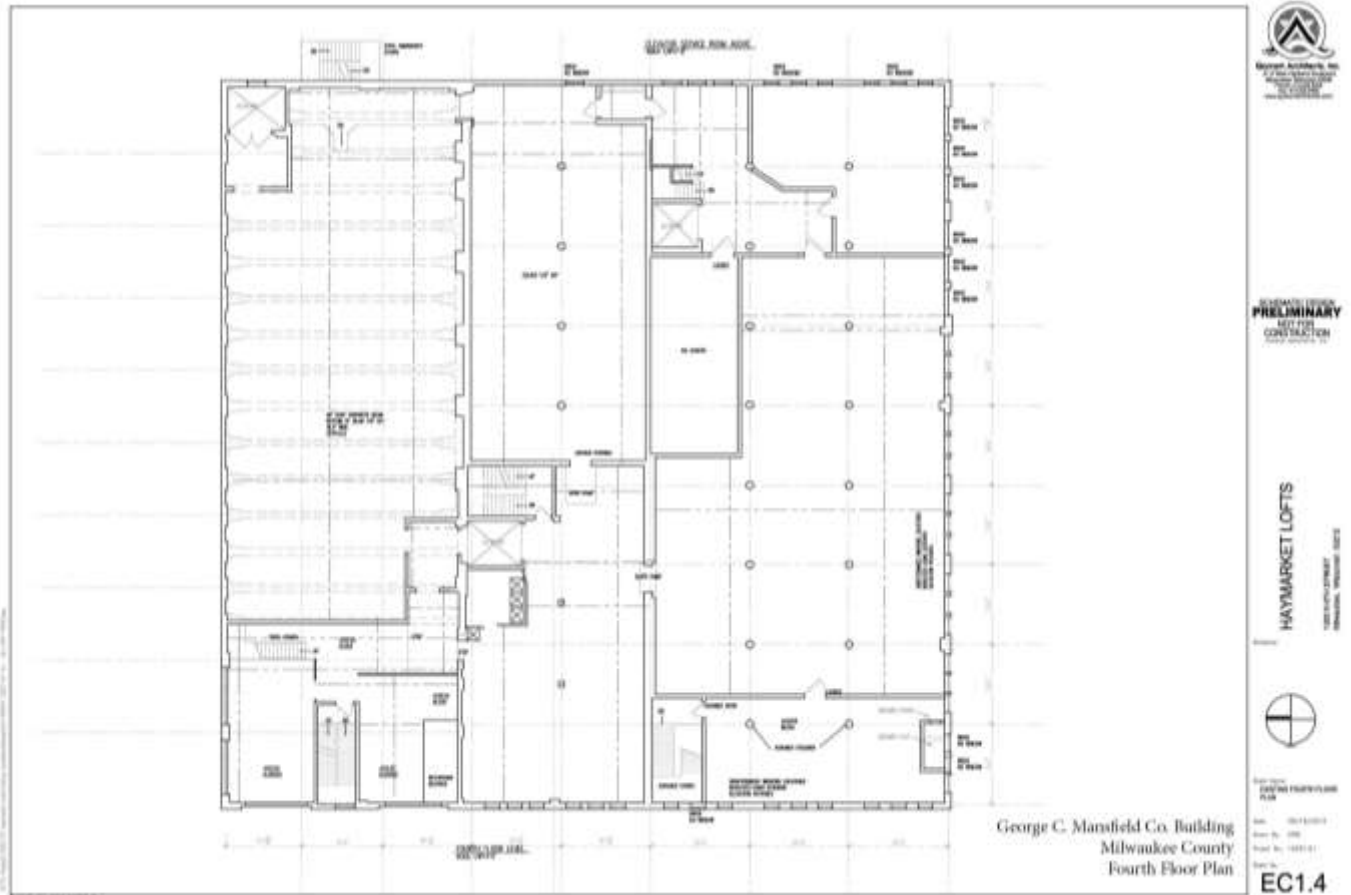


Figure 4: Fourth Floor Plan

