

INVENTORY FORM FOR NOMINATED PROPERTIES

Name of property: Harley-Davidson Motorcycle Company

Owner: Harley-Davidson Motor Co., Inc.

Address: 3700 West Juneau Avenue, 1147 North 38th St.

Owner's address: 3700 West Juneau Avenue

City: Milwaukee

Milwaukee, WI 53208

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)

170 Thematic or Multiple Resource Nomination Name (code)

180 NRHP List Name Harley-Davidson Motorcycle Company

190 Level of Significance

- national (NA)
- state (ST)
- local (LO)

200 District Classification

- pivotal (P)
- contributing (C)
- non-contributing (NC)

210 Applicable Criteria

- event (A)
- person (B)
- architecture/engineering (C)
- information potential (D)

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

Invention-notable persons

230 Period of Significance

1910-1934

340 Review Board Date

70 USGS Quad Map

SW/4 Milwaukee 7.5 min 1:24,000

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

see attached

85 Listed Acreage 10.2 acres

60 Verbal Boundary Description See attached

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Associated History)

The company began inauspiciously enough in 1903 when Bill Harley, Art Davidson and Walt Davidson began to tinker in the 10' x 15' shed behind the Davidson family home at 38th Street and Highland Boulevard. That year the three men produced their first motorcycle, a glossy black machine with a three horsepower DeDion-type single cylinder engine. Arthur Davidson, pattern maker, and Bill Harley, engineer, had become acquainted with each other from working together at the Barth Manufacturing Company. Brother Walter Davidson added his expertise as a machinist. The three men were among many across the country who were experimenting with motorcycles at the time. Unlike many of their would-be competitors, however, they hit upon the right internal dimensions for a reliable engine. Ole Evinrude, who lived in the area, also added his invaluable expertise on carburetors.

The company grew slowly in the early years. In 1904, the three men sold two of their machines while in 1905, eight were produced. In 1906 the production figure jumped to 50 and the firm's first employee was hired. On September 17, 1907 the group added another Davidson brother, William, and incorporated. By 1908 the business launched into the mass production of 450 cycles. By this time there were 18 employees working for the firm and a 2,380 square foot brick building was built for production. None of these first production buildings are extant.

It was during the decade from 1910 to 1919 that the company experienced its greatest expansion as it grew from a major domestic producer to the international leader of the motorcycle industry. In response to the anticipated popularity of the motorcycle, the two massive office, research and production buildings at 38th and Juneau were erected, in 1910 and 1926. These structures housed all Harley-Davidson operations until 1947 when final assembly was moved to a new plant on Capitol Drive in suburban Wauwatosa. The number of employees reached 1,574 and manufacturing occupied 297,110 square feet by 1921. Advertising, competitive racing, salesmanship and quality improvements all contributed to spreading the fame of the Harley-Davidson motorcycle. In 1908, for example, Walt Davidson had entered and won the New York endurance run an event that finally gave the motorcycle a national reputation. This was followed by a company sponsored racing team

HISTORICAL STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Harley-Davidson Motorcycle Company, whose name is synonymous with motorcycle production in the United States, is nationally significant for its contribution to the development of small engine vehicles. During the period of significance (1910-1934) represented by the nominated buildings, the company revolutionized motorcycle production by the invention and use of the first commercially successful motorcycle clutch in 1912; the step starter, an internal expanding rear brake, carburetor choke and a two speed transmission in 1914; and the three speed transmission in 1915. All of these innovations were developed by one of the company's three founders, William Harley. The company was begun in 1903 by Harley, Art Davidson and Walt Davidson and grew to be the world's largest producer of motorcycles by 1918. In 1912 the company had dealerships in sixty-seven countries, a figure that has not been equaled

by other domestic producers. Harley-Davidson alone weathered competition from the automobile, the Great Depression and competition from foreign imports to survive as the only remaining domestic manufacturer of motorcycles.

