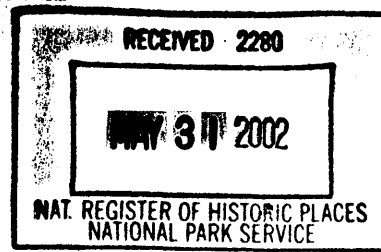


1778

United States Department of Interior
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 Amity Leather Products Company Factory
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number	723-735 South Main Street	N/A	not for publication
city or town	West Bend	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI	county Washington	code 131 zip code 53095

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title *Alicia J. Goch* Date *May 29, 2002*

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

Amity Leather Products Company Factory

Washington County

Wisconsin

Name of Property

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:)

Elson H. Beall

7/11/02

[Signature]

Signature of the Keeper

[Signature]

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

buildings

sites

structures

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
is previously listed in the National Register**

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION:

Manufacturing facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other Stone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 1

Amity Leather Products Company Factory
City of West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin

INTRODUCTION

The Amity Leather Products Company Factory is an utilitarian building with Art Deco features. As was characteristic of the "pilaster-and-panel mill construction" favored for industrial buildings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Amity Leather Products Company Factory is of brick-finished, structural clay tile with timber and steel-framing, trimmed with stone (photo 1). The factory is set on a raised, poured concrete basement, which is partially finished with brick. The factory was erected in three sections. The north two-story section was designed by Lockwood Greene, Engineers, and built in 1924.¹ The central (three-story) section, including the seven-story, Art Deco-influenced entrance tower, followed in 1929.² The south two-story section, although planned in 1929, was not erected until 1933.³ Chicago architect Fred Dolke, Junior designed the 1929 and 1933 sections. The enclosed loading dock on the rear of 1929 section was expanded post-1960; the expansion is non-contributing (see site plan and first floor plan, attached). A low, one-story section attached to the south end at ground level connects the factory with a two-story office building (much altered). Both were built in 1959.⁴ Due to their recent age and lack of distinction, both the connecting section and the office building are non-contributing elements of the Amity Leather Products

¹ 40th Anniversary, Amity Leather Products Company, Manufacturers of Amity and Rolfs Personal Leather Goods, (West Bend: N. p., 1955), no page numbers; and Robert Rolfs to Industrial Commission of Wisconsin, April 12, 1924, DIHLR series 2284 E16088, Wisconsin Historical Society.

² Fred Dolke, Jr., "Addition to Amity Leather Products Company Factory," Plans, 1929, West Bend Area Chamber of Commerce.

³ Dolke; Grinnell Co., Inc. "Amity Leather Products Company, Plan of Underground," 1930, West Bend Area Chamber of Commerce, which shows south section not yet constructed but does show the outline of the south section, labeled "future extension"; and Bob Zinkgraf, Manager, Special Programs, West Bend Area Chamber of Commerce, personal communication, January 22, 2001.

⁴ "Plot Plan, Amity Leather Products Company," dated July 23, 1959, DIHLR series 2284 E16088, Wisconsin Historical Society.

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Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 2

Amity Leather Products Company Factory
City of West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin

Company Factory and have been under separate ownership on a separate legal parcel since 1997.

DESCRIPTION

The Amity Leather Products Company Factory is located at 723 South Main Street, just south of West Bend's traditional downtown and in a neighborhood predominantly composed of early twentieth century, single-family houses. The factory stands on the east side of a busy, four-lane road, across the street from the old West Bend High School, a 1925 Collegiate Gothic structure that now houses Badger Middle School. A well-kept lawn with shrubs and mature trees provides a pleasant setting west (in front) and north of the factory. The non-contributing, 1959 connecting section and office building are attached to the south-facing façade of the factory. Parking lots and loading areas lie east of (behind) the factory.

The factory is rectangular in plan, with the long axis oriented north-south, parallel to South Main Street. The overall footprint of the 1924 through 1933 sections measures 350 feet (north-south) by 68 feet. The 1924 and 1933 sections are two stories tall, and flank the three-story, 1929 addition. On all contributing sections, as well as on the tower, parapets with stone copings hide the flat, built-up roofs. The factory faces west.

The entrance tower dominates the west-facing (front) façade. The square tower projects from the center of the 1929 addition, rising the equivalent of seven stories. Multiple brick pilasters of varying height and width emphasize the verticality of the tower and give it a stepped, zig-zag, Art Deco appearance. The entrance is set at the base of the tower's west face and is composed of a pair of multipane doors with multipane transoms (see photo 2). The entrance is recessed in a monumental surround that has the appearance of smooth-faced, coursed, white stone. A broad molding embellished with a series of floral patera frames

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Amity Leather Products Company Factory
City of West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin

the portal. On the inside face of the portal the date, 1929, has been carved. Narrow pilasters separate three metal hopper windows at each of the second, third and fourth floors of the tower. Narrow metal windows with white stone sills light the fifth and sixth stories. The north and south faces of the tower, as well as the east face above the roofline, match the west face of the tower, except that there are windows rather than doors at the first floor.

On either side of the tower, the west-facing façade of the three-story part of the factory displays two bays of windows at each floor (see photo 1). Horizontally-oriented, multipane metal windows appear at ground level. Brick pilasters with stone caps frame the bays at the first story. Paired steel industrial sash with stone sills are found at the first and second stories. At the third story, each bay holds two, multipane, metal awning windows with continuous stone sills. The brick header lintels are accented with stone corner blocks.

On the west-facing (front) façade of the two-story sections, one-story brick pilasters with stone caps divide the west-facing (front) façade of the two-story sections into bays. Grouped, steel industrial sash with stone sills and brick header lintels fill each bay (see photo 3, showing the east-facing façade of the 1924 section). At ground level, horizontally-oriented windows matching those in the three-story section are found. The bay at the north end of this façade (in the 1924 section) displays a very different fenestration pattern, with a column of single, multipane metal windows (see photo 4, near the center of the photo). These are offset from the first and second stories, showing that a staircase is located within.

Along the north-facing façade of the factory, the lot slopes down, setting the brick-finished basement above grade (see photo 4, on the left). At ground level, single and grouped industrial sash windows with stone sills are found. Toward the west end of

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Continuation Sheet**

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Amity Leather Products Company Factory
City of West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin

the façade, there are two metal doors. The westernmost door is surmounted by a panel of decorative brick and tile, and set in a projecting surround. The surround has the appearance of smooth-faced, coursed stone and is enriched with simple, classical moldings. Just east of this entrance is the second door. The way in which the opening for this door abuts the window next to it suggests that this is an alteration and that the opening originally held a window. Six multipane metal awning windows are regularly distributed on the upper stories. The east end of the façade incorporates an elevator tower, which rises slightly above the roofline of the rest of the façade.

On the south-facing façade of the factory, the 1959 connecting section attaches at ground level (see photo 5, on the right). Above the 1959 section, the first and second stories of the 1933 addition can be seen. These display four bays of paired, industrial sash windows with brick header lintels and stone sills. Brick pilasters with stone caps frame the first story windows. Stone corner blocks enliven the second floor lintels.

The east-facing (rear) façade is finished with a plainer brick than the other facades. Due to the slope of the lot, the basement is above grade (see photo 6). A square, five-story tower projects from the center of the rear façade. Brick pilasters with stone caps rise to the third story of the tower. On the south face, the pilasters separate steel industrial sash windows. Smaller industrial sash windows appear on the north and east faces. An enclosed, flat-roofed loading dock with multiple garage doors wraps most of the way around the base of the tower; the south end postdates 1960 and is non-contributing. On the main block of the factory, brick pilasters articulate the façade from the ground to the top of the first floor. Grouped industrial sash are set between the pilasters, except that a door opens at the south end of the 1924 section and there is a larger door adjacent to the elevator. In the three-story section, metal, multipane windows

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Amity Leather Products Company Factory
City of West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin

are evenly distributed. A square, brick chimney marks where the 1924 and 1929 sections meet (see photo 7).

On the interior, the entrance tower houses a staircase and an elevator (see plans attached). The vestibule displays green and beige terrazzo floors and baseboards, exposed brick walls and plaster ceilings (see photo 8). The staircase is of the "quarter turn with landing" type in an open stairwell. It is metal and has terrazzo treads, metal posts and balusters, and a wood handrail. On the fifth floor of the tower are two rooms. One was originally a conference room, but later became a nurse's office. The other was designed for Robert H. Rolfs, the founder and president of the company, and has a private bathroom.⁵ The sixth floor gives access to the company's huge copper water tank, which provided water to the sprinkler system and is said to have been the biggest in West Bend when it was installed in 1929.⁶

The ground floor is set at grade level on three sides, but is partially underground on the front façade. In all three contributing sections it is predominantly open, except for the company vault and a boiler room (with a sheet metal-clad door). In the northwest corner is an enclosed brick stairhall, with a wooden, dogleg staircase. An elevator (dating from 1924) is located in the northeast corner. Another dogleg staircase is located in the rear tower, accessed through a door in the east (rear) wall of the 1929 addition. Adjacent doors lead to two small rooms also located in the tower. The ground floor exhibits poured concrete floors, exposed brick walls, concrete and steel piers (1929 and 1933 additions) and timber posts (1924 section, many are steel-reinforced) as well as exposed timber and steel beams.

⁵ Dolke.

⁶ Zinkgraf.

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Amity Leather Products Company Factory
City of West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin

Amity's leather products were manufactured on the second and third floors (which correspond to the first and second stories when looking at the exterior front façade). These spaces are also open, except that bathrooms were located in the north end (1924 section) between the elevator and the stairhall. The rear tower contains an enclosed staircase and two bathrooms at each of the second and third stories. As on the ground floor, the piers, posts, beams and walls are all exposed (see photo 9). The original wood flooring has been retained, except that there is some asphalt tile on the second floor.

The administrative offices of the Amity Leather Products Company originally occupied the fourth floor (which corresponds to the third story when looking at the exterior front façade). The floor was open initially. In 1943, the fourth floor was remodeled, creating a large enclosed office space with half-height wood walls and glass windows.⁷ Currently, the fourth floor has been partitioned to create additional offices. Finishes include drywall, dropped acoustical tile ceilings and carpeting. Most of these changes date after 1996, when the Amity Leather Products Company closed this facility.⁸

NON-CONTRIBUTING SECTIONS

The two-story office building and the section that connects it with the factory are non-contributing elements of the Amity Leather Products Company Factory complex. These sections are located at the south end of the complex.

The office building is two stories tall, exhibits a flat roof with a parapet, and rests on a raised, poured concrete basement.

⁷ Nudscker, Walbridge and Jacobson, "Office Remodeling - Amity Leather Products Company," Plans, February 12, 1943, West Bend Area Chamber of Commerce.

⁸ Zinkgraf.

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Amity Leather Products Company Factory
City of West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin

It is finished with brick set in vertical panels, which alternate with dark, fixed, single-pane windows in dark metal frames. The office building was remodeled to its current appearance circa 1975. The interior has also been substantially altered.

The connecting section is composed of a long, low, one-story addition that joins the factory and the office building at basement level. This section is of poured concrete construction, is partially-finished with brick and has a flat roof. Bands of metal, multipane, industrial sash appear in the connecting section, some inset with aluminum awning windows. The interior is intact and consists of an open plan with exposed finishes.

ALTERATIONS

The Amity Leather Products Company Factory has had few alterations. The most noticeable is the presence of the 1959 office building and the section that connects it to the factory. However, the office building is set at the south end of the property, and the connecting section is very low, joining the two parts at basement level. The connecting section visually separates the factory and the office building, and the connecting section's short stature minimizes the impact of these sections on the factory.

On the exterior of the contributing sections, the enclosed loading dock at the base of the rear tower has been expanded; and two window openings on the rear and north-facing (side) facades have been enlarged to accommodate doors. Although all the original metal windows have been retained, aluminum awning windows have been inset in some of them.

Interior changes are concentrated on the fourth floor, which was remodeled in 1943 and again following the departure of the Amity Leather Factory Company in 1996. Partitions, dropped acoustical tile ceilings and carpet were installed.

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Taken altogether, these alterations are minimal and do not impair the otherwise excellent integrity of the Amity Leather Factory Company.

Amity Leather Products Company Factory
Name of Property

Washington County, Wisconsin
County and State

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.)

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from
instructions)

Architecture

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.

Period of Significance

1924-33

Significant Dates

1924; 1929; 1933

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is
marked above)

N/A

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

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 resource.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Lockwood Greene, Engineers
Dolke, Fred, Junior

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the sources used in preparing this form on continuation sheet(s).)

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Section 8 Page 1

Amity Leather Products Company Factory
City of West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: SUMMARY

The Amity Leather Products Company Factory is locally significant under Criterion C as a good and exceptionally intact example of a building type called the "textile mill industrial loft." This type of industrial building was erected between about 1885 and 1930. The period of significance for the Amity Leather Products Company Factory encompasses the dates of construction of the contributing sections, 1924-1933. The Amity Leather Products Company Factory's high degree of integrity likely derives from the company's continued use of the building as a factory until 1996. The factory is currently empty, although the West Bend Area Chamber of Commerce occupies the attached office building.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY OF WEST BEND

The future city of West Bend received its first European-American settlers in 1846. They were drawn by the construction of a new, state-sponsored road running from Milwaukee to Fond du Lac, built in 1845. Byron Kilbourn, James Kneeland and Dr. Erastus B. Walcott supervised the construction of the road, which would cut the travel time between Milwaukee and Fond du Lac to two days. Kilbourn, Kneeland and Walcott realized that travelers would need a place to stop over, and purchased land adjacent to the road about half-way between Milwaukee and Fond du Lac. A portion of this land was platted as "West Bend" in January 1846, named for the nearby horse-shoe bend in the Milwaukee River. The same year, Dr. Walcott had a dam built on the Milwaukee River at West Bend, and erected a sawmill next to it. George Irish built the first frame house in West Bend using lumber cut at Walcott's sawmill. Irish operated the community's first hotel in his home. William Wightman opened the second hotel and tavern in the community in 1847. Other early settlers in the community of West

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City of West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin

Bend included E. N. Higgins, M. A. T. Farmer, Amos and Isaac Verbeck and their families.⁹

Most of the early settlers in West Bend were Yankees from New England, New York and Pennsylvania. They were soon followed by German immigrants, most of whom came from the southwestern German states of Nassau, Hesse, the Rhineland, Pfaly, Baden, Wurtenburg, and Bavaria. By 1850, nearly half of the population of West Bend was German-born.¹⁰

West Bend developed as an agricultural support community, incorporating as a village in 1868. In 1873, the Chicago and North Western Railway extended a line through West Bend, sparking economic growth in the village, and solidifying the village's role as a regional trading center.¹¹

By 1880, the village of West Bend had developed a thriving industrial sector that included a brewery, an agricultural implements factory (eventually known as the Gehl Brothers Manufacturing Company) and a stave factory. In 1885, West Bend incorporated as a city. In 1890, the City of West Bend had a population of 1,296. Many were of German origin.¹²

West Bend grew steadily through the 1920s. The commercial industrial sector of the city continued to expand, and many new companies were organized during the period. Among these were the West Bend Bottling Company (established in 1892), the Krieger Collar and Harness Factory (founded in 1895), and the Enger Kress

⁹ History of Washington and Ozaukee Counties, Wisconsin, (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881), pp. 389-91.

¹⁰ Ibid.; and Peter A. Rathbun, David W. Vannoy and Mary Yeater Rathbun, "Final Report of an Intensive Architectural/Historical Survey of West Bend, Wisconsin," prepared for the City of West Bend and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, March 1988, p. 115.

¹¹ History of Washington and Ozaukee Counties, Wisconsin, p. 444.

¹² Ibid.; and Rathbun, Vannoy and Rathbun, pp. 29 and 115.

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Section 8 Page 3 Amity Leather Products Company Factory
City of West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin

Company (begun in 1894). The latter was a leather factory that, by the 1920s, would become one of the largest producers of leather pocket books and wallets in the United States. In 1911, Bernhard C. Ziegler, S. F. Mayer and Andrew Pick founded what would become the West Bend Aluminum Company, an innovative manufacturer of frying pans and other products that would eventually be sold world-wide (and which continues to make kitchen appliances today, as the West Bend Company).¹³

On September 29, 1915, Robert H. Rolfs founded the Amity Leather Products Company in a small room on the second floor over William Peters' Store at 104 South Main Street (extant) in downtown West Bend. Rolfs (1888-19?) was born in Milwaukee although his mother's family, the Goettters, were among the early German settlers of West Bend. Rolfs graduated from West Bend High School. While still in high school, he worked first at the West Bend newspaper, where he is said to have gained an appreciation for the power of advertising. Upon leaving high school, Rolfs was employed at the Enger Kress Company in West Bend. Rolfs worked his way through a series of positions at Enger Kress, becoming very knowledgeable about the leather goods business in his eight years with that company.¹⁴

In the small room on the second floor of Peters' Store, Rolfs and one employee made leather billfolds. Rolfs incorporated his company in February 1916, naming it "Amity" because ". . . fine leather goods are friendly possessions. They make the best of friendly gifts."¹⁵ The young company was very successful and grew to include 15 employees by 1917. That year, the Amity Leather Products Company moved to the third floor of the

¹³ Rathbun, Vannoy and Rathbun, pp. 30-31.

¹⁴ Wisconsin: Stability, Progress, Beauty, (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1946), V:203-05.

¹⁵ 40th Anniversary Amity Leather Products Company Manufacturers of Amity and Rolfs Personal Leather Goods, no page numbers.

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Section 8 Page 4 Amity Leather Products Company Factory
City of West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin

Hangartner Block at 130 North Main Street (extant) and opened a sales office in New York City. In 1918, the company expanded onto the first and second floors of the Hangartner Block. During World War I, Amity made leather jerkins for soldiers. After the war, the company grew rapidly, developing a national market. In 1924, the original section of the existing Amity Leather Products Company Factory was erected at 723 South Main Street. At that time, the company employed 178 (nearly all women). Amity launched a national advertising campaign with the slogan, "if it's stamped Amity it's leather." The campaign was so successful that a large addition was planned in 1929, including room for expansion. The first part of the addition was erected in 1929. Amity's sales increased through the Depression. In 1933, the factory was expanded in accordance with the 1929 plan. By the mid-1930s, the Amity Leather Products Company had become the largest manufacturer of leather billfolds in the country.¹⁶ West Bend's industrial sector remained vibrant during the Depression and included the White House Milk Company (producers of evaporated milk), the Enger Kress Company, Pick Manufacturing Company (makers of automotive products), Gehl Brothers Manufacturing (farm machinery manufacturers), West Bend Aluminum Company and Amity Leather Products Company.¹⁷

In the late 1930s, the Amity Leather Products Company began making a new type of billfold (with pockets for cards, photos and key), and added handbags and travel kits to their product line. During World War II, the Amity Leather Products Company made handbags for female military personnel. After the war, the company acquired a plant in Sturgeon Bay, moving its travel kit manufacturing operations there.¹⁸ In 1959, the non-contributing

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ "West Bend Golden Anniversary Homecoming, Celebrating 50 Years of Progress," Souvenir booklet, July 4-7, 1935, p. 13.

¹⁸ Ibid.

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Amity Leather Products Company Factory
City of West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin

office addition was attached to the south end of the factory in West Bend.

The Amity Leather Products Company continued to make billfolds in the factory in West Bend until 1996, when manufacturing operations were relocated overseas.¹⁹ In 1997, the parcel on which the building is located was divided in two, leaving the office addition and the factory on separate parcels.²⁰ Stone House Development acquired the factory property in 2001 and will rehabilitate the structure as an apartment building using historic preservation tax credits.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Amity Leather Products Company Factory is locally significant under Criterion C as an exceptionally-intact example of an industrial building type: the textile mill industrial loft. This building type was constructed in the United States between about 1885 and 1930.

The form of the textile mill industrial loft had its origins in the textile mills of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Technical improvements in weaving and spinning developed in England in the 1760s required the use of a mechanical system of pulleys and belts, rotating shafts and gears, linked together and driven by steam or water power. Economic efficiency dictated the layout of the mechanized textile mill, creating a long, narrow, multistory building with open floors and high ceilings to accommodate the machinery and provide sufficient light and ventilation. On each floor, a single, rotating wooden shaft operated the textile machinery. Belts, pulleys and shafts running through the floors connected the

¹⁹ Zinkgraf.

²⁰ Washington County Certified Survey Maps, 33:143-47, August 1, 1997.

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Section 8 Page 6

Amity Leather Products Company Factory
City of West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin

horizontal shafts to the source of power. The first mechanized textile mill in the United States was erected in Pawtucket, Rhode Island in 1790. Conditions in New England proved ideal for mechanized textile manufacturing. A network of rivers provided ample water power, capital was abundant, labor sufficient and the damp climate strengthened cotton fiber. The textile industry flourished, especially in Massachusetts, into the late nineteenth century. The building form that had developed for textile mills in Britain was widely used in New England. As other industries in the United States mechanized, many adopted the long, narrow, multistory building form of the textile mill and continued to use it into 1930s.²¹

As defined by architectural historian, Betsey Hunter Bradley, the "industrial loft" was a long, narrow, multistory industrial building designed to optimize natural light and ventilation. Prior to 1930, the industrial loft had brick walls with heavy timber framing. In the late 1910s, steel-reinforced concrete construction began to be utilized in industrial loft buildings. Paired with continuous, steel industrial sash windows, this was called "daylight" construction because the amount of wall space devoted to windows doubled. Daylight construction became widely used for other kinds of industrial buildings, especially the sprawling, one-story "production shed," in the first decade of the twentieth century. The multistory industrial loft was more expensive to erect than the one-story production shed and daylight construction was more expensive than brick-and-timber. Therefore, factory owners, always striving for economic efficiency, did not adopt daylight construction for loft buildings until the 1920s, when the cost of steel dropped and long, straight lengths of timber grew scarce due to the

²¹ Ken Breisch, Serge Hambourg and Noel Perrin, Mills and Factories of New England, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1988), pp. 24-26.

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Amity Leather Products Company Factory
City of West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin

harvesting of old-growth forests. Daylight industrial lofts were built until around 1940.²²

During the 1920s, use of the electric fork-lift truck became wide-spread. As a result, the concrete-floored, one-story, production shed type of industrial building was increasingly preferred over the multistory industrial loft after 1930. Improvements in artificial lighting, such as the introduction of fluorescent lights in 1938, and the increasing efficiency of air-conditioning, led to the development of the "controlled conditions plant." A one-story, steel-reinforced concrete structure, the controlled conditions plant had glass-block or other fixed windows, or was windowless. It was the preferred type of industrial plant after 1940, although daylight production sheds continued to be built into the 1950s.²³

The "textile mill," as defined by Bradley, is a specialized subtype of industrial loft building designed for a specific manufacturer. It was especially suited to light manufacturing industries, such as the leather billfolds the Amity Leather Products Company made. The textile mill industrial loft was constructed between 1885 and 1930. Plans for textile mill industrial loft buildings appeared in various publications, such as the 1885 edition of Frank Kidder's construction manual, Architects and Builders Pocketbook. The pilaster-and-panel brick exterior and the wood framing and flooring known as mill construction was standard for textile mill industrial lofts because it minimized the effects of machinery vibration, resisted the spread of fire and provided a high level of natural lighting and ventilating at a relatively low cost. Timber-framing had high tensile strength (resisting breaking and bending well),

²² Betsy Hunter Bradley, The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States, (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 104-07, 146 and 156.

²³ Ibid., pp. 161-63.

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Amity Leather Products Company Factory
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elasticity, was easy to work and allowed more flexibility in plant layout than masonry walls. Fire-resistive elements in the textile mill industrial loft included: the brick and timber construction; the elimination of ceiling finishes, attics and combustible interior furnishings such as shelving; the isolation of staircases and offices in towers apart from the factory floor; plank doors clad with sheet-metal; steel-framed, wire-glass windows, which were shatter-proof; and sprinklers with a water tank on the roof. The flat roof, a standard feature of mill construction, added to the stability of the structure, increased its fire resistance and provided outdoor space that could be used for noxious processes or for employee recreation. Ceiling height ranged from 12 to 14 feet, increasing with the width of the building.²⁴

The exterior appearance of the textile mill industrial loft, generally termed "astylistic utilitarian," was the result of the engineer's concept of beauty, which was based on function and utility rather than the formality or picturesqueness that architects of the day found beautiful. Industrial buildings were detailed to imply strength, stability and efficient manufacturing organization. This was achieved through simple, functional designs that showcased the quality of the materials used and expressed the construction on the exterior. On textile mill industrial lofts, the pilaster-and-panel brick walls were articulated both vertically and horizontally, with pilasters, spandrels and belt courses. Pilasters were often truncated at floor or window level on the top story, truthfully showing that, above that point, brick piers no longer supported the structure. Engineers emphasized the structure by placing ornament at load-bearing locations, such as window lintels, and pilaster capitals and bases. In contrast, architects recommended enriching industrial buildings around prominent features, such as entrances and towers. In the 1910s and 1920s, European modernist architects

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 27, 30-33, 113, 125-35.

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Amity Leather Products Company Factory
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were inspired by American industrial designs, expressing the construction of other types of buildings.²⁵

The Amity Leather Products Company Factory is a fine example of a textile mill industrial loft, incorporating and retaining many of the features described above. It is a long, narrow building of fire-resistive, masonry pilaster-and-panel mill construction (structural clay tile with timber and steel framing, brick finish and flat roof). The factory has other fire resistive elements as well: the interior is exposed, there is a water tank with sprinklers, the windows are metal industrial sash, there is no attic and the stairs and elevators are isolated either in a separate tower or a shaft enclosed in brick. The offices are either in the front facade tower, or on the fourth floor, isolated from the factory floors in that no manufacturing took place on the fourth floor. The exterior is a stylistic utilitarian, reflecting the engineer's aesthetic with its functional design and the pilasters framing the windows at the first floor. However, the front facade tower is enriched according to the architect's ideal of beauty: the tower with its stepped, Art Deco detailing is a very prominent feature of the factory; and the entrance is emphasized with a white stone finish and classical ornamentation including a broad floral patera molding. Interestingly, the tower was designed by an architect, Fred Dolke, Junior, who concentrated the architectural flourishes on the front facade tower, while matching the rest of the 1929/1933 addition, which is predominantly manufacturing space, with the 1924 section. The 1924 section, which is almost all manufacturing space, conforms to the engineer's concept of beauty and was in fact designed by an engineering firm, Lockwood Greene, Engineers. The Amity Leather Products Company Factory retains excellent integrity.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 202-32.

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Amity Leather Products Company Factory
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The 1987 intensive survey of the architectural resources of the city of West Bend identified eight industrial buildings dating from the early-to-mid twentieth century. Of these, only three are textile mill industrial loft buildings, including the Amity Leather Products Company Factory. The other two are the West Bend Aluminum Factory at 400 West Washington Street and a building at 431 South Western Avenue. The West Bend Aluminum Factory is a sprawling structure ranging from two to four stories. Of brick pilaster-and-panel construction with industrial sash windows, the West Bend Aluminum Factory is a fine and intact example of a textile mill industrial loft. The building at 431 South Western Avenue is smaller than either the Amity Leather Products Company Factory or the West Bend Aluminum Company, but is also a good and intact example of a textile mill industrial loft. It is a two-story, brick, pilaster-and-panel structure with industrial sash. All three textile mill industrial loft buildings in West Bend are good and intact examples and all three may be eligible for the National Register.

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City of West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin

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Zinkgraf, Bob. Manager, Special Programs, West Bend Area Chamber of Commerce. Personal communication, January 22, 2001.

Amity Leather Products Company Factory
Name of Property

Washington County, Wisconsin
County and State

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
Name of repository:
West Bend Chamber of Commerce

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3.0

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>1/6</u>	<u>4/0/4/4/4/0</u>	<u>4/8/0/7/3/4/0</u>	2	<u>/</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / / /</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth L. Miller, Historic Preservation Consultant
organization for Stone House Development date 9-06-01
street & number 4033 Tokay Boulevard telephone 608-233-5942
city or town Madison state WI zip code 53711

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)

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The legal parcel on which the Amity Leather Products Company Factory is located is described as follows: all of Block 95 in Map of the Highlands, being part of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 13, Town 11 North, Range 19 East, City of West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin.

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

These boundaries coincide with the legal boundaries on which the Amity Leather Products Company Factory sits and enclose the all the resources that are historically associated with the property.

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City of West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin

Photo 1 of 9
Amity Leather Products Company Factory
City of West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin
All photos were taken by Elizabeth L. Miller in January 2001.
Negatives on file at the Wisconsin Historical Society.
View of the east-facing (front) façade, looking northwest.

The information for the following photos is the same as the
above, except as noted:

Photo 2 of 9
View of the front entrance, looking west.

Photo 3 of 9
View of the east-facing (front) façade of the 1924 section.

Photo 4 of 9
View of the east- and north-facing facades, 1924 section, looking
southwest.

Photo 5 of 9
View of the south- and east- (front-) facing facades, looking
northwest

Photo 6 of 9
View of the south- and west- (rear-) facing facades, looking
northeast.

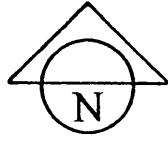
Photo 7 of 9
View of the west-facing (rear) façade, 1924 section, looking
northeast.

Photo 8 of 9
View the vestibule in the entrance tower, looking southwest.

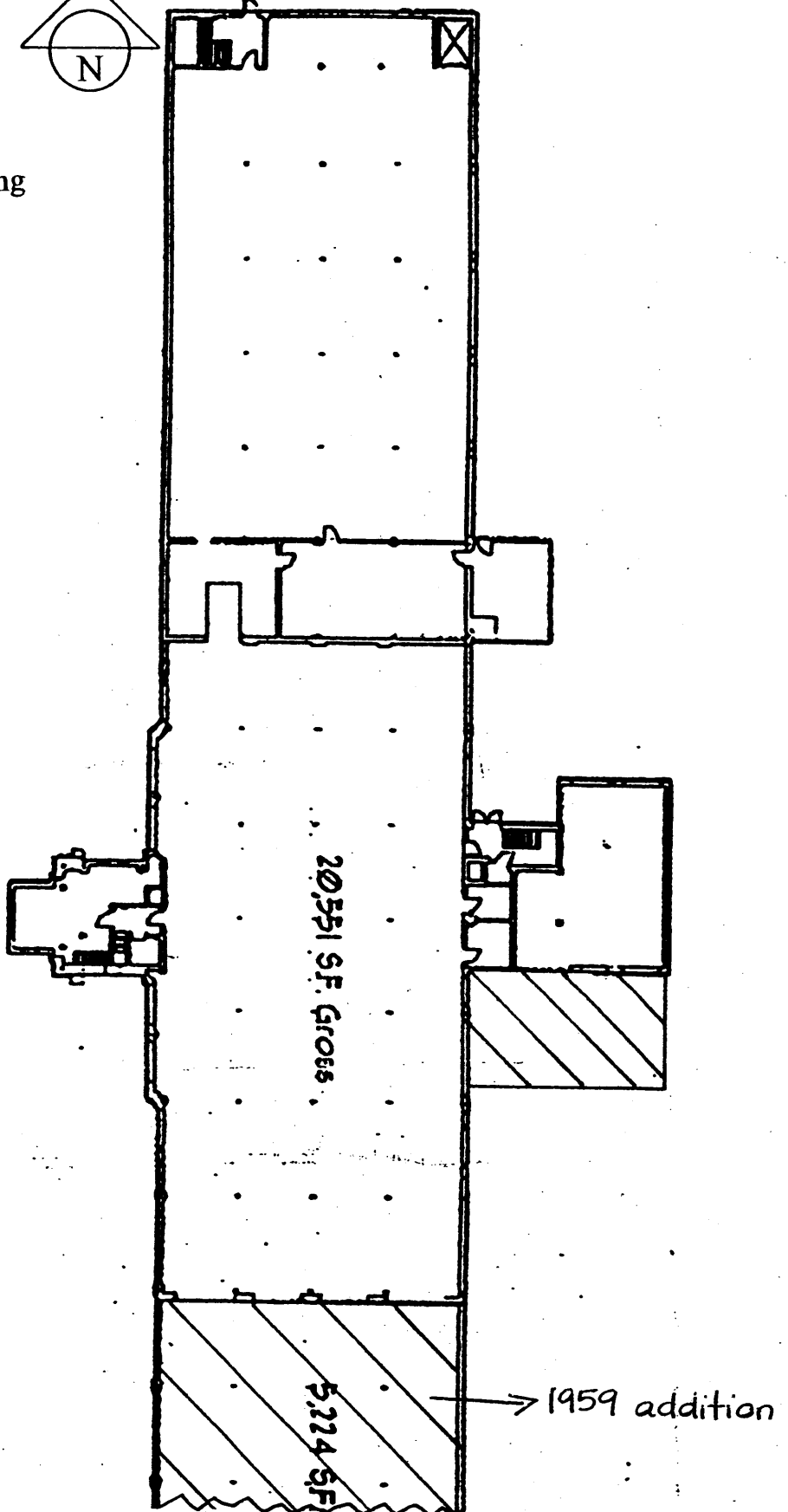
Photo 9 of 9
View of the third floor, 1929 section, looking southeast.

First Floor Plan
Amity Leather Products Company Factory
West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin

Not to scale

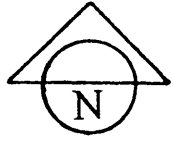


- Contributing
- ▨ Non-contributing

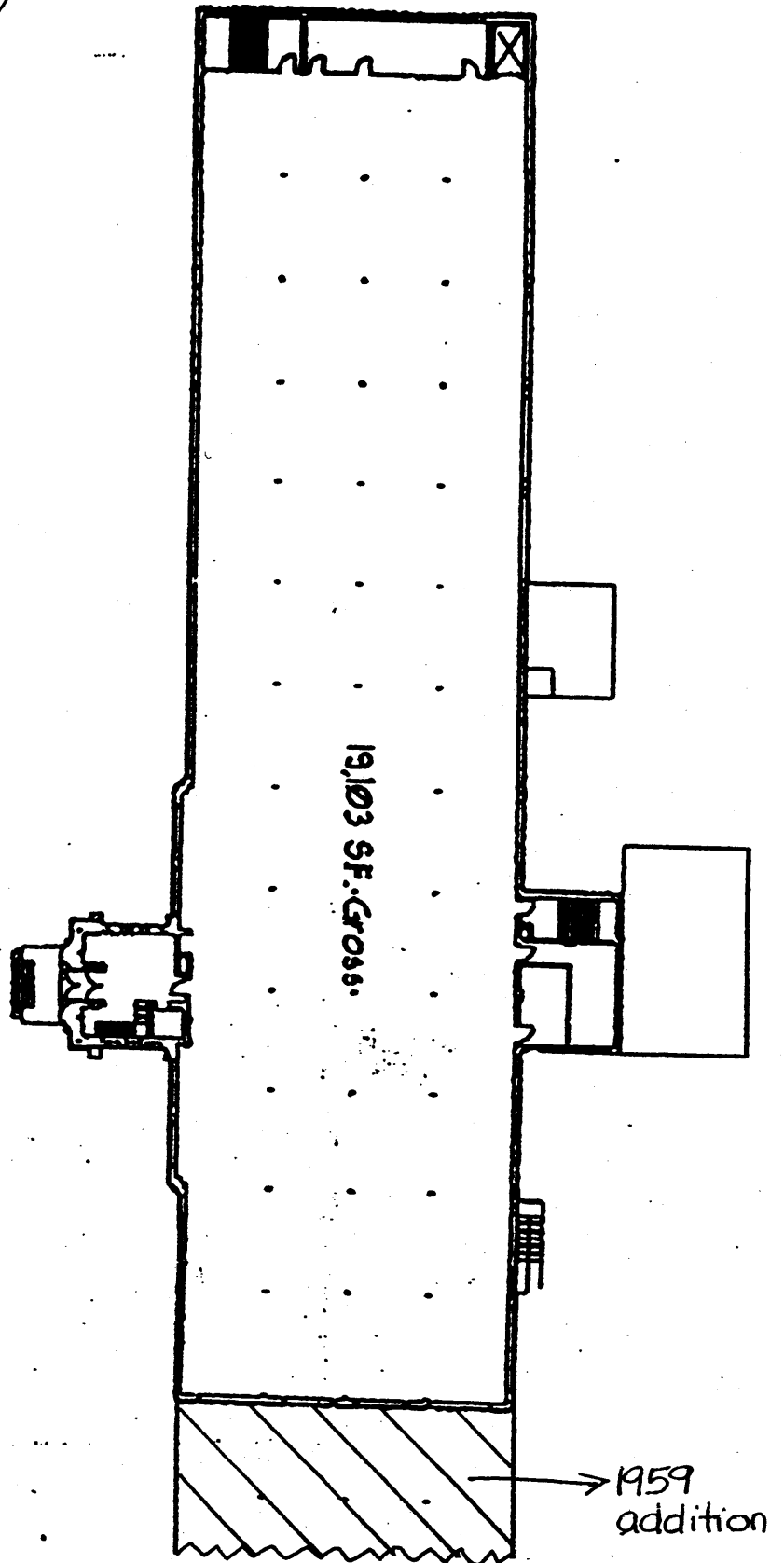


Second Floor Plan
Amity Leather Products Company Factory
West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin

Not to scale



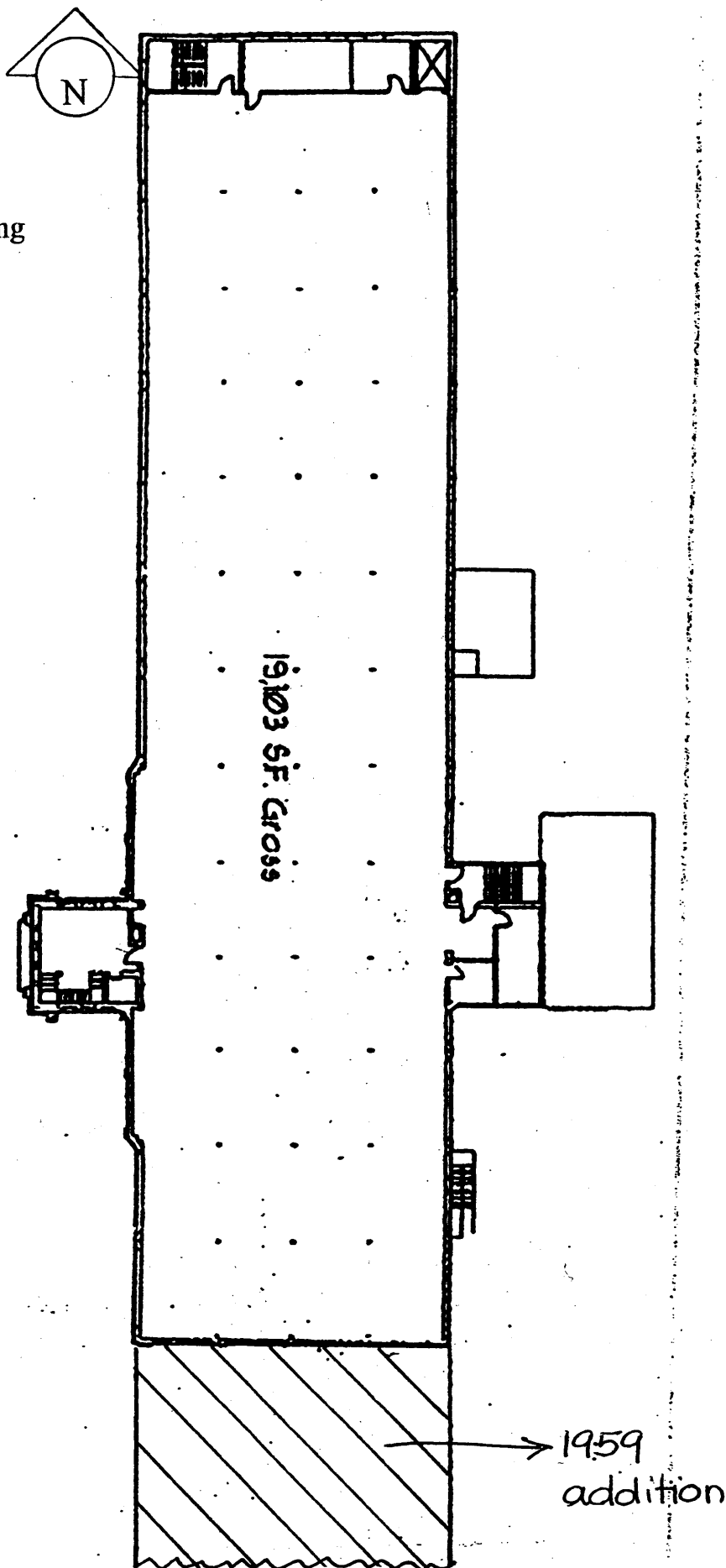
- Contributing
- ▣ Non-contributing



Third Floor Plan
Amity Leather Products Company Factory
West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin

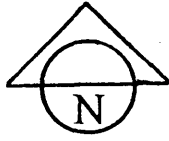
Not to scale

- Contributing
- ▨ Non-contributing

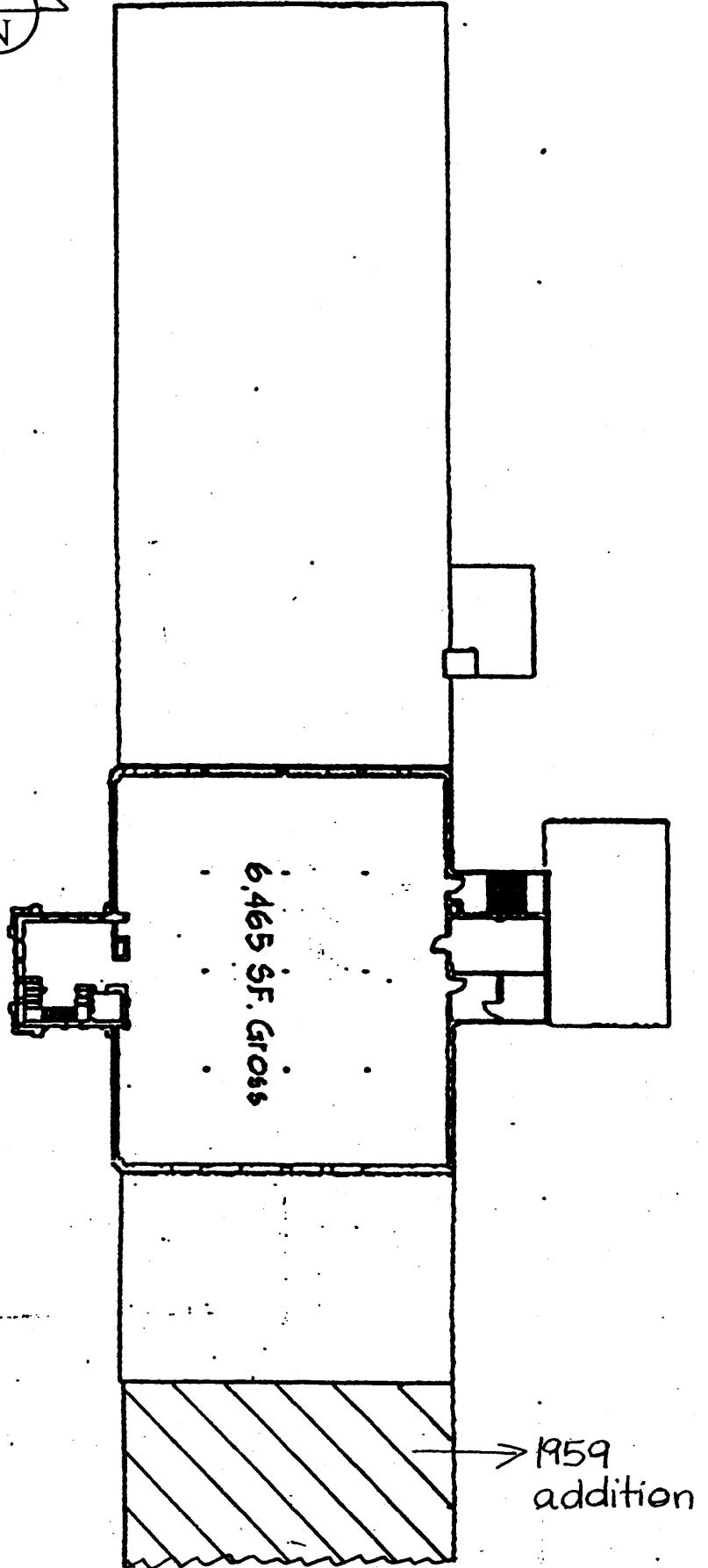


Fourth Floor Plan
Amity Leather Products Company Factory
West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin

Not to scale

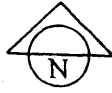


- Contributing
- Non-contributing



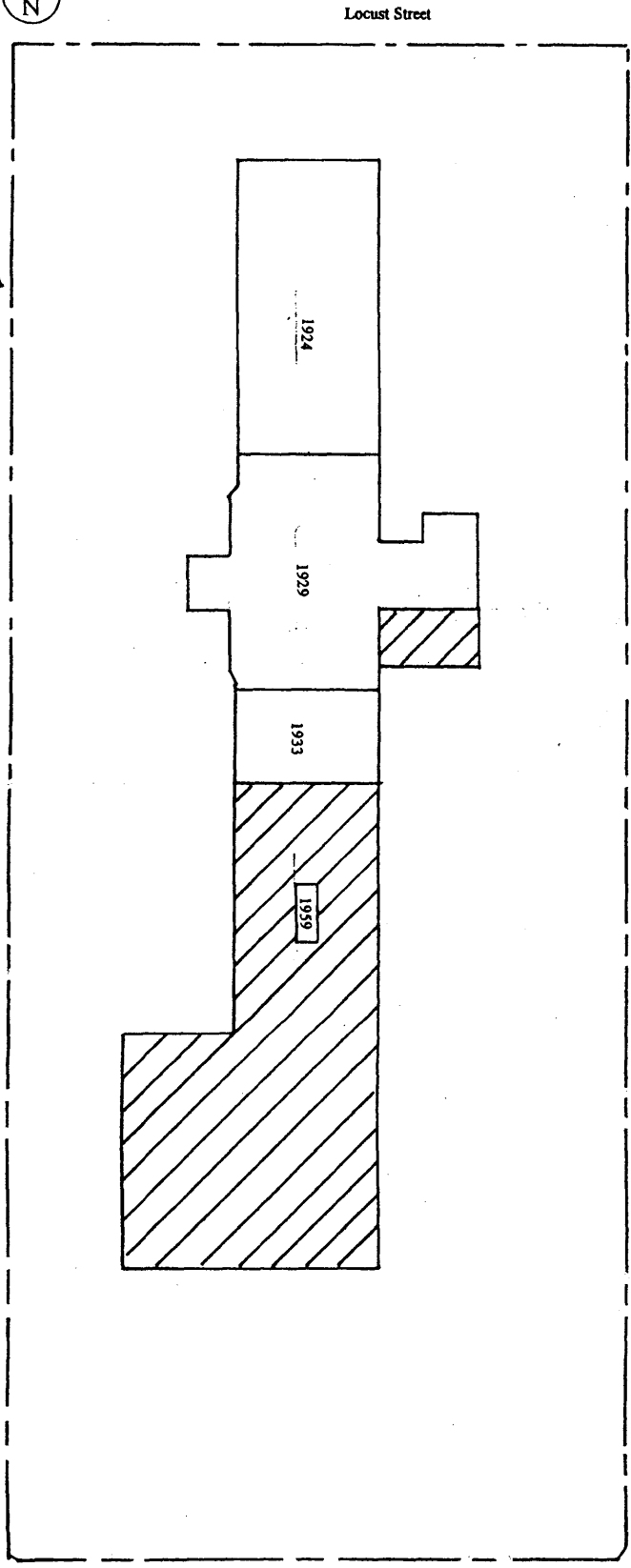
Site Plan
Amity Leather Products Company Factory
West Bend, Washington County, Wisconsin

Not to scale



- Contributing
- Non-contributing

property boundary 



Locust Street

South Main Street

South Third Avenue

Sycamore Street

Amity Leather Products Company Factory
Name of Property

Washington County, Wisconsin
County and State

Property Owners

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Amity Apartments, LLC (c/o Richard Arnesen, Stone House Dev.)
street & number 147 South Butler Street telephone 608-251-6000
city or town Madison state Wisconsin zip code 53703

name West Bend Joint School District (non-contributing addition)
street & number 735 South Main Street telephone 262-335-5435
city or town West Bend state Wisconsin zip code 53095

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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.