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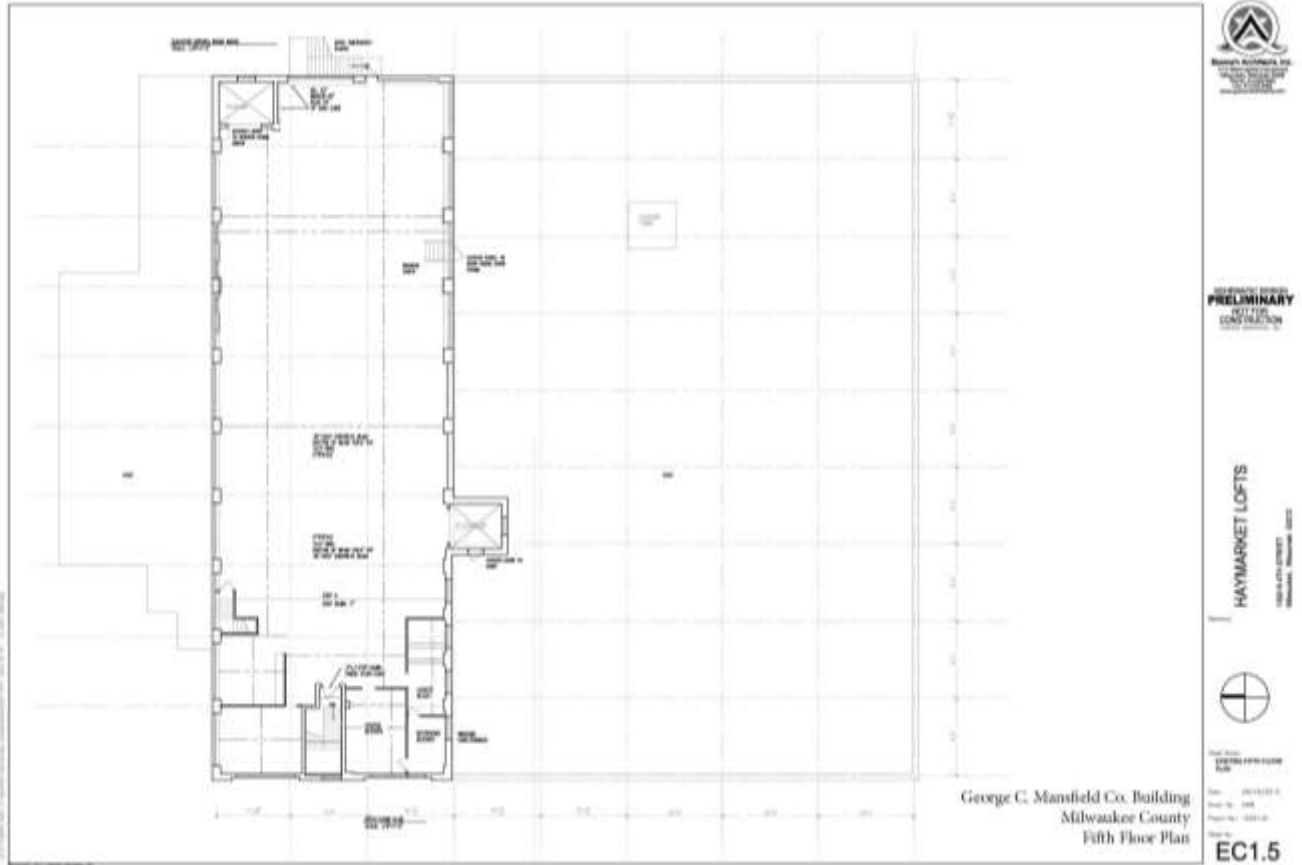