(B)

DESCRIPTION (Continued)

The facility is located at the far western edge of the survey area along the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway spur in the upper Menomonee Valley. Originally, sited away from major development it is now surrounded by a residential neighborhood to the southeast, the Miller Brewing Company headquarters to the south, the Milwaukee County Transit System Cold Spring Car Barns to the northwest and a neighborhood shopping center to the northeast.

Associated History (Continued)

called the Wrecking Crew, whose victories through the teens helped to change the H-D image from reliable and slow to reliable and invincible. The accounts of such races as well as travel information and personal stories found their way into a company publication, The Enthusiast, beginning in 1916.

Salesmanship and distribution also played a significant part in the popularity of the H-D motorcycle. Company secretary and general sales manager Arthur Davidson had a remarkable facility for organizing dealerships and soon had a network of dealers across the country. Sales were extended as far as New Zealand and Australia. By 1921 there were dealers in 67 countries, a figure that has not been equaled since by a U.S. producer.

Quality improvements also captured the interest of the buying public. A desirable twin cylinder engine was introduced as well as a three-speed transmission. Since the well-built Harley outlasted many of their competitors, they were popular with those who wanted a vehicle that would last for more than 5,000 miles.

Harley-Davidson also began to diversify during the 1920's and offered bicycles, accessories and side cars. The latter were among the most unusual of H-D productions, and were the company's answer to pickup and delivery problems. The side car bodies were created in the shape of cameras, shoes, platforms and other forms. Some were produced by the H-D factory and some by the Seaman Body Company of Milwaukee (later part of Nash Motors.)

Large government contracts during World War I made Harley-Davidson the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles in 1918. As much as one-third of their production was exported during this time. The glory days were soon over for the firm, however. The post-war depression devastated the motorcycle market. Production in 1921 fell to a mere 10,202 units compared with the 28,189 cycles produced in 1920. Although a world wide economic recovery began in 1922, it did not revive the slumping cycling industry. The romance of the motorcycle had begun to wane as rich and poor alike turned to the automobile for their transportation needs. Mass produced Ford Model T's cost a mere \$245.00 each, which made them highly competitive with Harley-Davidson motorcycles.

The company responded to the drop in sales by retrenching. Company supported racing was dropped. Fewer cosmetic changes were made each model year. Engineering refinements continued, however, and cycles were kept up-to-date with such features as balloon tires, front brakes and standardized parts. The Kilbourn Finance Corporation (1923) was set up as a subsidiary to help individuals finance the purchasing of their cycles. Harley-Davidson also began to advertise in national magazines (1927) to keep its product in the buyer's eye.

Improved sales in the late 1920's rekindled company optimism, but it was quickly extinguished by the Great Depression.

Associated History (Continued)

In 1930 only 10,500 cycles were made but by 1933 that number had dropped to 3,703. The only other U.S. manufacturer of motorcycles, Indian, switched to the production of coaster wagons. H-D considered and rejected this alternative. Instead, the company expanded its line of bikers' clothing and accessories, since they had a higher profit margin than did the bikes themselves. H-D tried new sales techniques and expanded its marketing efforts to police departments. One act which was to have grave consequences for the future of the company was the selling of engineering blueprints and machinery to the Japanese in 1932. Hit hard by the Depression the company was in dire straits and desperately needed the \$32,320 it made on the deal. While the sum seems meager today, it kept the ailing company afloat through the dark days of the early 1930s. Unfortunately, the sale provided the Japanese with the engineering basis for establishing its now highly successful motorcycle industry.

H-D limped through the Depression and as the 1930's drew to a close, sales climbed to 674 vehicles in 1937. Workers saw their chance to bargain for better wages and benefits, and successfully unionized under the UAW. In the interim, Harley-Davidson had farsightedly developed prototypes that would be useful in the event of war. Upon the outbreak of World War II the company won lucrative government contracts to manufacture motorcycles and engines between 1943-45. By 1947, production had climbed to 20,392 bikes and a 269,000 square foot plant was purchased for \$1.5 million from A.O. Smith in 1947 on Capitol Drive in Wauwatosa in anticipation of a post-war sales boom that never materialized.

