

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received OCT 11 1984
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

Owner Objection

1. Name

historic J.R. Watkins Medical Company Complex

and/or common Watkins Products, Inc., Complex

2. Location

street & number 150 Liberty Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Winona

N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota

code 22

county Winona

code 169

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Watkins Products, Inc.

street & number 150 Liberty Street

city, town Winona

N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Winona County Courthouse, County Recorder's Office

street & number Third and Washington Streets

city, town Winona

state Minnesota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Survey of Hist. Resources has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Minn. Historical Society, Ft. Snelling History Center

city, town St. Paul

state Minnesota 55111

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Watkins Products complex is situated in a residential area of Winona, Minnesota, occupying all of Block 14, Laird's Addition. The complex is bounded by Third Street on the north, Chestnut Street on the east, Fourth Street on the south, and Liberty Street on the west. This complex includes seven buildings and constitutes the administrative headquarters and manufacturing and warehousing facilities for the Watkins company in Winona.

Building 1: Administration Building (1911). Designed by architect George W. Maher, the Administration Building is the most distinctive structure in the complex. It is 300 x 68 feet and occupies the full west side of Block 14 along Liberty Street. The building is arranged in three separate pavilions, each approximately two stories high, connected by two, four-bay office units, each a tall single story. The two end pavilions are flat-roofed; the central rotunda pavilion is topped with a spired dome. The top of the dome is approximately 70 feet above street level. Overall the building is designed with simple classic proportions and, when completed, was considered to be in the "modern classic style."

The exterior is faced with smooth, cut, blue Bedford stone. While the end pavilions are flat-roofed, the central dome is sheathed in sheet metal, as are the longitudinal arched roofs of the connecting office areas. The three pavilions each include a large round-arched entryway within a square-framed facade with projecting cornice. Each entryway is flanked by single square columns, each of which is topped by a carved stone date and monogram emblem. Similar column designs separate the two-story bays on the north and south ends. Filling the round-arched openings in each entryway are stained glass windows "typifying the beautiful landscape which surrounds Winona." Fenestration in the two-story office pavilions consists largely of paired one-over-one double hung sash in square openings, which the large connecting office areas have four-over-four sash in large square openings.

The exterior remains almost entirely intact, missing only the original four light standards along the street and the vertical wall lamps which were situated on each side of the rotunda entrance. The interior has undergone some alteration.

Building 2: Manufacturing and Warehouse Building (1914). Also designed by George W. Maher and constructed by the Haglin-Stahr Company, this is the newest building in the Watkins complex.

[see continuation sheet]

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1900-14

Builder/Architect George W. Maher

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Watkins Products complex in Winona, Minnesota, is significant in commerce and industry as the home, headquarters, and primary manufacturing plant of the J.R. Watkins Medical Company since 1885. The complex is architecturally significant for its 1911 Administration Building designed by Prairie School architect George Washington Maher.

Joseph R. Watkins was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1840 and moved with his family to Minnesota in 1862. In 1868 he secured from a Dr. Richard Ward of Cincinnati the right to make and sell the doctor's liniment, mixing up his "secret" ingredients in the kitchen of his Plainview, Minnesota, house. Establishing a sales territory within a 50-100 mile radius of Plainview, he decided to move the rapidly expanding business to Winona where he could utilize the town's excellent steamboat and rail connections.

In Winona he enlarged the product line to include not only liniment but also extracts, salves, and various home remedies. Also in Winona he first began to send out "wagon salesmen," forerunners of the soon-to-be-famous "Watkins Man." To support the increasingly wide-ranging sales force, branch distributorships were established, followed by branch warehouses and factories throughout the country. Watkins distributors became key figures in the company's sales force. They were generally top salesmen themselves, and it was they who recruited dealers as the company extended its reach all over the country. In order to avoid the responsibility of record-keeping for all these quasi-independent distributorships, Watkins had to treat them as independent contractors. Thus, as the dealer force expanded into the thousands, the famous Watkins Man operated at a remove from the company itself.

By the 1940s, there were 15,000 Watkins Men, an all time high. And since 1915, J.R. Watkins Medical Company had been the number one direct-sales company in America. The product line had grown to include some 300 products, including spices, flavoring extracts, cosmetics, perfumes, household-cleaning preparations, insecticides, mineral supplements for livestock feed, and others.