Figure 5: Fifth Floor Plan

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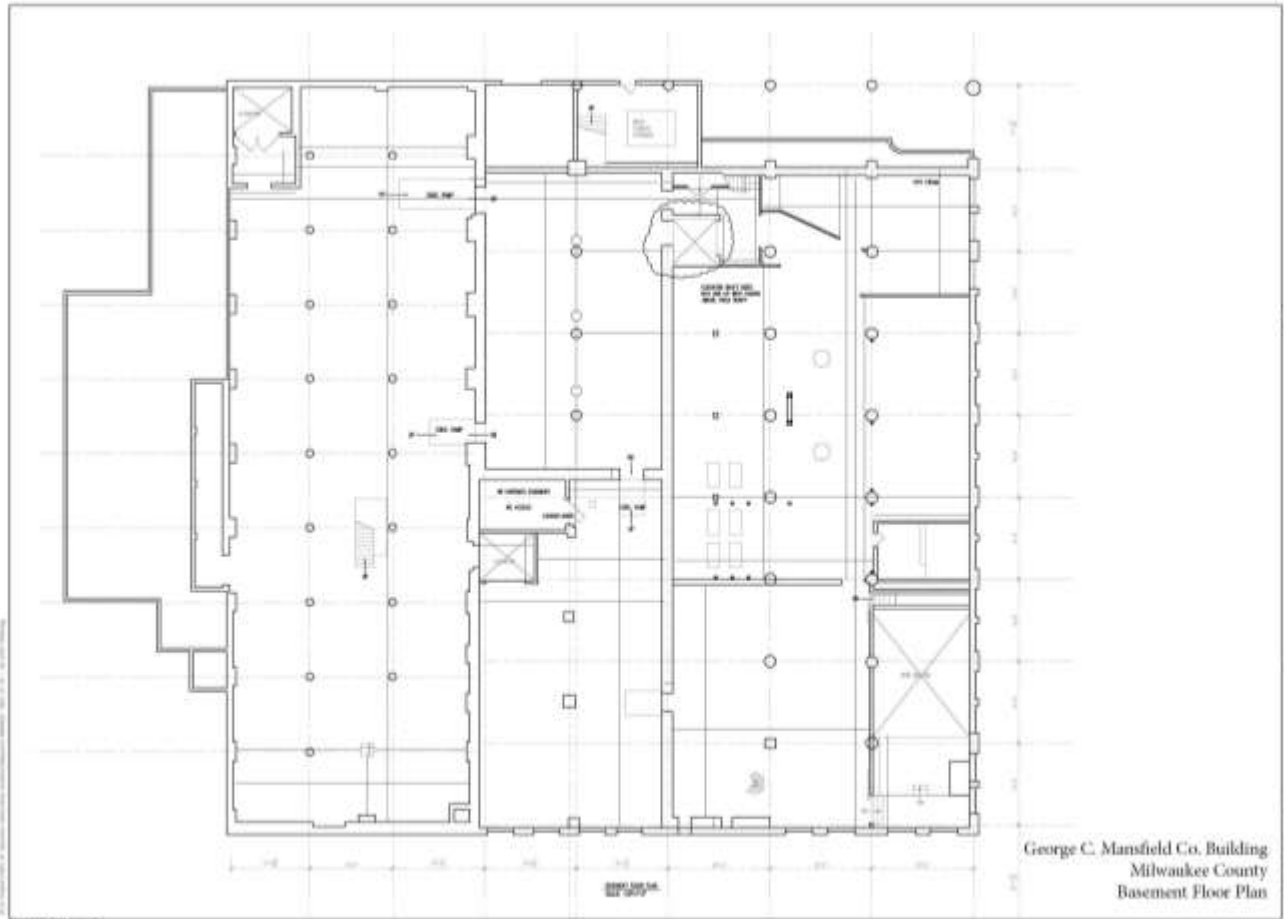


Figure 6: Basement plan.

