

1 City, Village or Town: <b>Superior</b>		County: <b>Douglas</b>	Surveyor: <b>P. Lusignan</b>	Date: <b>2/1/85</b>	Street <b>Tower Avenue</b>	
Street Address: <b>917-927 Tower Avenue</b>		(NW corner Tower Ave. and Broadway)	USGS Quad and UTM Reference: <b>Superior WI-Minn 15 / 568460 / 5174995</b>	Acreage: <b>less than one</b>		Number <b>917-927</b>
Current Name & Use: <b>Amsoil Building / Offices</b>			Current Owner: <b>Amsoil Building Inc.</b>		Town <b>49N</b>	
Film Roll No. <b>DG - 9, 17</b>	Affix Contact Prints		Current Owner's Address: <b>917-925 Tower Avenue Superior, Wisconsin 54880</b>			Range <b>14W</b>
Negative No. <b>27,28,29</b>			Legal Description: <b>West Superior, First Division; Lots 16, 17, 18 and 19, Block 94.</b>			
Facade Orient. <b>East</b>						

2 Original Name & Use: <b>Berkshire Block</b>	Source <b>A</b>	Previous Owners	Dates	Uses	Source	Section <b>15</b>	
Dates of Construction /Alteration <b>1892</b>	Source <b>A,C</b>						Map Name <b>Superior Intensive Survey</b>
Architect and/or Builder: <b>unknown</b>	Source						

3 <u>Architectural Significance</u> <input type="radio"/> Represents work of a master <input type="radio"/> Possesses high artistic values <input checked="" type="radio"/> Represents a type, period, or method of construction <input type="radio"/> Engineering <input type="radio"/> None	4 <u>Historical Significance</u> <input type="radio"/> Assoc. with lives of significant persons <input type="radio"/> Assoc. with significant historical events <input checked="" type="radio"/> Assoc. with development of a locality <input type="radio"/> Other: _____ <input type="radio"/> None      Period of significance: _____	Map Code <b>A</b>
Architectural Description and Significance: The Berkshire Block is a two story commercial building designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque manner. The handsomely detailed structure, clad in rock-faced Kasota limestone, features a frontage of 128 feet on Tower Ave. and 99 feet on Broadway. U-shaped, the building's most dominant exterior feature is a ground floor arcade of heavy Romanesque arches rising from from rusticated supporting columns. The continuous arcade wraps around the east and southern (continued) Interior visited? <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	Historical Background and Significance: The imposing two story Berkshire Block, now better known as the Amsoil Building was built in 1892 by New York financier Francis H. Weeks. An important early investor and businessman in the community, Weeks was one of the first presidents of the Land & River Improvement Company. Intensely involved with the development of Superior, Weeks would also come to build the Nemadji Block Apartments on Belknap St., as (continued)	

5 Sources of Information (Reference to Above) <b>A</b> <u>Evening Telegram, Superior, 2/5/1934.</u> <b>B</b> <u>Evening Telegram, Superior, 9/22/1977</u> <b>C</b> <u>Assessor's Records</u> <b>D</b> <u>City Directories, Superior ,WI</u> <b>E</b> <u>Superior Daily Leader, Superior, 11/29/1891</u> <b>F</b>	6 <u>Representation in Previous Surveys</u> <input type="radio"/> HABS <input type="radio"/> LDMK <input checked="" type="radio"/> WIHP <input type="radio"/> NRHP <input type="radio"/> other: _____	Map Code <b>A</b>
	7 <u>Condition</u> <input checked="" type="radio"/> excellent <input type="radio"/> good <input type="radio"/> fair <input type="radio"/> poor <input type="radio"/> ruins	
	8 <u>District:</u> _____ <input type="radio"/> pivotal <input type="radio"/> contributing <input type="radio"/> non-contributing	
	9 <u>Opinion of National Register Eligibility</u> date: _____ initials: _____ <input checked="" type="radio"/> eligible <input type="radio"/> not eligible <input type="radio"/> unknown <input type="radio"/> national <input type="radio"/> state <input checked="" type="radio"/> local	

Architectural Description (continued)

facades of the building and features smaller openings at the corners, which are also marked by polygonal bays.

The second story windows of the building are set in pairs under heavy tra-beated lintels and feature a continuous stone sill course. The roofline is marked by a prominent denticulated cornice.

The renovations which preceeded the Amsoil Company's moving in to the site in 1977-79 included the replacement of earlier altered sash with modern, tinted glazing and metal panels. The middle bay of the eastern elevation contains the main building entrance. Despite the alterations to the major window areas, the building - which was designed to support an additional 6 floors - retains its monumental scale and powerful nature. It is clearly an expression of the prosperous boom era of Superior commercial development.

The rear and alley elevations of the building reveal the brick bearing-wall construction which is covered by the dramatic stone veneer to the front. Each of the lesser (north and west) elevations contains various infilled or altered window areas. Inserted within the U-shaped light court (see plan) is a simple one story brick structure.

The interior of the building, which at one time contained handsome mahogany (first floor) and oak (2nd floor) trim and massive round columns clad in marble, has been completely modernized by the present tenants save for a handsome iron stairway at the main entry.

The site occupied by the impressive 22,500 square foot commercial block is located to the north of the other nominated sites, at the prime commercial intersection created by Tower Avenue and Broadway, early on a major trolley-line transfer point.