The earliest extant buildings at the Watkins complex date from 1900, when significant growth in manufacturing and sales was underway. Five major manufacturing and warehousing structures

[see continuation sheet]

9. Major Bibliographical References

[see continuation sheet]

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approx. 2.5

Quadrangle name Winona West, Minn.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	5	6	0	9	7	6	0	4	8	7	8	0	0	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

All of Block 14, Laird's Addition, City of Winona.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert M. Frame III, Historical Consultant

organization N/A

date August 1984

street & number 202 McBoal St.

telephone 612-291-7882

city or town St. Paul

state Minnesota 55102

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Russell W. Fridley

title Russell W. Fridley
State Historic Preservation Officer

date 9/26/84

For NPS use only Determined Eligible
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

NO OWNER OBJECTION

Beth Groves
Keeper of the National Register

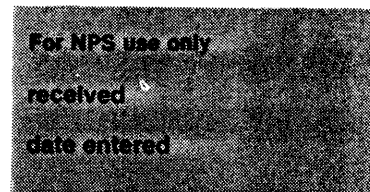
date 11/13/84

Attest:
Chief of Registration

date

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Continuation sheet Watkins Complex Item number 7 Page 2

Situated adjacent to the south end of the west wall of the Administration Building, it is 58 x 140 feet and, at ten stories, is the complex's tallest structure. According to Maher's blueprints, the building incorporates the Akme System of Girderless Floor Construction, patented in 1911 by the Condron Company of Chicago, structural engineers. It is topped with an observatory penthouse and water tank house. It is constructed of cream brick with a large rectangular outline in Flemish bond, one bay wide, on the east, west, and south facades; a cornice completes the facade. Fenestration includes Chicago-style commercial windows in long rectangular openings across the central bays, singly on the north and south facades, and in groups of six across the east and west facades.

The remaining buildings are all of similar red brick mill construction with stone foundations and coping, and simple cornice elements. Generally they incorporate one-over-one double-hung sash in rectangular openings, usually with stone sills and lintels. All have flat, tar and gravel composition roofs. Access bridges connect buildings 3 and 4, 4 and 5, 5 and 6, 6 and 7, 4 and 6, and 3 and 7. For the most part they were designed for various manufacturing, warehousing, and laboratory purposes and have maintained these functions, in varying degrees, to the present.

Building 3 (1900-01). A four-story structure, 53 x 140 feet, with wood frame, adjoining the east wall of the 10-story Manufacturing and Warehouse Building, and fronting on Fourth Street.

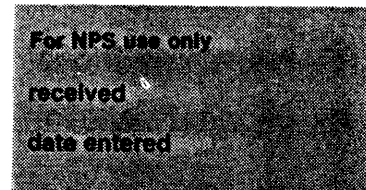
Building 4: Laboratory Building (1900-01). A four-story structure, 50 x 140 feet, with wood frame, fronting on Fourth Street.

Building 5. This was built as two structures but appears as a single building running the full length of the block along Chestnut Street. South end--Drug & Spice Grinding Mills Building (1904): a four-story, 40 x 140-foot building of brick and concrete construction (although the second floor is wood). North end--Stock and Poultry Tonic Addition (1907): this four-story addition to the south building is 40 x 160 feet and includes a two-story curved railroad tunnel located in the sixth and seventh

[see continuation sheet]

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Continuation sheet Watkins Complex Item number 7 Page 3

bays from the north. This tunnel provides rail access to the large interior courtyard which is located in the center of Block 14 and allows service access to all buildings in the complex. The Stock and Poultry Tonic Addition has wood floors.

Building 6: Manufacturing Building (1910). This reinforced-concrete and brick building was designed by C.A. Eckstrom of Chicago and built by Haglin-Stahr Company of Minneapolis. Originally built to six stories with a penthouse, it has since been expanded to a full seven stories. The south wall is curved and angled to allow passage of the railroad track entering the complex through Building 5. The building is 94 feet wide and the east wall is 108.5 feet while the west wall is 140 feet. Fenestration in some instances includes paired ten-over-ten double-hung sash in rectangular openings. A tall, brick chimney stack prominently displaying the name "WATKINS" rises alongside this building.

Building 7: Printing & Publishing Building (1904-06). This four-story, 50 x 140-foot, wood-frame building was designed to house the Watkins printing operations.