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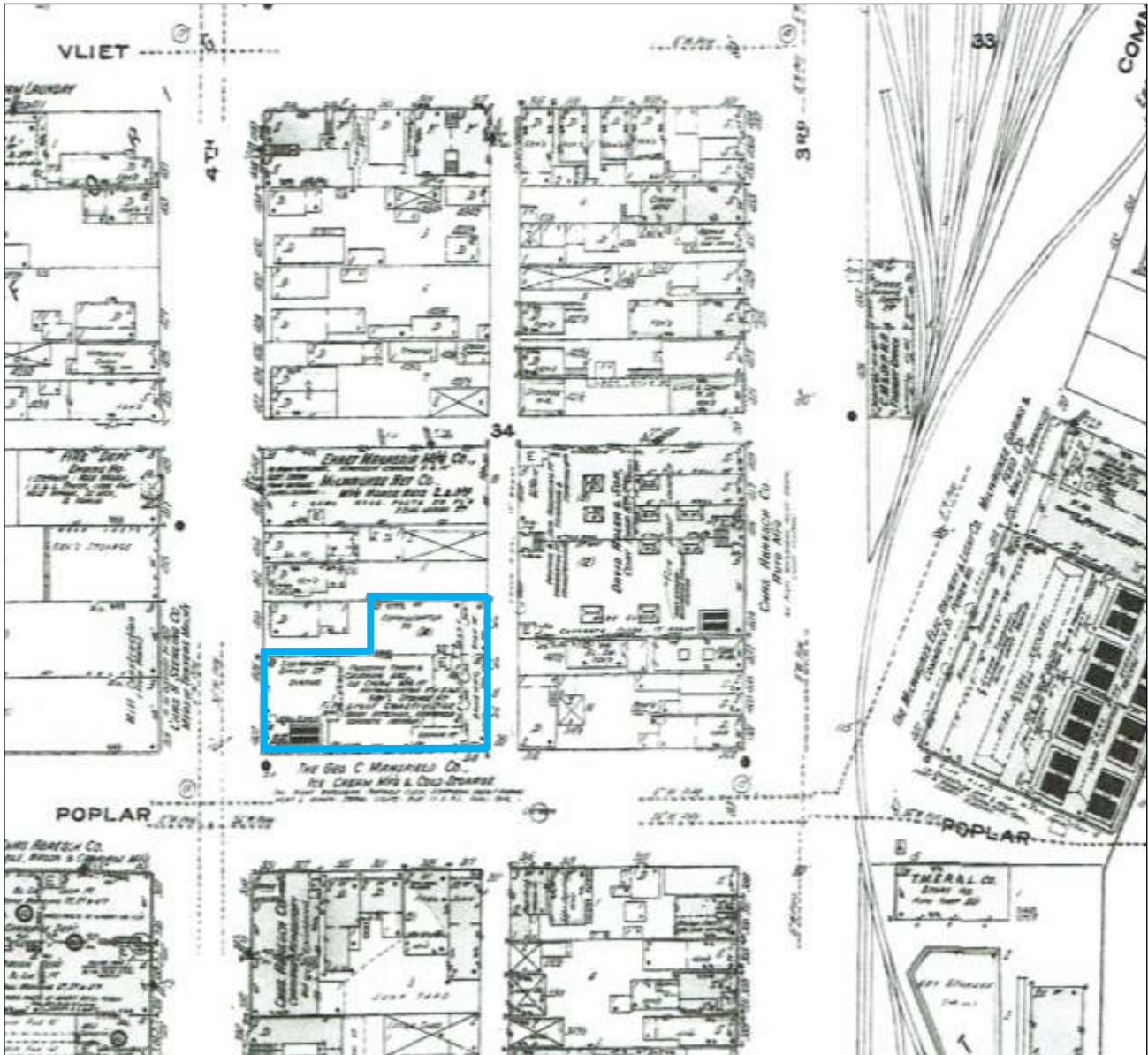


Figure 7: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1910 (George C. Mansfield Company Building outlined in blue)



