

Fourth Street (Meir) School

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)
United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Fourth Street School
Other Name/Site Number: Golda Meir School

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 333 West Galena Street Not for publication:
City/Town: Milwaukee Vicinity:
State: WI County: Milwaukee Code: 079 Zip Code: 53212

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property Category of Property
Private:
Public-local: X Building(s): X
Public-State: District:
Public-Federal: Site:
Structure:
Object:

Number of Resources within Property
Contributing Noncontributing
1 buildings
sites
structures
objects
1 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing:

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this _____ 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 _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- _____ Entered in the National Register _____
- _____ Determined eligible for the _____
National Register
- _____ Determined not eligible for the _____
National Register
- _____ Removed from the National Register _____
- _____ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Education	Sub: School
Current: Education	Sub: School

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Romanesque/Romanesque Revival	Materials: Foundation: Limestone Walls: Brick, Limestone Roof: Other Description: Terra Cotta
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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.**Summary** [1]

The Fourth Street (Golda Meir) School is a Romanesque Revival building of masonry construction, with coursed limestone used for the raised basement floor and brick and terra cotta above. The school is built on a highly symmetrical H-shaped plan and is four stories in height, including the basement. It is situated prominently, on the southeast corner of N. Fourth and W. Galena Streets on the crest of a hill and occupies an entire city block, with the building on the west half, its playground on the east half.

The building is ornamented with stone belt courses, label molds, pinnacles, carved pilaster caps, and other decorative stonework. The terra cotta spandrel panels with their molded enframements, low relief foliation, and lettering are particularly fine.

The school was designed in 1889-90 by Milwaukee architect Henry C. Koch, who also designed the City Hall, Turner Hall, and other important buildings, most in Romanesque Revival style, in the city. The school was one of a number constructed by the city during the tenure of a progressive school superintendent, William Anderson.

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Additional Description

Each of the elevations is architecturally articulated to the point that there is really no main elevation. In terms of massing, the east and west elevations are composed of a three-bay recessed central gabled element, flanked by two projecting three-bay wide hip roofed pavilions. The seven-bay north and south elevations are flat except for the slightly projecting central bays which terminate at the attic level in gabled wall dormers.

Each facade employs a similar scheme of two stories of large grouped window bays with terra-cotta spandrel panels unified by brick arcading over the rusticated limestone basement. The fourth level is defined by a projecting stone beltcourse above which tall narrow flatheaded windows with transoms rise to a corbelled brick cornice. Gabled wall dormers with arched windows break the cornice line at the central bays of each elevation and projecting pavilion. The tall steep overhanging hipped roof is pierced by massive chimney stacks ornamented with deep brick coffer paneling.

The windows are rectangular, except those in the dormers, some of which are round arch openings. Windows throughout are double-hung with transoms above.

Each gable is flanked by tall rod-like stone decorations which project above the roof eave creating a picturesque silhouette. The tall chimnies with small recessed panels add to the picturesque roof line. The recessed terra-cotta spandrel panels between windows are decorated, several with relief, including the words "Public School."

The symmetry of the 4th Street (west) facade is broken by a 5-story-tall square tapered chimney which rises from a single-story flat-roofed boiler house, of rusticated limestone, projecting from the basement. This side originally served as the main entrance, a function now handled by the north, or Galena Street, side.

The school contains 16 classrooms and an auditorium on the third floor. The first floor is framed with iron post and beam construction; the upper floors are wood framed.

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Alterations

The 1-story heating plant was added to the west side of the building in 1915 by Milwaukee architects Van Ryn and DeGelleke. A fuel room was added in 1937. Fire escapes were completed and enclosure of stairways for fireproofing occurred in 1957. An interior and exterior renovation took place in 1976. This included painting, woodwork refinishing, landscaping, and the addition of a new cafeteria.

The integrity of the facility is excellent, and the 1976 renovation helped maintain the building's original appearance. The interior retains its original incised moldings with bull's-eye corners. The third-floor gymnasium, with stained glass insets in the windows, is in excellent condition.

Endnote

1. This description is abstracted from the "Historic Designation Study Report," prepared for designation of the Fourth Street (Golda Meir) School as a Milwaukee City Landmark in 1988.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally: X Statewide: Locally:

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B X C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A B C D E F G

NHL Criteria: #2

Areas of Significance:	Period(s) of Significance	Significant Dates
Ethnic Heritage/Other	1906-12	_____

NHL Theme(s): XXX. American Ways of Life
 E. Ethnic Communities: Jewish-Americans

Significant Person(s): Meir, Golda

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Koch, Henry C.