Historical Background (continued)

well as a number of other speculative townhouses and private residences. <sup>E</sup>  
The massive commercial block was originally designed as a 6-8 story building. The first two floors were completed by 1892, but plans for the completion of the building were halted by the economic depression of 1893. Corner bays and a modillioned cornice was subsequently added to give the building a finished appearance. <sup>B</sup>

The rich mahogany and oak trimmed appointments of the commercial building were initially designed to serve the needs of the Wingate-Lightbody dry goods firm of Superior and the State Bank of Wisconsin. The building's upper story offices quickly became the home of a number of prominent Superior lawyers and physicians. <sup>D</sup>  
In 1898 the building became the home of The Fair, a large department store operated by A.J. and P.C.N. Pederson. Starting in 1904, the top floor would serve as offices for the expansive Pittsburg Coal Co, which maintained sizable docks at the harborfront area (1904-1912). <sup>D</sup>

The building continued to see various uses until the mid 1910s when ownership passed from the De Forest brithers of New York to local businessman William Patterson, and the site became the home of the newly created U.S. National Bank. Significantly renovated at the time of its purchase, the building became known as the National Bank Building, a moniker it carried up to the mid-1970s when the site was purchased by the Amsoil Corporation and remodelled into their corporate executive headquarters. <sup>B</sup>

Significance

The Amsoil/Berkshire Block exists as a significant example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture within the community of Superior. Distinguished by its monumental stone facade and first floor arcade, the structure represents the prosperity of Boom Period architecture within the commercial district of downtown Superior.

The block is also a significant representation of the developmental activity seen in the commercial area of the community between 1888 and 1892. Sponsored by numerous investment concerns and progressive businessmen, this speculative activity saw Superior develop as a major commercial center in the late 19th century. The Berkshire clearly represents the prosperity of the boom era activity in the city.

Address 917-27 TOWER AVE.

District \_\_\_\_\_

Owner A J & R A AMUTUZZIO (Amsoil Building Inc.)

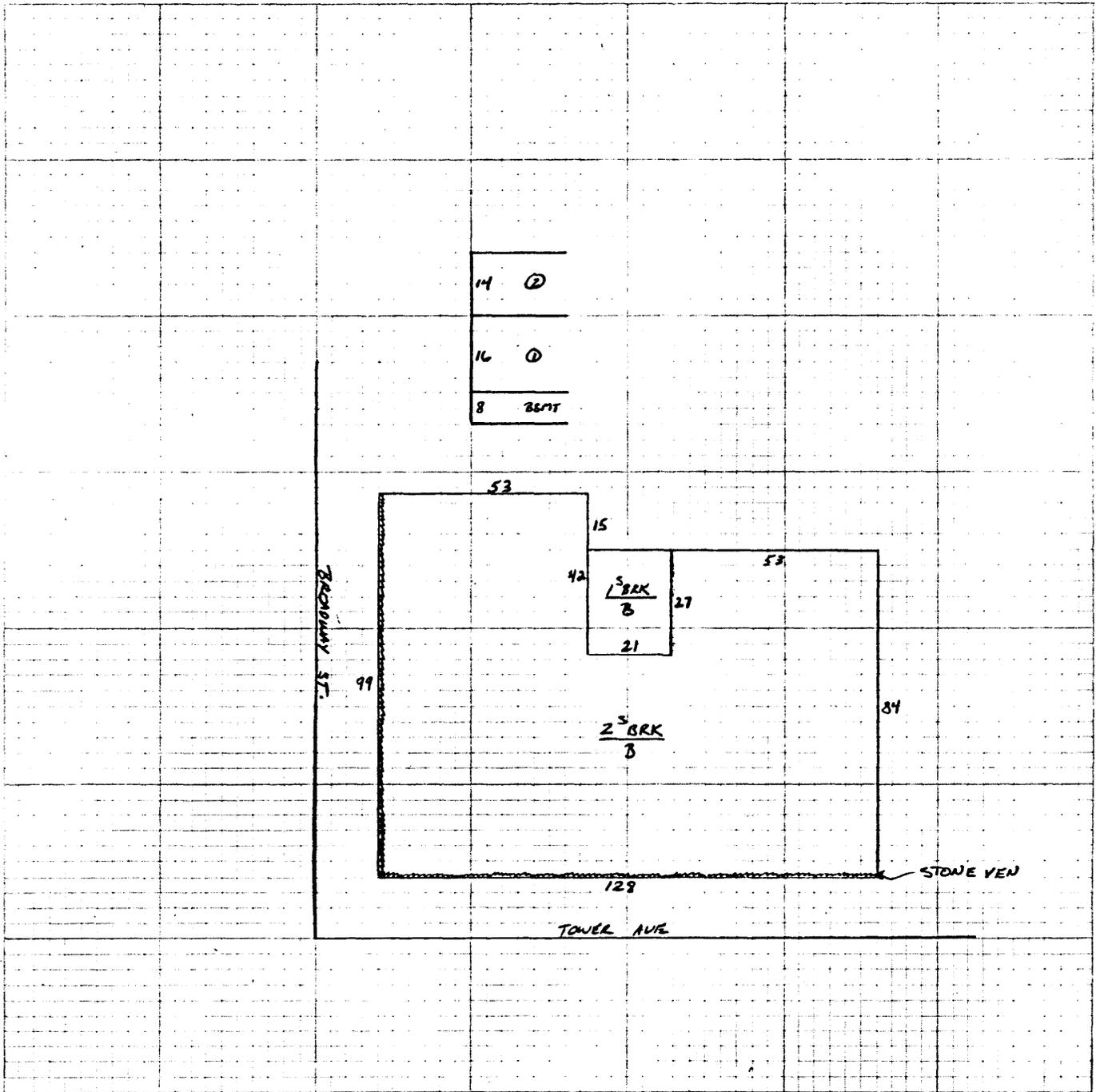
Key No. \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Appraisal 8/80

Made By RG

Year of Const. 1890 REMOD - 1978?

Indicate on Building Sketch: No. Stories - Story Height - Wall Mat'l & Thickness - Type & Size Windows Scale: 1" = 40 Ft.



Computations & Other Pertinent Data

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