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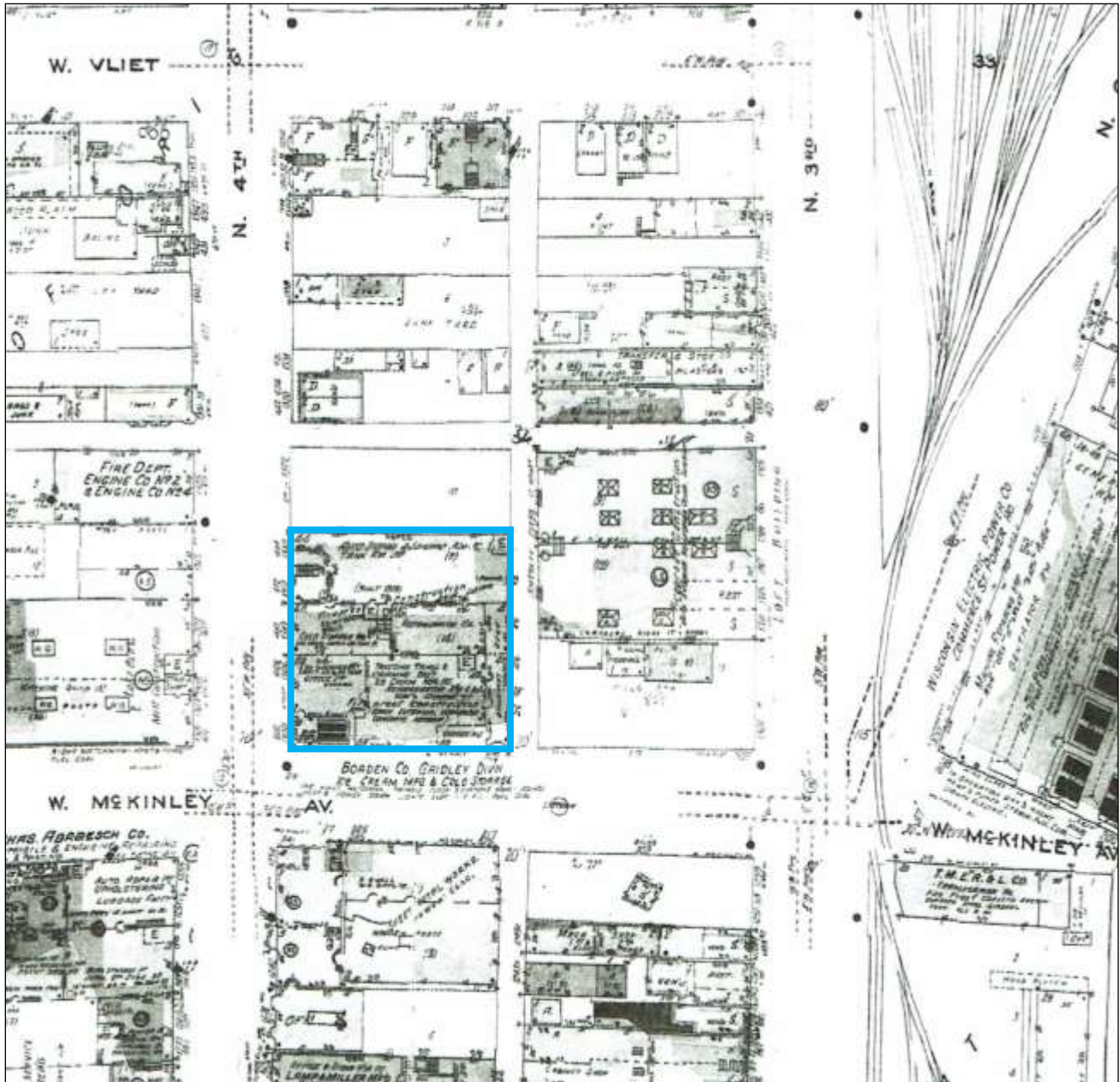


Figure 8: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1951 (George C. Mansfield Company Building outlined in blue)