Harley's 1932 sale to the Japanese has come back to haunt the company. Since World War II, H-D's biggest challenge has been the rise of the foreign import, principally Japanese bikes. As early as 1960, foreign cycle sales amounted to nearly 40% of all new registrations. Harley-Davidson asked the Federal government for a 50% hike on the tariffs for imported motor bikes, but the request was denied. By 1955 production at H-D had slumped to 9,550 vehicles. As the company entered the 1960's, it considered diversifying into snow blowers, scooters and lawn mowers but instead H-D decided to meet the Japanese competition head on and enter the medium-weight motorcycle market. The Japanese models ranging midway between the easy handling English bikes and the sturdy Harleys, were attractive to many segments of the American market. H-D's strategy was to purchase half of the profitable Italian Aermacchi cycle division and produce their own lighter cycle. The venture was a disappointment, however, and sales never reached expectations.

In 1965 the company made its first public offering of stock in order to raise capital for expansion and modernization. A number of corporate buyers were attracted to the company because of its stability and 12-16% market share. To fend off an unwanted take over by Bangor Punta Corporation, stockholders agreed to merge in 1969 with American Machine and Foundry (AMF) of White Plains, New York, a successful manufacturer of sporting goods and leisure items. Descendants of the founders had always managed Harley-Davidson up to this point. After the merger with AMF, William H. Davidson, son of William A., became chairman of the company for a short time, after which many non-family members chaired the firm. AMF invested millions in the company for development and for advertising and promotion. Harleys were used in the movie Electra Glide in Blue and Evel Knievel performed on a H-D bike. By 1973 AMF had moved Harley's assembly operations to a plant in York, Pennsylvania leaving the Milwaukee plants chiefly as components manufacturing facilities. In its annual report for 1975, AMF indicated that its future was in the production of industrial products and services rather than in the leisure field of sporting goods and motorcycles. At this point, only 1% of AMF's profit was derived from the sale of cycles. Another attempt was made to get the Federal government to impose protectionist import tariffs for the cycle industry in 1978, but the outcome did not materially enhance Harley-Davidson's market position. While the U.S. Treasury Department found evidence that three out of four Japanese manufacturers sold their motorcycles cheaper

Associated History (Continued)

here than at home, the International Trade Commission ruled that Japanese sales had not hurt Harley's sales since Harley's products appealed to an entirely different segment of the market. The Commission felt that Harley-Davidson needed to revamp its product and marketing technique to be competitive.

Finally, in 1981, after a number of years of negotiations, various H-D and AMF executives purchased the company from AMF and set it on an independent course once more. John A. Davidson, third generation family member and former Harley-Davidson president, was seen as a key figure to head the buy-back management team, but, in the end, declined to participate.

The future of Harley-Davidson is uncertain. Although it has met production projections, rising interest rates have reduced dealer traffic. Employees have been laid off, benefits cut and the warehouse at York, Pennsylvania was eliminated. Honda is now encroaching on Harley's traditional stronghold, the heavyweight cycle market and its market share has fallen from a hard won 21% to 14%. Recently, however, the U.S. government imposed sizeable tariffs on the larger Japanese cycles making them competitive in cost with Harley's. This move should improve Harley's market position.
(B,C)

STREET: West Juneau Avenue

NUMBER: 3700

SHSW INTENSIVE SURVEY FORM

LOCATION

10 County Milwaukee
20 City or Village Milwaukee
30 Civil Town
35 Unincorporated Community
40 Location 3700 West Juneau Avenue
50 Town/Range/Section