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Summary

The Fourth Street School is one of three intact buildings in the United States associated with the life of Mrs. Golda Meir and was associated with her for the longest period. The building's significance in her life is documented in her autobiography, and it is situated in Milwaukee, which was her home for most of the 15 years she spent in the United States as a girl and young woman. The other structures associated with her life in the United States have been demolished, except for the house in Denver where she lived briefly, in 1913-14, with her sister and brother-in-law, and the high school she attended in Denver for a comparably short period.

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Golda's immigrant family arrived by steerage from Russia in 1906, after the notorious pogrom of the previous year, and one step ahead of the Czar's secret police. At the 4th Street School, she learned English and exhibited, at an extraordinarily early age, a talent for leadership.

Mrs. Meir, who served Israel in a variety of posts, including Minister of Labor, Foreign Minister, and Prime Minister, was a woman whose career and accomplishments were played out on the world stage from the 1940s through the mid-1970s. Her role, as much as that of any woman of her time, was of international importance, but her work was particularly central to the relationship between the American Jewish community and Israel and to the ties between the State of Israel and the United States.

As a one-time American, she was the strongest living link between the two nations. It is in this sense then that Mrs. Meir is a figure of exceptional importance in the history of the United States--as a "bird of passage" whose stay in the United States affected not only her, but left an indelible imprint on the history of both her adopted nations, the United States and Israel.

Thus, Mrs. Meir's career presents an unconventional, but meritorious, subject for historic recognition. It is highly unlikely that many other sites exist that represent emigration from the United States in as highly illustrative and poignant a manner.

History

Born in Kiev, in the Ukraine, in 1898, Golda Mabovitch spent her girlhood in Kiev and in Pinsk, Byelorussia ("White Russia"), within the Pale of Settlement (that limited zone of the Russian Empire--historically a part of Poland--to which Jewish residence was restricted after 1791). [1]

In 1906, she, her older sister, and mother joined her father Moshe in Milwaukee. He had come to America in 1903 and found work as a carpenter. In Milwaukee, the family settled on Walnut Street, where her mother ran a small store in the front of their apartment. Never becoming highly successful, the family did become assimilated in the Jewish immigrant community that then had established itself at the south end of Brewers' Hill, in that part of Milwaukee near the great Schlitz beer factory. [2]

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Golda studied at the 4th Street School, where she graduated in 1912 as valedictorian. During her years there she had already displayed the initiative and determination that would characterize her entire career. In 1908 she organized a group grandiosely known as the American Young Sisters Society to help provide free textbooks to poor children in her school. [3]

Golda entered Milwaukee's North Division High School in the fall of 1912, but her studies were interrupted by a dispute with her parents over her desire for a career as a teacher. She ran away from home early in 1913 to stay with her sister in Denver. In June 1914, she returned to Milwaukee, to her parents' home--although they had moved in the meantime--and finished high school. She began study at the local teachers' college (today part of the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee) in October 1916. [4]

Golda's political views and desire to emigrate to Palestine were germinating during these years. Political activity had surrounded Golda since childhood. Her sister's Zionist and Socialist sympathies had played a part in prompting their departure from Russia. She joined the Labor Zionist Party (Poalei Zion) in 1915 and led marches and rallies for them. During World War I, she worked for various Jewish relief programs and taught Yiddish at Milwaukee's Jewish Community Center.

After convincing her fiance, Morris Meyerson, whom she had met in Denver, to emigrate, she married him in Milwaukee in 1917. She dropped out of college, spent a brief time as a librarian in Chicago, and traveled widely for the Labor Zionists. Milwaukee remained her home base, where her family lived, and where her husband kept a small apartment for her. She was a Milwaukee delegate to the first convention of the American Jewish Congress in 1918. In 1920, preparatory to leaving for Palestine, she and Morris moved to New York City; they emigrated the next year with her sister and brother-in-law. [5] (Their parents followed in 1926.) Of this fateful step, she wrote in 1975:

I took a great deal with me from America to Palestine, more perhaps than I can express: an understanding of the meaning of freedom, and awareness of the opportunities offered to the individual in a true democracy and a permanent nostalgia for the great beauty of the American countryside. [6]

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In Palestine, then a British mandate under the League of Nations, the Meyersons--or Meirs--as the name was Hebraicized--joined the small Zionist vanguard who hoped for a permanent Jewish homeland. They joined the Merhavia kibbutz, but remained only about a year. Golda, who eventually separated from Morris, took a succession of increasingly responsible jobs. In 1928, she began working for Histadrut (the primary labor organization of the Zionist community). As the years passed, she made a series of visits to the United States, including trips in 1929, 1932-34, and 1937. A main reason for these trips was to lecture and raise funds for the Jewish community in Palestine. Just before and during World War II, she played a significant role in efforts to rescue European Jews from the Nazis.

When the Jewish "exodus" from Europe to Palestine assumed major dimensions in 1946 and 1947, it became almost inevitable that, when the British abandoned the mandate, full-scale war would break out. Virtually weaponless and penniless, the Jewish leaders anticipated the need to buy arms. Mrs. Meir, in part because of her fluent English and experience in the United States, was sent to the United States on a fund-raising visit in January-March 1948. During her six-week stay, she raised \$50,000,000. [7] Her success was such that, on her return, David Ben-Gurion praised her: "Someday when history will be written, it will be said that there was a Jewish woman who got the money which made the state possible." [8]

After participating in the May 14 signing of the "Scroll of Independence" of the State of Israel, she almost immediately left for the United States again, packing only a hairbrush, a toothbrush, one clean blouse, and the first travel document ever issued by Israel, a hastily prepared laissez-passer. This second visit yielded even more funds. [9] It is no exaggeration to assert that Ben-Gurion's praise of Mrs. Meir was justified. Later, she played an important role in convincing American Jewry to purchase substantial amounts of Israel Bonds. [10]

During the difficult years following independence, Meir held a series of posts: Ambassador to the Soviet Union (1948-49); Minister of Labor (1949-56), an especially important post because of the massive immigration to Israel during the period; Foreign Minister (1956-65); and Prime Minister (1969-74). She died in 1978.

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Mrs. Meir's visits to the United States included receptions at the White House, speeches at the United Nations, and public appearances. On one of the state visits, the Prime Minister was received at her old school in Milwaukee. Despite her many trips to the United States, she had not seen it since her departure for Israel in 1921. She recounted this visit in her autobiography:

It had not changed very much in all those years except that the vast majority of its pupils were now black, not Jewish, as in 1906. ... Standing in rows on the creaky old stage I remembered so well, freshly scrubbed and neat as pins, they serenaded me with Yiddish and Hebrew songs and raised their voices to peal out the Israeli anthem "Hatikvah" which made my eyes fill with tears.

... when the children asked me to talk to them for a few minutes, it was not about book learning that I chose to speak. I had learned a lot more than fractions or how to spell at Fourth Street, and I decided to tell those eager, attentive children--born, as I myself had been, into a minority and living, as I myself had lived, without much extravagance (to put it mildly)--what the gist of that learning had been. "It isn't really important to decide when you are very young just exactly what you want to become when you grow up," I told them. "It is much more important to decide on the way you want to live. If you are going to be honest with yourself and honest with your friends, if you are going to get involved with causes which are good for others, not only for yourselves, then it seems to me that that is sufficient, and maybe what you will be is only a matter of chance." [11]

The Fourth Street School, renamed for Mrs. Meir, still serves as a public school.

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Endnotes

1. The primary source used in preparing this summary of the life and career of Mrs. Meir was Golda Meir, My Life (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1975).
2. Mrs. Meir describes her childhood in Ibid., pp. 13-29.
3. Ibid., pp. 33-35, 38-40.
4. Ibid., pp. 40-45, 53-56.
5. Ibid., pp. 55-70
6. Ibid., pp. 70-71.
7. Ibid., pp. 211-214.
8. Ibid., p. 214.
9. Ibid., pp. 233-237.
10. Ibid., pp. 269-271.
11. Ibid., pp. 34-35.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Agress, Eliyahu. Golda Meir. New York: Sabra Books, 1969.
 (Trans. by Israel I. Taslitt.)

Meir, Golda. My Life. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1975.

Milwaukee Public Schools. Our Roots Grow Deep, 1836-1967.
 Milwaukee: 1974. 2nd ed.

Milwaukee Sentinel, July 3, 1888; July 16, 17, 20, and 23, 1889;
 September 14, 1889; October 9, 1889; December 13, 1889; and
 September 1, 1890.

Syrkin, Marie. Golda Meir, Israel's Leader. New York: G.P.
 Putnam's Sons, 1969.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register.
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: # _____
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other: Specify Repository: Department of City Development,
 Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 1.10 Acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
A 16 425450 4766660 B _____

Verbal Boundary Description:

The city block bounded by West Galena Street on the north, North Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Street on the east, West Court Street on the south, and North 4th Street on the west.

Boundary Justification:

This is the block historically occupied by the school and its playground.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: James H. Charleton, Historian

Organization: History Division (418), NPS

Date: July 9, 1990

Street & Number: P.O. Box 37127

Telephone: (202) 343-8165

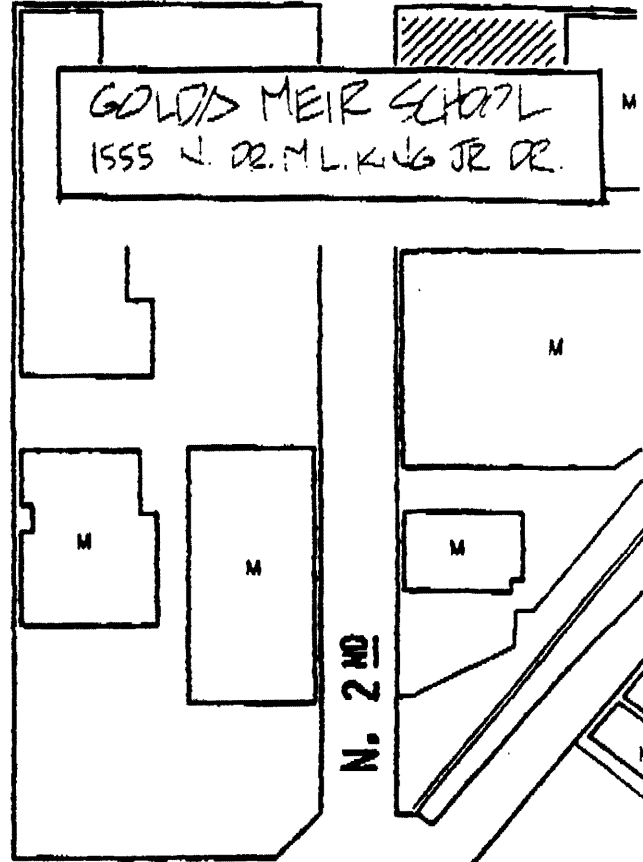
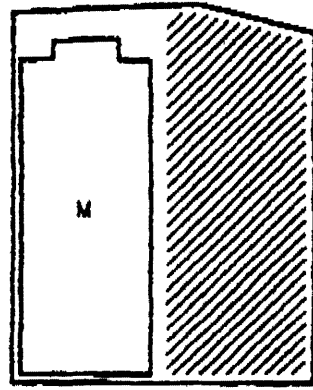
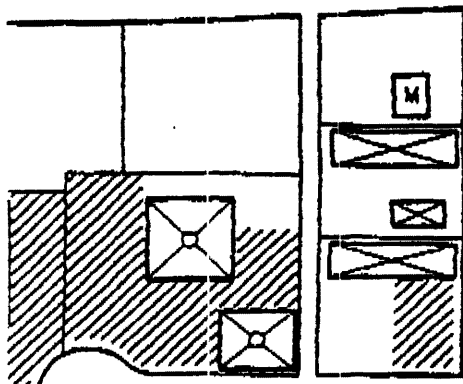
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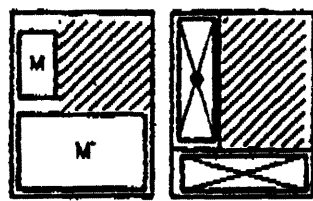
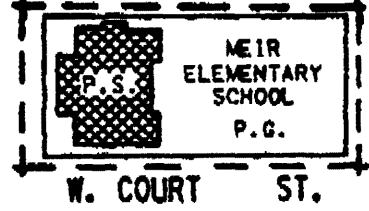
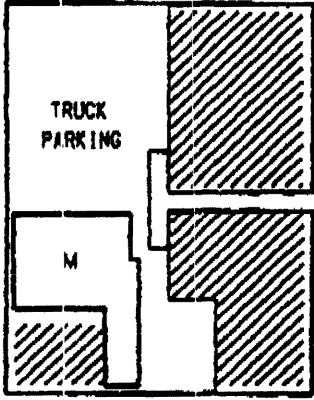
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W. GALENA

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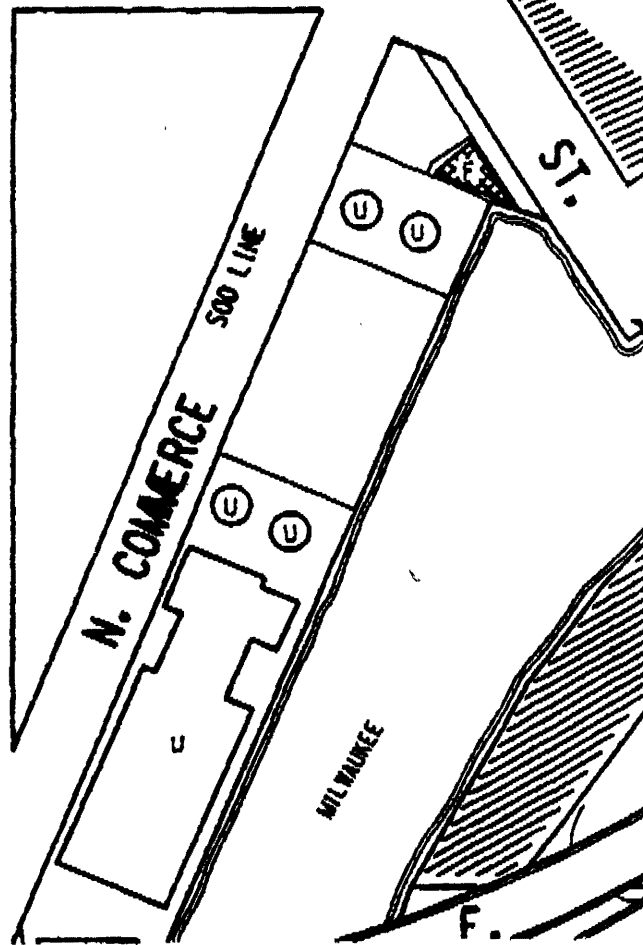
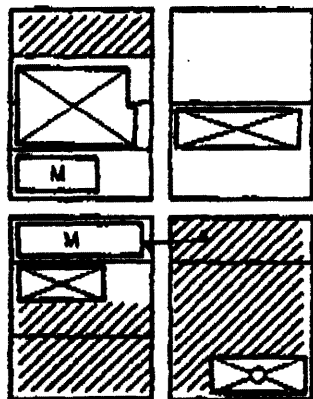
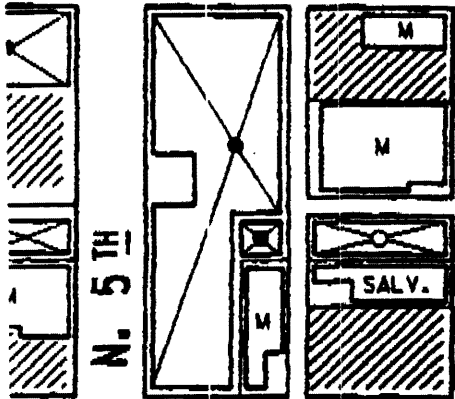
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N. 2ND

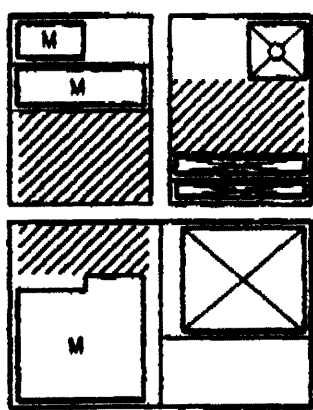
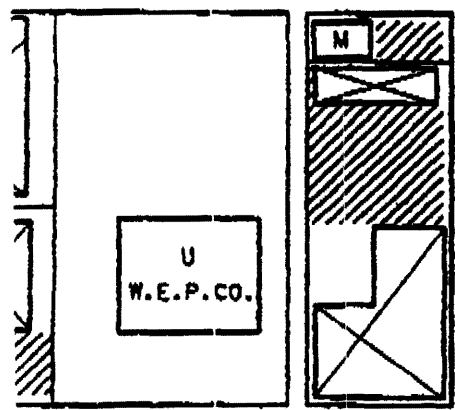
CHERRY

N. 5TH



VLIET

ST.



N. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

McKINLEY

AVE.

N. 4TH



MILWAUKEE