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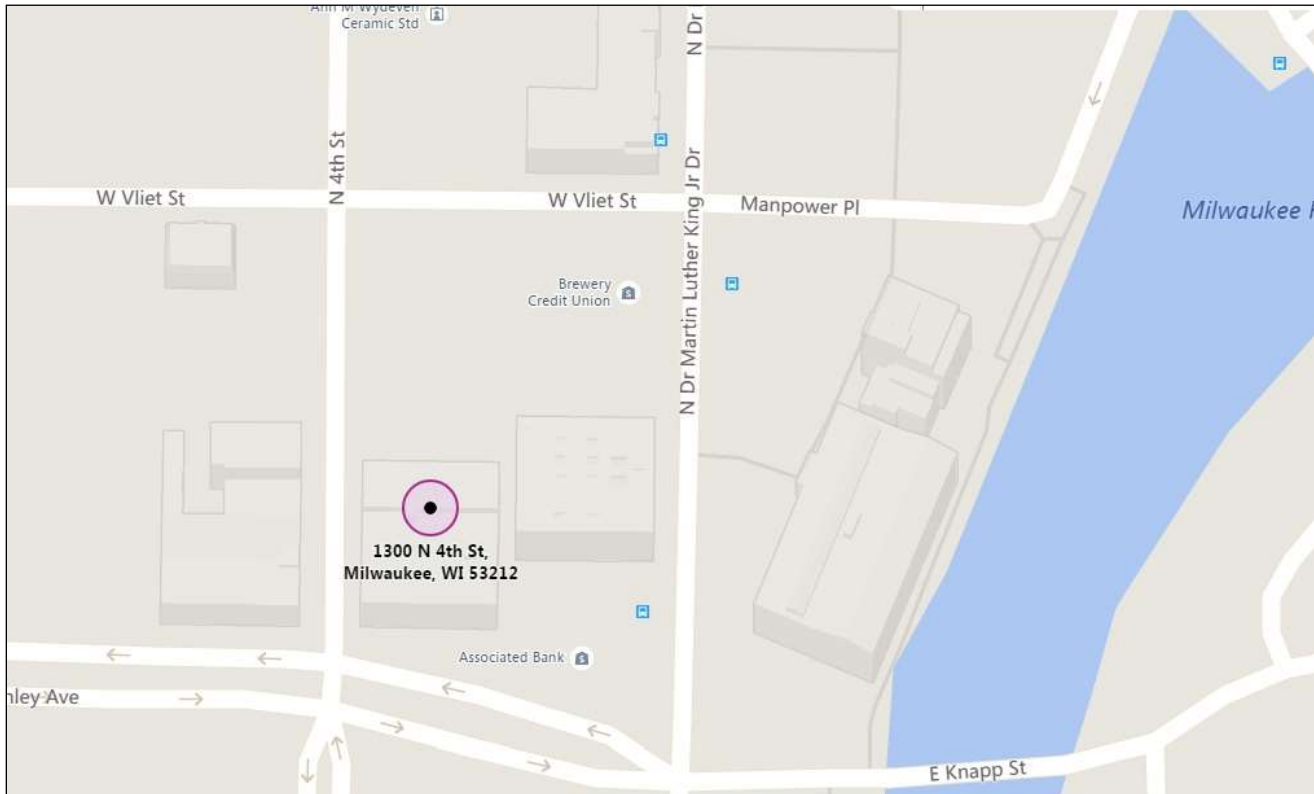


Figure 9: Current Bing Map showing the George C. Mansfield Company Building at 1300 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street as it stands today