55 Quarter Sections

60 Verbal Boundary Description Becker's Subdivision in southwest quarter section 24-7-21, Block 3, all Block 3 and part (lands-vacated streets and alleys and Block 9 in Resubdivision Block 8, 9, & 10 etc.) commencing northwest corner Block 3, Becker's Subdivision, thence south 63.81 feet; thence east 38.14 feet; thence south 35 feet; thence west 268 feet; thence south 67 feet; thence east 14 feet; thence south 184 feet; thence west 30 feet; thence south 54 feet; thence west 50 feet; thence south 12.45 feet; thence west 109.18 feet; thence northwesterly 51.35 feet; thence west 108.45 feet; thence northwesterly 86 feet to a point in southeast line of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad right-of-way; thence northeasterly to beginning. (The two major buildings in this complex have separate, but contiguous legal descriptions.)

PROGRAM REVIEW

250 Tax Case Number
260 Compliance Case Number
270 A or D Grant Yes No
275 Covenant/Easement Dates
320 Ownership
X private (P)
local-public (L)
state-public (S)
federal-public (F)
mixed, private-public (M)
330 Lead Agency (code)

SURVEY

90 Photo Codes MI 128-19, 20
100 Survey Map 387
110 Map Code 128-19
120 Reconnaissance Survey Date 1979
130 Reconnaissance Surveyor Wenger/Hunton/Jensen
140 Intensive Survey Name (code) Westside
150 Intensive Surveyor Wenger/Hatala
155 Intensive Survey FY 1983
235 Survey Evaluation
X eligible (E) not eligible (N)
237 Survey District Classification
pivotal (P) non-contributing (NC)
contributing (C)
240 Survey Level of Significance
X national (NA) local (LO)
state (ST)
243 Survey Evaluation Criteria
X event (A) architectural/engineering (C)
X person (B) information potential (D)
245 Proposed District
280 NHL Date
290 HABS No. 300 HAER No.
310 Local Landmark (code)
315 Associated Archeological Site(s)

22265

Street

Address

ARCHITECTURE

450 Date of Construction (source)

1910¹¹³ (A)

460 Dates of Alterations/Additions (source)

480 Builder (source)

490 and 500 Designer Type and Name (source)

architect: H. William Washburn & A.C. Eschweiler/

artist: Fed. Engineering Co. (A)

engineer: _____

interior designer: _____

landscape architect: _____

other: _____

510 Style or Form (code)

Commercial Style

520 Building, Structure, Object or Site Type (code)

Industrial

530 Building Materials (code)

(roof)

(foundation)

Stone

Brick

(trim)

540 Interior Visited Yes No

550 Structural System (code)

Steel frame

560 Plan Configuration (code)

Irregular

570 Number of Stories

5

580 Roof Shape (code)

Flat

590 Additional Description

620 Condition

excellent good fair poor ruins

650 Related Buildings (code)

HISTORY

430 Common/Current Name Harley-Davidson Co.

440 Historic Names (source) Harley-Davidson Co. (A)

660 Associated Individual(s) (dates) (source)

Bill Harley (1910-1934) (B); Art Davidson

(1910-1934) (B); Walt Davidson (1910-1934) (B)

670 Associated Event (source)

Bill Harley invented the first commercially successful motorcycle clutch, a rear hub, free wheel unit (1912) and the step starter, an internal expanding rear brake, carburetor choke and two speed transmission (1914) and the three speed transmission (1915) (B)

680 Commercial/Industrial Historic Uses (source)

STREET: North 38th Street

NUMBER: 1147

SHSW INTENSIVE SURVEY FORM

LOCATION

10 County Milwaukee

20 City or Village Milwaukee

30 Civil Town _____

35 Unincorporated Community _____

40 Location 1147 North 38th Street

50 Town-Range-Section _____

55 Quarter Sections _____

60 Verbal Boundary Description Resubdivision of Blocks

8, 9, & 10 etc. in northwest quarter section

25-7-21 Block 8, all of Block 8 except south 120 feet and all vacated alleys and part vacated streets adjacent commencing at northeast corner of Lot 1 in said Block 8; thence west 254 feet; thence south 32 feet; thence west 14 feet; thence north 67 feet; thence east 268 feet; thence south 54 feet; thence east 30 feet; thence north 54 feet to the beginning. (The two major buildings in this complex have separate, but contiguous legal descriptions.)

PROGRAM REVIEW

250 Tax Case Number _____

260 Compliance Case Number _____

270 A or D Grant Yes No

275 Covenant/Easement Dates _____

320 Ownership

private (P)

local-public (L)

state-public (S)

federal-public (F)

mixed, private-public (M)

330 Lead Agency (code) _____

SURVEY

90 Photo Codes MI 128-19, 20

100 Survey Map 387

110 Map Code 128-19

120 Reconnaissance Survey Date 1979

130 Reconnaissance Surveyor Wenger/Hunton/Jensen

140 Intensive Survey Name (code) Westside

150 Intensive Surveyor Wenger/Hatala

155 Intensive Survey FY _____

235 Survey Evaluation

eligible (E) not eligible (N)

237 Survey District Classification

pivotal (P) non-contributing (NC)

contributing (C)

240 Survey Level of Significance

national (NA) local (LO)

state (ST)

243 Survey Evaluation Criteria

event (A) architectural/engineering (C)

person (B) information potential (D)

245 Proposed District _____

280 NHL Date _____

290 HABS No. _____ 300 HAER No. _____

310 Local Landmark (code) _____

315 Associated Archeological Site(s) _____

Street**Address****ARCHITECTURE**

450 Date of Construction (source)

1913-1926 (A)

460 Dates of Alterations/Additions (source)

480 Builder (source)

490 and 500 Designer Type and Name (source)

 architect: Fed. Engineering Co. (A) artist: engineer: interior designer: landscape architect: other:

510 Style or Form (code)

Commercial Style

520 Building, Structure, Object or Site Type (code)

Industrial

530 Building Materials (code)

Brick(foundation)Stone(trim)540 Interior Visited Yes No

550 Structural System (code)

Steel frame

560 Plan Configuration (code)

Irregular

570 Number of Stories

6

580 Roof Shape (code)

Flat

590 Additional Description

620 Condition

 excellent good fair poor ruins

650 Related Buildings (code)

HISTORY

430 Common/Current Name

Harley-Davidson Co.

440 Historic Names (source)

Harley-Davidson Co. (A)

660 Associated Individual(s) (dates) (source)

See 3700 West Juneau Avenue

670 Associated Event (source)

See 3700 West Juneau Avenue

680 Commercial/Industrial Historic Uses (source)

Description

The Harley-Davidson Motorcycle Company complex consists of two primary production/office buildings. Located at the intersection of North 38th Street and West Juneau Avenue, these buildings are examples of early twentieth century industrial architecture. Between North 37th and North 38th Streets along Juneau Avenue is a wedge shaped production/office building whose form was a result of the triangular shape of the site. Built in various stages between 1910 and 1913 (a 1966 addition is excluded as non-contributing), this building represents the company's first major expansion of its production facilities when it was becoming a world leader in the manufacture of motorcycles. The building was constructed with a steel frame skeleton and encased with dark russet tapestry brick trimmed with stone. It is five stories high on a raised basement. The steel structural system is expressed in the brick piers and spandrels. Inset between the structural members are large, multi-light, double-hung windows. The exterior is almost void of any reference to an architectural style except for the corbelling, low parapet wall, and inset stone panels. To the west of this structure is a small, transformer building constructed in 1919. It is a one-story, wedge-shaped structure encased with the same russet tapestry brick. It is trimmed with a limestone water table and cornice above which rises a plain brick parapet. The wall surfaces are pierced with high, vented windows, recessed in panels that are separated by brick piers. The second major building in this complex is across the street at the southwest corner of Juneau Avenue and 38th Street. Also built in stages between 1913 and 1926 (a 1957 addition is excluded as non-contributing), it reflects the same type of construction methods, materials and design as the previous one. The central core of this building (parts erected in 1919, 1923 and 1926) is six stories high and is L-plan in form. Adjoined to the east of this is a one-story addition erected in 1913. The facades are articulated by a series of large multi-light windows, framed by piers and corbelling. A stone cornice separates the plain brick parapet trimmed with stone coping from the main body of the building. Adjoined to the west of the core building is a one-story addition erected in 1921. It is a front gabled, long rectangle. This structure was built as infill to adjoin the main block to a two-story building erected in 1918. Repeating the same industrial aesthetic of the large whole, its roof line is characterized by a series of

Architectural/Engineering Statement of Significance

raised skylights that form a zig-zag like configuration. To the west of this structure are three additional buildings, one an Oil House constructed in 1920 and two non-contributing ones built in 1947*. The Oil House is a two-story, rectangle encased in the same tapestry brick and trimmed with a stone cornice, above which rises a plain brick parapet. Windows are recessed behind the brick piers and separated by spandrels between the floors. (See attached map for plant layout). Originally these structures represented Harley-Davidson's total office, research, production, warehousing and shipping facility. In 1947 assembly production was moved to the Capitol Drive plant in suburban Wauwatosa. This site is now the location of the company's corporate headquarters, management offices, research and development, and parts and accessories. (Continued)
 (*The two non-contributing structures are considered outside of the nomination boundaries. See map.)

690 Bibliographic References (Sources)

- (A) Milwaukee City Building Permits
- (B) Wright, David. The Harley-Davidson Motor Company, An Official Eight-Year History. Osceola, Wisconsin: Motorbooks International, 1983.
- (C) The Harley-Davidson Story. Milwaukee: Harley-Davidson Motor Co., 1982.

700 Study Units (code)

350 Demolished

360 Date Demolished

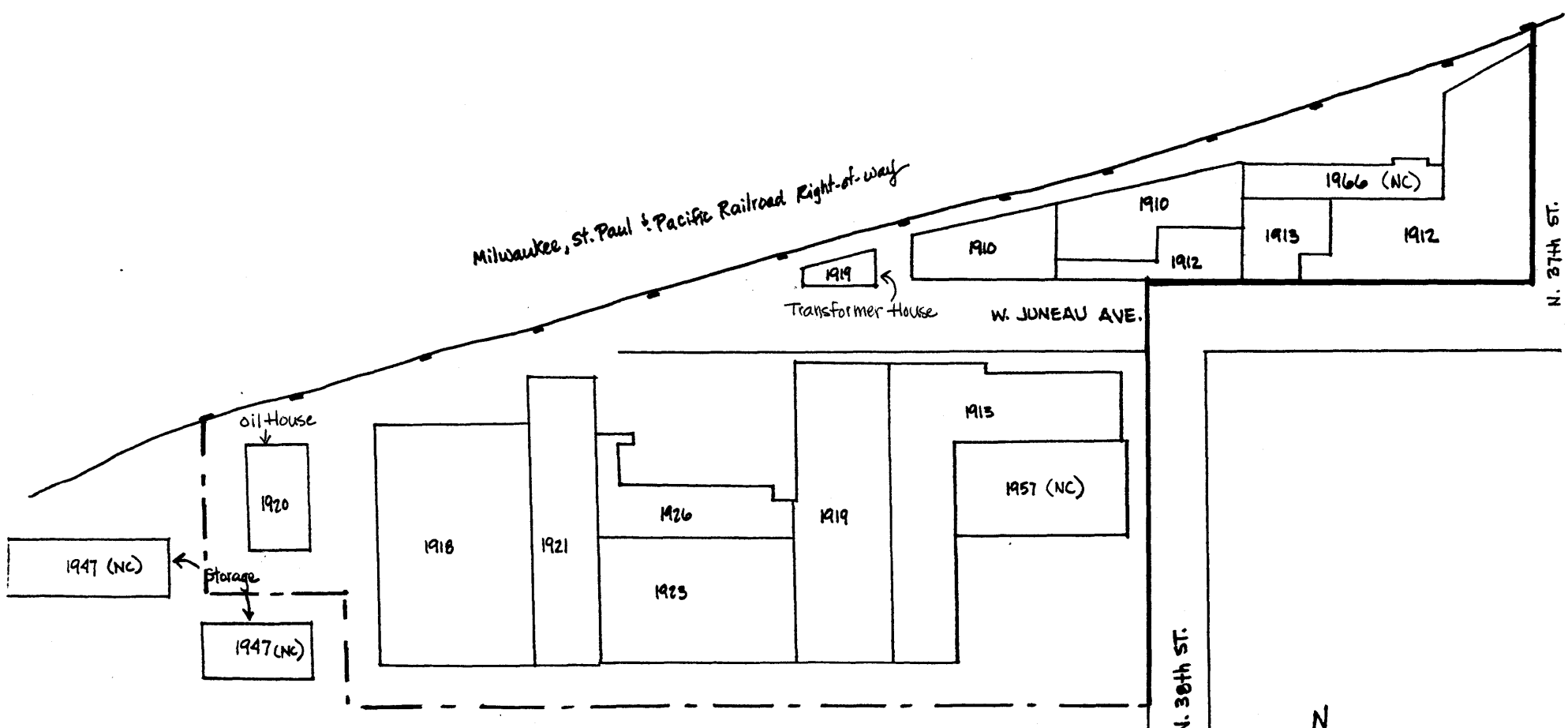
___ yes ___ no

DESCRIPTION (Continued)

In comparing the current appearance of the Harley-Davidson plant with historic photos there have been only minimal alterations to the large majority of this complex. The most noticeable change has been the removal of some original window sash to install air conditioning units and the installation of combination storm and screen windows on the building along Juneau Avenue and North 37th Street. On the other building, the one-story 1913 addition was modified in 1957 with a contemporary office addition that was not architecturally compatible to the historic fabric. (Continued)

80 UTM Coordinates

A	16421870/4766210
B	16421870/4766140
C	16421770/4766140
D	16421770/4766080
E	16421570/4766090
F	16421570/4766150



Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad Right-of-Way

1919
Transformer House

W. JUNEAU AVE.

oil House

1920

Storage

1947 (LC)

1947 (NC)

1918

1921

1926

1925

1919

1913

1957 (NC)

1910

1912

1966 (NC)

1913

1912

N. 30th ST.

N. 27th ST.

N

HARLEY-DAVIDSON MOTOR COMPANY

12/26/65

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Harley--Davidson Motorcycle Factory Building
Milwaukee County WISCONSIN 86003850
(West Side Area MRA)

REMOVAL OF OWNER OBJECTION APPROVED
LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Beth Boland 11/9/94



46 00 38.50

received
SEP 26 1994
NRHP

DOB 7-29-86

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

Division of Historic Preservation

816 State Street • Madison, Wisconsin 53706-1488
• (608) 264-6500 • FAX (608) 264-6404

TO: Carol Shull, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places

West Side
MRA

FROM: Jim Draeger
 Diane Holliday

SUBJECT: National Register Nominations

The following materials are submitted on this 21st day of September, 1994,

for the nomination of the Harley-Davidson Motorcycle Factory Buildings

to the National Register of Historic Places:

- original National Register of Historic Places nomination form
- Multiple Property Nomination form
- Photographs
- original USGS map
- sketch map(s)/figure(s)
- pieces of correspondence
- other: _____

Comments

- Please insure that this nomination is reviewed
- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- The enclosed owner objections do do not constitute a majority of property owners.

The Harley Davidson Factory was determined eligible for listing in the National Register on 7/29/86 due to owner objection. The purpose of this submission is to withdraw that objection and formally list the property on the National Register. The building retains historic integrity and has not changed significantly from the time in which it was determined eligible. The attached letter represents the interests of the owner of record.