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Continuation sheet Watkins Complex Item number 8 Page 4

were erected in a spurt of expansion between 1900 and 1907. In 1910 the second largest manufacturing building was built, followed quickly by George W. Maher's striking Administration Building in 1911. In 1914 the large 10-story factory building designed by Maher was completed, the most recent structure in the complex. It is Maher's Administration Building which gives Watkins its architectural significance but it is his 1914 building which has made Watkins a landmark visible from all over the city of Winona.

J.R. Watkins died in 1911, never seeing the completion of the symbol of his commercial achievement, the Administration Building. The Watkins firm, and the Watkins Man, continued as both a national institution and a powerful local influence. The family-owned Winona National & Savings Bank, designed by Maher in 1914, became locally known as the "Watkins bank." In the 1930s, the company decided to invite Watkins customers to tour the plant. In two years, more than 250,000 people arrived in Winona to go through the present buildings. As many as 5,000 showed up in a single day.

The 1911 Administration Building commission proved to be a valuable entre for George W. Maher in the city of Winona and the family that controlled the Watkins company. Termed by Carl Condit as "one of the most prolific and original" of the Prairie School architects, Maher was born in West Virginia in 1864. He began his architectural work in 1878, soon joining the office of J.L. Silsbee where he worked with Frank Lloyd Wright and George Grant Elmslie. By the time he received the Watkins job, he had completed a number of Chicago institutional buildings, including several for Northwestern University, where future elements of the Watkins project can be discerned. In the Administration Building, as in these Chicago buildings, one can see Maher's commercial style with its classical elements, all composed into a harmonious decorative scheme. He combines the rather severe geometric outline of the commercial style with the single arches and ornament of the Prairie School, as Condit observes. Even more of the commercial element is seen in the 1914 manufacturing building, including use of the wide Chicago window style.

So significant was the Watkins work, that the J.R. Watkins Company has been considered to be Maher's most important patron for the second decade of the 20th century. Not only did Maher do the 1911 and 1914 buildings, but also the Winona National and Savings Bank and "Rockledge," a house and estate for E.L. King who was the successor as Watkins president to J.R. Watkins, his father-in-law.

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Continuation sheet Watkins Complex Item number 9 Page 5

Biebel, Anne. "Midwestern Progressive Bank Design 1891-1920." Chronicles [Winona Co. Historical Society 3 (Winter 1984): 1-7.

Bormann, Terry. "Whatever Happened to the Watkins Man?" Corporate Report (April 1981): 44-48, 115-116, 118-120, 122, 124-126, 128-130.

"Building [is] One of Great Beauty." Winona Daily Republican, Dec. 30, 1911.

Condit, Carl. The Chicago School of Architecture. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1964.

Gebhard, David, and Tom Martinson. A Guide to the Architecture of Minnesota. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minn., 1977 [page 329].

"George W. Maher, A Democrat in Architecture." Western Architect 20 (March 1914): 24-29, plus 25 plates.

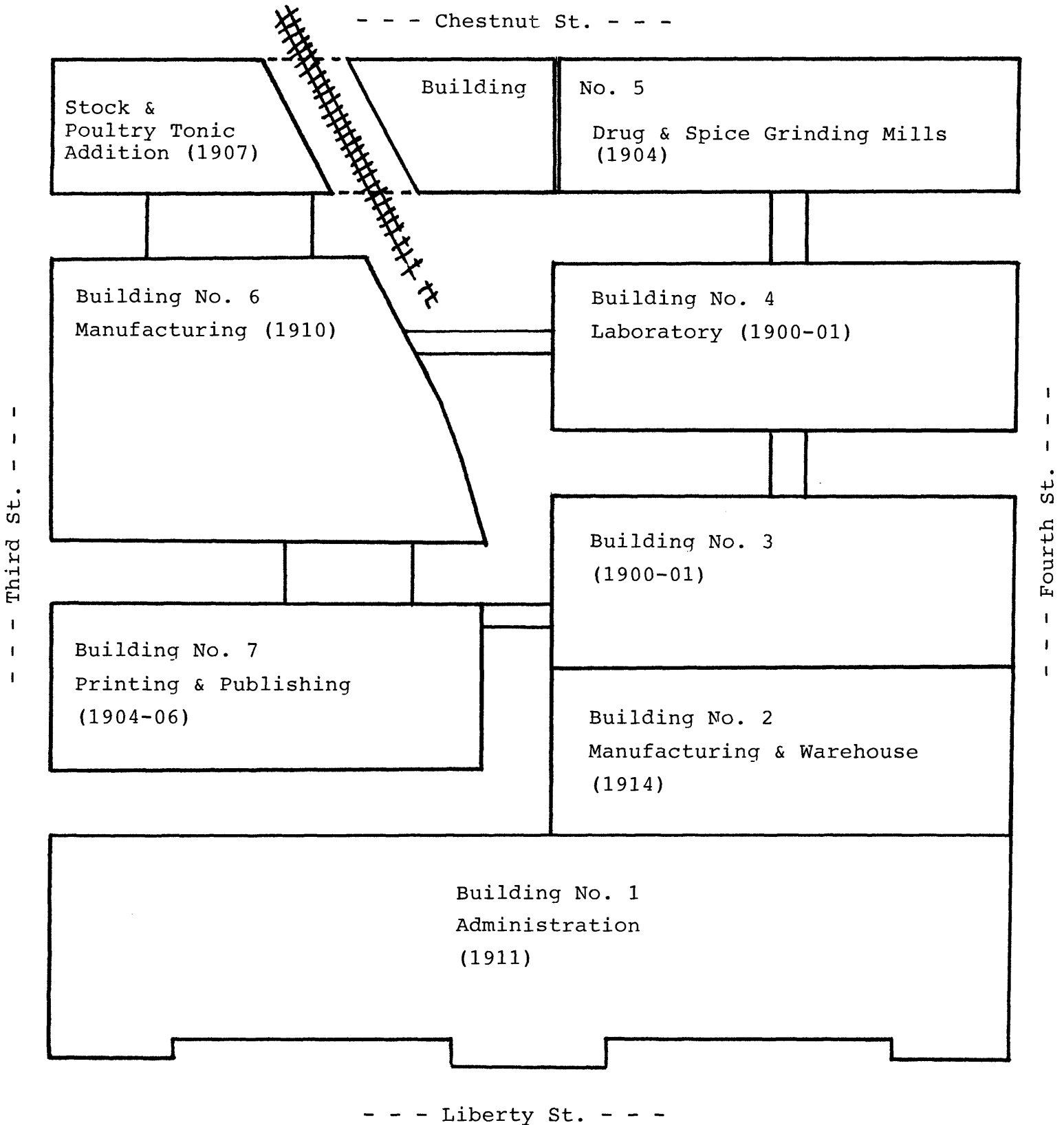
Rudd, J. William. "George W. Maher--Architect of the Prairie School." Prairie School Review 1 (First Quarter, 1964): 5-11. See related items, pages 12-15, 20.

Maher, George W., Papers. Northwest Architectural Archives, Univ. of Minn., Minneapolis.

"Notable Achievement Made By J.R. Watkins Medical Co.: [New Building is] Marvel of Architectural Beauty." Winona Daily Republican, Dec. 31, 1912

J.R. WATKINS MEDICAL COMPANY COMPLEX

Block 14, Laird's Addition, City of Winona



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Watkins, J. R., Medical Company Complex

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MINNESOTA, Winona

DATE RECEIVED: 10/22/04 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/19/04
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/04/04 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/05/04
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 84003940

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 12/4/04 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in the
National Register**

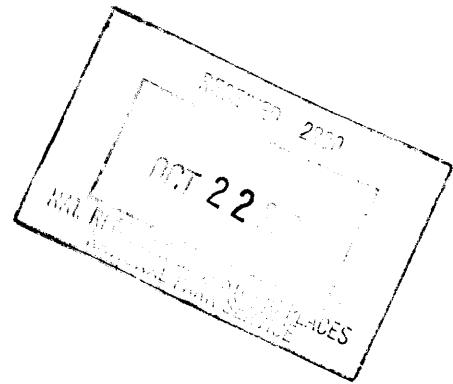
RECOM./CRITERIA Accept
REVIEWER Gordon Bell DISCIPLINE History
TELEPHONE _____ DATE 12/4/04

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.



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



October 19, 2004

Ms. Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW (2280)
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:


RE: J. R. Watkins Medical Company, Winona, Winona County, Minnesota

The above property was determined eligible for listing in the National Register on November 13, 1984. It was not listed because the owner of the property, Watkins, officially objected.

The enclosed letter from the company is requesting that the objection be lifted and the property listed in the National Register.

If your staff has questions about this property, please contact Susan Roth, National Register Historian at address below, 651/215-0118 or susan.roth@mnhs.org

Sincerely,


Britta L. Bloomberg
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Minnesota Historical Society