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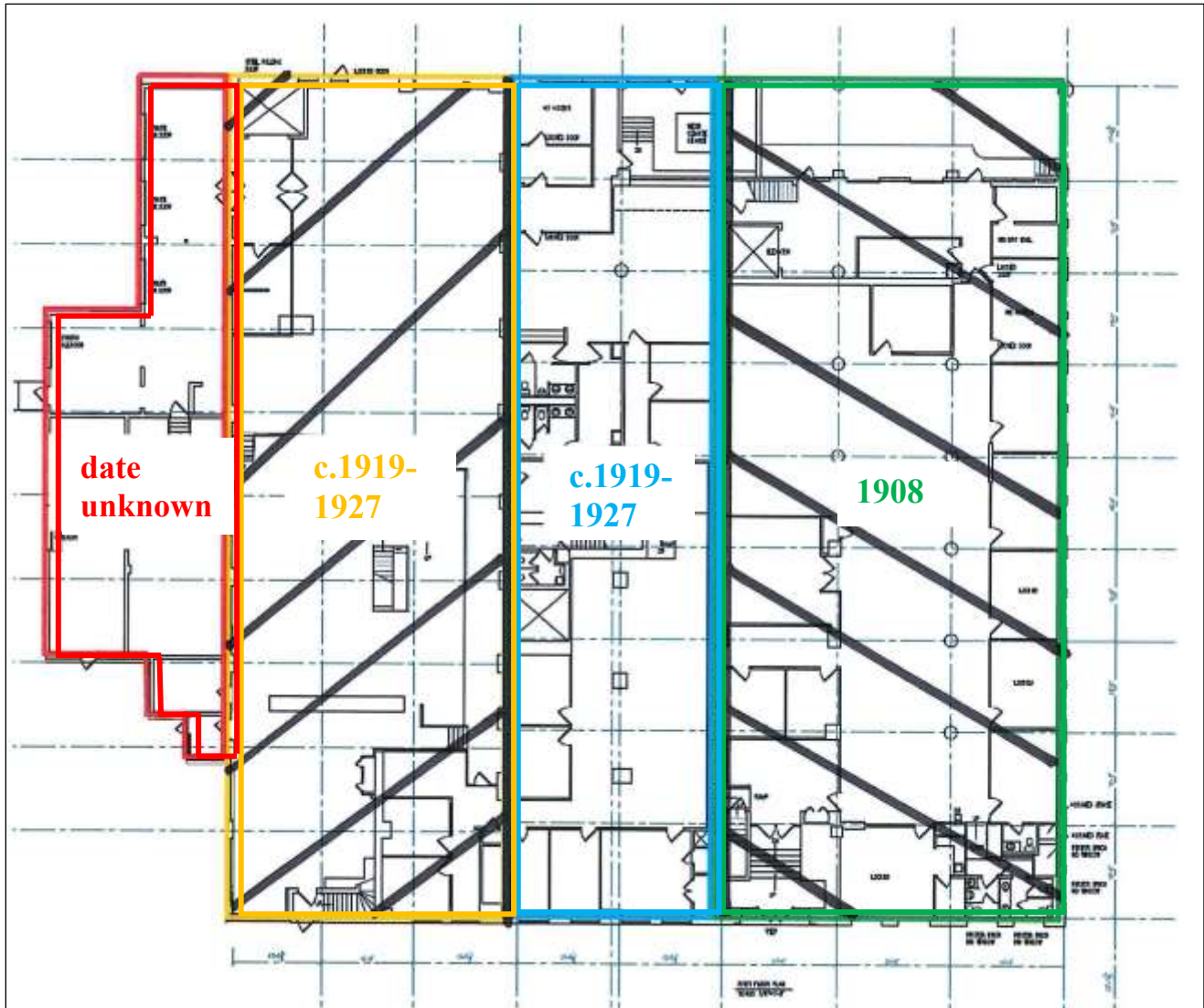


Figure 10: First floor (existing) floor plan showing dates of construction

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Figure 11: Rendering of the George C. Mansfield Company Building prior to its completion (*The Ice Cream Trade Journal*, "The New Mansfield Plant in Milwaukee," March 1908)

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Figure 12: Historic photo of the south façade (right) and west façade (left) of the George C. Mansfield Company Building after it was purchased by the Gridley Dairy Company. (OldMilwaukee.net, date unknown)





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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Mansfield, George C., Company Building

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: WISCONSIN, Milwaukee

DATE RECEIVED: 6/10/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/27/16  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 7/12/16 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/26/16  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000476

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: Y PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

X ACCEPT \_\_\_ RETURN \_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The George C. Mansfield Co. Building is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for significance in Industry as a leader in the ice cream and dairy industry. It was noted for its use of the most modern sanitation practices and machinery. The building design promoted efficiency in production, packaging, storage, and distribution. The building is locally significant, with a period of significance that begins in 1908 with the completion of construction, and extends to 1959 when it ceased operation as a creamery and wholesale ice cream production facility.

RECOM./CRITERIA A

REVIEWER Terhara Ogall

DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE 202-354-2252

DATE 7-26-16

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.





WISCONSIN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

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JUN 10 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

TO: Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Peggy Veregin  
National Register Coordinator

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination

The following materials are submitted on this Sixth day of June 2016, for the nomination of the George C. Mansfield Company Building 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>18</u>	Photograph(s)
<u>1</u>	CD with image files
<u>1</u>	Map(s)
<u>12</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: