NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

306

United States Department of the 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 E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 141 Elm Street (456 Michigan Avenue) [ ] not for publication

city or town Buffalo [ ] vicinity

state New York code NY county Erie code 029 zip code 14203

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] 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 as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [X] locally. ([ ] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ruth L Pierpont DSHPO 3/29/13
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
[X] entered in the National Register
[ ] see continuation sheet
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register
[ ] see continuation sheet
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register

[ ] removed from the National Register

[ ] other (explain)

for Alexis Abernathy 5/22/2013
Signature of the Keeper date of action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

[X] private
[ ] public-local
[ ] public-State
[ ] public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

[X] building(s)
[ ] district
[ ] site
[ ] structure
[ ] 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 is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Work in progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH and EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN/
no style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE
walls BRICK
roof ASPHALT
other WOOD

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

[X] **A** Property 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.

[X] **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that 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.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all 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 building, object, or structure

[ ] **F** a commemorative property

[ ] **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance:
(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

INDUSTRY

Period of Significance:

1878 – c.1920

Significant Dates:

c. 1889 – c. 1914

c. 1920

Significant Person:

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Unknown

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

[X] 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 Building Survey
_____
[ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record
_____

Primary location of additional data:

[X] State Historic Preservation Office
[ ] Other State agency
[X] Federal Agency
[ ] Local Government
[ ] University
[ ] Other repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than an acre

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	184055	4755300	3			
2				4			

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 Caitlin T. Boyle, Architectural Historian (Contact: Daniel McEneny – NYSHPO)

organization Preservation Studios date 2/12/2013

street & number 257 Lafayette Avenue, Suite 3 telephone

city or town Buffalo state NY zip code 14213

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 SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Elm Michigan Holdings LLC

street & number 2760 Kenmore Avenue telephone

city or town Buffalo state NY zip code 14150

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

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, D.C. 20503

Narrative Description of Property

Summary

The E.M. Hager and Sons Co. building is overall rectangular in shape with a small extension on the southwest corner and a larger extension on the northeast corner. The main block of the building is three stories in height with a two-story wing to the north and a three story, with mezzanine, addition (of the same height as the three story block) to the south. A three-story section leads east from the back of the two-story north wing. All sections are brick with segmental arch wood windows and the main building and south addition are further unified by a similar wooden cornice and decorative brickwork below the cornice line.

Location/Setting

The E.M. Hager and Sons Co. building is located at 141 Elm Street, east of Main Street in downtown Buffalo. Elm Street runs north-south and the Hager building site occupies the full frontage along Elm Street from William Street to the north to Clinton Street to the south. The neighborhood was historically an industrial area with mid-to-late nineteenth century pockets of residential blocks providing housing for workers at nearby manufacturing facilities.

Before 1940, William Street was a small thoroughfare called Vine Alley, and there were buildings associated with the Hager Company on the corner of Elm and Vine. Those buildings no longer remain and the street has been widened bringing William Street within 40 feet of the north wall of the Hager building. The Hager building is the sole remaining structure along Elm Street in this block, with the land to the west that once served as a lumber and mill yard currently used for parking. There are additional industrial structures unrelated to the Hager site, built at the turn of the century, on the block facing Clinton Street.

Chronological Description

The oldest building in the complex is the three-story main block, constructed in 1878. The two-story wing to the north and the three-story section behind it were built a few years later (c. 1880) by a different wood working company. These buildings were eventually acquired by Hager and incorporated into the ever growing complex. The final addition came circa 1920 with the construction of a three-story wing that includes a mezzanine level.

Wooden storage shed structures in various configurations were at one time on Elm Street south of the current building. They were on the site until the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Exterior

The principal façade of the E.M. Hager and Sons Co. building faces west on Elm Street **(E-1)**. It is composed of an original building, at center, with an addition on either side. The main block of the building is three stories in height and was built in 1878. The two-story wing to the north was a separate wood working company, as was

the three-story section behind this. Both were constructed circa 1880 **(E-2)**. Hager incorporated all three constructions to function as a single manufacturing building. A three-story (with mezzanine) wing, fit into the height of the main block, was added to the south in the early part of the twentieth century (circa 1920) and served as office space **(E-4)**. The entire building sits on a random cut stone foundation and is constructed of red-orange brick. There is no basement. Currently, there is a late twentieth century concrete application on top of the original nineteenth century concrete floor slab on the first floor. Brick is laid in running bond on the east (principal) façade of the main block while common bond with fifth, sixth and seventh course headers is used in the remainder of the building. There is decorative brick corbelling just below the cornice at the top of the façade of the main building and the 1920 addition. The wooden cornice has carved brackets sitting between a deep, layered hood and resting on a layered curved molding. All openings on the façade sit in brick surrounds with stone sills and brick segmented-arch lintels **(E-1, I-8)**. The current windows appear to date from a 1980's remodeling of the building and are flat-topped, single sash with fifteen-lite muntins on the first floor and twelve-lite on the upper floors. Windows have been boarded in the east façade of the north wing. The original delivery door openings on the ground floor of the main block have been filled with a treatment having decorative wood panels below multiple muntin-divided sash topped by a wood cornice and flanked by decorative pilasters. The current appearance of the façade occurred sometime during the latter half of the twentieth century **(E-5)**.

The north elevation consists of the two-story wing to the west and three-story wing to the east **(E-2)**. The west wing on this elevation is a blank wall of brick in common bond with seventh course headers. The only openings are two large rectangular metal vents on the upper portion of the wall. The two-story height expands to a third floor at the rear of this wing with two window openings on each the second and third level. Tile capping tops a low parapet. The east section of the north elevation appears to have been built in two phases. It, too, is brick in common bond with fifth, sixth and seventh course headers. This part of the north elevation has windows on all levels, although the first floors windows have been boarded. All windows have brick segmented arch lintels and stone sills. The windows are fixed sash with multiple lites. Some appear to be from the mid-twentieth century, while most date from the 1980 remodeling. On each of the second and third levels is an opening that originally held a loading loft door but is now boarded with a smaller window centered in the opening. Like the windows throughout the building, these openings have segmented arch lintels and stone sills. The flat roof with tile capped low parapet continues on this wing of the north façade. There is no decorative detailing on this elevation and it presents itself in as a mid-nineteenth century manufacturing building.

The east elevation **(E-3)** at the rear of the building forms an **L** around a paved courtyard with the original 1878 building as the base of the **L** and the rear of the north wing as the stem. Wall surfaces and window treatments are similar to the other elevations with common running bond, brick segmented arch lintels and stone sills. The tile-capped parapet from the north façade continues around the building on this side. On all three sides of the **L** the openings have been filled in, either with brick or wood in-fill. Two large loading door openings are also filled with wood; the opening at the east end of the stem has a broad segmented arch in brick over a steel support and the other opening faces south and is at the inner corner of the courtyard. It has a flat lintel in brick over a steel **I**-beam. The courtyard is paved in concrete and is three-sided, with the rear of the buildings facing Clinton Street forming the south wall of the court.

The south elevation consists of the 1920 addition at the west and the original 1878 building. It originally faced the lumberyard and has the most active of the elevations, with a mix of entry and delivery doors in addition to the windows and upper level loft openings **(E-6)**. Like the north façade, there is no decorative detail other than the segmented arches forming the lintels. The roofline is parapeted and capped by tile. Windows are a mix of double hung six-over-six and fixed sash twelve-lite and appear to be from the latter half of the twentieth century. Three loft openings at the second floor level appear in historic photos to be filled with large window sash but were likely originally doors similar to their current appearance. A fourth larger opening on the second floor has a pair of multi-pane sash. On the easternmost side of the first floor, there are three large openings with half round tops are currently windows and doors but may have been delivery doors in their original configuration. In an unusual easement, a portion of the unconnected building next door abuts a few feet of the first two floors at this corner, partially blocking one of the arched openings. The 1920 addition at the western end of this façade (nearest Elm Street) consists of a projecting four-story office wing. All openings on this section are blocked and it appears that there may have been an industrial sliding door on the second floor connected to the storage buildings that once existed along Elm Street.

Interior

On the interior, the first and second floors consist of the entire building footprint: the original central building, the c.1880 addition to the north, and the 1920 addition to the south. The third floor is smaller area, since only the east portion of the 1880s addition is three stories tall.

The interior of the Hager building was modified for use as a restaurant in the 1980s, with changes limited to the first floor. The upper floors exhibit a notable degree of integrity of design and materials although the condition has deteriorated noticeably. It appears that the changes to the first floor did not affect the circulation and consisted mostly of inserting modern uses into historic spaces.

First Floor

When the Hager Company occupied the building, the first floor housed the planing mill, lumber storage and sawdust vault. The primary entrance is located on the west façade, through a small wainscoted vestibule with leaded door, transom and sidelights, all of modern construction **(I-1)**. The first floor is primarily large open spaces separated from front to back by a continuous brick load-bearing wall that once delineated the separation between the original building and the north addition. A wood post and beam structural system is evident in the open spaces with approximately two by two foot square wood columns with beveled supporting headers reaching a height of 13 feet- 9 inches to the underside of the joists and spaced at 18 feet supporting the beams that are topped by an open unfinished ceiling **(I-2)**. There are additional iron columns providing support **(I-3)**.

All interior and perimeter walls are red brick and the floor, originally wood, is covered in some areas with tile or concrete. In the larger space of the original budilings, there is a raised platform approximately sixteen feet deep running east-west along the south wall edged with a low modern wainscoted wall **(I-2)**. Centered in the far third

of the space and extending to the back (east) wall are an enclosed former elevator shaft and the enclosed space housing the heating system.

All of the windows in the first floor space have been replaced, although the openings appear to be original. The sash, configured with multiple lites in thin muntins, appears to date from the 1980's. In the original building section, storefront type openings run along the west (street) side of the interior and arched openings with doors and windows run along the west wall. Modern wood surrounds have been placed around the newer sash and the segmental and half round arches indicate the configuration of the original windows. The half round arches on the south wall are of particular note being made of three rows of brick headers **(I-4)**.

The north wing is similarly configured with wood post and beam construction and brick interior and perimeter walls. It also is primarily an open space with partial walls separating some of the areas and an enclosed modern wooden stairway at the rear (east wall) leading to the second floor. All of the windows, except the large storefront type opening on the front (west) wall have been filled either with wood or masonry **(I-5, I-6)**. Both of the first floor spaces contain modern ducting and lighting from the time of the buildings use as a restaurant/night club.

There is a small space in the addition at the southwest corner of the building, which was the ground floor of the office addition. Triple windows run across the front (west) wall and the interior is finished with plaster walls and natural stained woodwork of a higher level of finish than that found in the remainder of the more industrial first floor space.

Second Floor

The second floor is accessible via the single stair at the rear of the building and is similar to the first floor in being primarily open space. This space was originally used for carving, gluing and painting the woodwork produced by the company. It has not been used in recent times and all of the former work areas contain remnants and artifacts including belt and pulley systems, heating units and wooden racks.

The structural system is wood post and beam and the wood remains in rough finish, although some of the columns are painted. Perimeter and interior walls are brick, most whitewashed or painted, and there are wood floors throughout. None of the original windows remain and many of the openings are boarded or bricked, including three large industrial type window openings on the south wall of the main building. The existing windows are set in rough frames in the brick walls.

In the original building, the second floor consists of a single rectangular space in which there are three enclosed areas centered in the rear (eastern) portion of the block. These spaces include an elevator shaft and storage room, followed by a room entered through tall, framed wooden double doors **(I-9)** and finally a raised area having the original employee locker and rest rooms. The raised area is reached via a wooden staircase along the back wall that continues onto the third floor of the main wing **(I-10)**. A second staircase in the main block leading to the third floor is in the front near the office addition on the southwest corner. The walls and ceiling in

this section in the corner near the office addition are wainscoted indicating that they may have been used as office space before the adjacent addition was built **(I-11)**.

The north addition is divided into three areas by brick walls with broad openings to each section **(I-7, I-8)**. The westernmost area occupies over half of the wing, and the remainder is divided equally into two spaces. There is a ramp with a rise of two and a half feet between the larger westernmost area and the middle room.

The office addition on the southwest corner has the most highly finished interior with plaster walls, mahogany stained finished woodwork and decorative stair leading to the office levels above. Beneath the stair is a lavatory **(I-12)**.

Third Floor

The third floor continues the wood post and beam structural system and like the lower floors was used as manufacturing space for the woodworking company, and like the second floor, it contains remnants of woodworking equipment and artifacts.

Like the second floor, the floors are wood and many windows are boarded with those that are open having rough wooden frames set in the exterior brick walls. None of the sash appear to be original, dating from the latter half of the twentieth century **(I-13)**. A broad stair, corresponding to the ramp on the second floor below, leads up to a sliding industrial door leading to the main space of the original building. This section is a single large room. Many of the windows are boarded. Centered in the back third of this space, there is a brick elevator shaft behind in front of a boarded clerestory **(I-14)**.

The third floor of the north wing is not the same shape as the first two floors, covering only the eastern half of those areas. It is divided by brick walls into three spaces that have a crude wall heating system consisting of layers of piping.

The office addition, at the southwest, is three steps down from the third floor grade. This space contains a loft reached by a wooden stair and has two levels of windows (giving a “four story” appearance on the exterior) **(I-15)**. All of the walls are painted brick with painted window frames set in wainscoting. Triple windows on two levels face the front and all of the openings facing west have been boarded.

The E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building is one of the few remaining pre-1880 industrial buildings in the Elm-Oak neighborhood that once housed a significant stock of manufacturing buildings. The building demonstrates classic nineteenth century industrial design and construction techniques and remains structurally sound. The Hager Building retains significant integrity of spaces and materials and stands as a good representative example of a nineteenth century industrial building in the City of Buffalo.

Statement of Significance:

Significance

E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Planing Mill is locally significant under Criterion C in Architecture as an intact example of a mid-nineteenth Century manufacturing building that was once common in the City of Buffalo. Buffalo's prominence as a commercial and industrial center in the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries saw the development of the factory building throughout that time period. The Hager Planing Mill is typical of a mid-nineteenth century building that remained in use for over a century and was minimally adapted to accommodate changing manufacturing techniques. This is one of few planing mills left intact, particularly within the corridor framed by Oak Street, the Kensington Expressway and the Niagara Thruway. The building type was crucial to the development of industry in Buffalo, a major node in manufacturing networks during the nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. Buffalo's siting on the Great Lakes and its location at the terminus of the Erie Canal were advantages that led to the development of industry in the early and mid nineteenth century and the concurrent need for construction of manufacturing buildings. Raw materials from outside of the area were readily available to the factories in the city and manufactured products easily transported to markets throughout the U.S. and even to Europe. As a result, Buffalo became a center for manufacturing with varied industries ranging from soap products to steel and later even a significant manufacturer of automobiles. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Buffalo's advantageous position on local and national rail lines allowed industrial development to expand to an even greater extent. Lines such as the Nickel Plate, the D.L. & W. (Delaware Lackawanna and Western) and Lehigh Valley as well as the New York Central all provided freight service to and from the city. The Hager mill was built to serve a regional manufacturer that was an early participant in Buffalo's growth as an industrial and commercial center.

The E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Planing Mill is additionally significant under Criterion A for its association with the Hager Company that occupied the building for over a hundred years. Hager was involved in the construction of many of Buffalo's premier buildings, beginning with its function in construction and later by providing beautifully detailed interior woodwork for commercial and residential projects. Beginning as a construction company and then becoming a manufacturer and supplier of materials for building, the Hager company played an important part in the physical expansion of the city of Buffalo. In the last half of its century-plus existence, the company provided noted interior cabinetry and finishing for mansions, commercial structures and, in its final years, specifically for bank interiors. For over a century, the company's name was prominent in the community. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Buffalo benefitted from enduring locally owned business. Along with Hager, others with nearly a century or more presence included the Larkin Soap Company, Kittinger Furniture Company and Birge Wallpaper Company. Like Hager, these companies were associated with the City of Buffalo and maintained notable identities within specific parts of the city.

The period of significance related to these two criteria is 1878 – circa 1920. Edward M. Hager began his construction company on Mortimer Street in 1868. The factory at 141 Elm was built in 1878 and in

1883 Hager's company first became associated with the building. Although their presence at the site continued through the 1980s, it was circa 1920 when the final configuration of the company and the site as producers of finely finished woodwork occurred. In the earlier years the company was producing framing for industrial and residential construction. By the 1920s the company had moved away from that original product line to the production of interior woodwork and this remained as their principal field of work until the closing of the company in the early 1980s.

History of the Lumber Industry and Related Businesses

Lumber Trade in Buffalo and Tonawanda

By the 1850s, Buffalo had become a major hub in the lumber industry and Tonawanda developed into the nation's second largest wholesaler of white pine after steam motive power allowed access to its water frontage. Before steamboats and steam barges, when sailing vessels carried lumber, the rougher waters below the Niagara River prevented access to Tonawanda. Since land was cheaper in Tonawanda, it quickly developed into a large lumber hub after developments in steam technology.[1]

While Tonawanda was a larger wholesaler of white pine, second only to Chicago, Buffalo had a more varied line of lumber products and served a bigger local market.[2] The local market supported an economy of related businesses. In 1907, there were 132 lumber related companies in Buffalo, including wholesalers, retailers, manufacturers, and manufacturers of sash, doors, blinds, interior finish, flooring, etc.[3] Buffalo was initially a forwarding market but developed into a wholesale and distributing center, while Tonawanda functioned largely in the forwarding business.

Once it reached Buffalo, the lumber was wholesaled to markets across the East. Pennsylvania hemlock was commonly used in homes built in the homestead farm regions near the lakes. This type of unbound cargo transportation was uncommon by the early twentieth century.[4]

Until 1850, most of the lumber coming through Buffalo was from Canada. By the next decade, however, the Canadian supply diminished and Michigan pine became popular. The Michigan timber was transported to Buffalo on schooners or chained to rafts that floated down.[5] Buffalo is credited as the origin of the tow barge system on the Great Lakes, a system developed to transport lumber from Michigan to Buffalo.[6] Around 1870, the market expanded further as Buffalo imported hemlock from Northern Pennsylvania forests and black walnut from Ohio and Indiana.

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[1] James Elliott Defebaugh, *History of the Lumber Industry of America.* Chicago: The American Lumberman, 1907: 465.
[2] Defebaugh, *History of the Lumber Industry*, 445.
[3] Ibid., 450.
[4] "Lumber Industry Once Huge Here," *Buffalo Evening News* 1 March 1939. Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society.
[5] "Lumber Industry Once Huge Here," *Buffalo Evening News.*
[6] Defebaugh, *History of the Lumber Industry,* 446.

The lumber trade in Buffalo suffered as the supply of Canadian and Eastern timber was depleted. As supply areas shifted to Northern Michigan, Minnesota and the pine forests of the South, distribution also shifted from the few larger wholesaling points, such as Buffalo, to smaller posts throughout the country. As Buffalo lost its dominance in the lumber system at large, it remained a principal hardwood distributor for the East.

Hager Company History

Edward M. Hager emigrated to the United States from Germany when he was thirteen years old with his younger brother Charles F. Hager and their parents.[7] Upon their arrival in Buffalo, Edward and Charles were taken in by their brother August C. Hager who had been established in Buffalo for several years as a grocer. Edward worked in August's grocery store for a brief period before he went to Newark, N.J. to learn the carpentry trade. He joined the 68th Regiment of New York City and fought during the Civil War.

After the war, he returned to Buffalo and worked in the flour and feed business for a short period before turning his attention to carpentry work. He married Ottilia Dorscheid who gave birth to five children, August C. (1867), George J. (1868), Ottilia, Caroline (1873), Edward J. (1877).

Hager established the E. M. Hager and Sons Company in April 1868 on Mortimer Street in the City of Buffalo. Hager's company originally specialized in timber-framed construction and carpentry, the most common construction method at the time. The technique of timber framing has been used throughout history in one form or another since it originated in prehistoric times. Timber-framed construction consists of connecting and organizing large, heavy wooden timbers in a post and beam system that creates a framed structure. The weight of the structure is transferred through principal timber posts and onto the foundation, instead of through load bearing walls. A non-load bearing shell as well as interior partitions in-fill the jointed timber structure, which were usually made out of brick, stone or rubble and finished with plaster and wainscoting for insulation.

This building system and variations of it (ie., half-timber construction) were widely used during the 1800s in a variety of structures because of its proven strength, reliability, and its quickness and cost-effectiveness compared to masonry. However, several drawbacks of timber framing include susceptibility to fires and limited height of about three stories.

The City of Buffalo's growth as an important trading and shipping center during the mid-1800s through the early 1900s created a huge demand for qualified builders. Economic development in the region was fueled by the settlement's strategic geographic location on the Great Lakes as well as the establishment of other transportation corridors, including the Erie Canal in 1825 (of which Buffalo was the terminus), and several railroad lines some time later. By the mid 1800s, the City of Buffalo was widely known as a

[7] "Hager Street is Memorial to Former Chief of Parks," *Courier Express*

center of commerce related to shipbuilding, meatpacking, and the lumber and grain industries. Water and rail transportation helped the City of Buffalo develop into the eighth largest city in the United States by the beginning of the twentieth century.

While many builders—including Richard and William Caudel, Eckel & Ackerman, and Cyrus K. Porter & Sons—serviced the demand in Buffalo, none of them had the longevity that E.M. Hager & Sons experienced.[8] The E. M. Hager & Sons Company grew rapidly, mirroring the growth of Buffalo. The construction company helped to construct many of Buffalo's early factories, grain elevators, churches, schools and private residents. In 1873, Hager erected the scaffolding for Buffalo's first public execution in Lafayette Square. As a result of his early success, Hager joined two other local woodworkers, John Feist and Ralph Clark, in 1883 to form the 'Clark, Hager & Feist – Planing Mill'. Hager moved from his location on Mortimer Street to Feist's mill at 141 Elm Street, the extant 3-story building that was constructed in 1878. Prior to his partnership with Feist and Clark, Hager had a partnership with Joseph Klaus for three years under the name Hager and Klaus.

Clark retired four years after the partnership formed, and Hager bought the company outright from Feist in 1894. At that time, his two sons, George J. and August C. joined the company to formally re-establish the E.M. Hager & Sons Company in 1902.[9] Edward served as president while George and August were vice president and secretary, respectively. After Edward's death in 1919, August C. served as president of the company until his passing a year later in 1920. George J. took over the company after August's death and served as president until 1954 when he passed away.

The E. M. Hager Company worked on countless prominent projects in Buffalo, including the Pan-American Exposition of 1901, for which it served as one of the prime construction contractors. All of the temporary structures at the Exposition were built entirely out of wood, and the E. M. Hager Company built the temporary wood edifices for several of the buildings including the Electric, Transportation, and Horticultural Society Buildings, among others. The construction effort was so large that Edward Hager established a satellite woodworking plant on-site to deal with the tremendous demand.[10] Ironically, this display of monumental architecture was also the beginning of decline for wooden structural systems. The New York State Building, the only permanent building for the Exposition, was made with marble.[11]

[8] "Historic Plymouth Avenue in the Kleinhans Neighborhood," http://buffaloah.com/a/plymouth/cb/129.pdf.
[9] E.M. Hager & Sons Co., Inc. "A Century of Service," 1968. Available at the Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society, Buffalo New York.
[10] E.M. Hager & Sons Co., Inc. "A Century of Service."
[11] *Art Hand-Book, Official Handbook of Architecture and Sculpture and Art Catalogue to the Pan-American Exposition.* Ed. David Gray. Buffalo, N.Y.: David Gray, 1901. Quoted at http://panam1901.org/about.html. See http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/NHLS/Text/80002606.pdf for National Historic Nomination and http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/NHLS/Photos/80002606.pdf for accompanying pictures.

The Hager & Sons Company also built many of Buffalo's most beautiful and elaborate mansions, churches, schools, clubhouses and offices. When Buffalo was building its new City Hall (NR 1998), the Hager Company produced the wall and door paneling in the mayor's office, the only wood work in the entire building. Other notable buildings they outfitted include the 20th Century Club (NR 2011), the former University Medical School on High Street, the Statler Hilton, St. Paul's Cathedral (NR 1972), and Canisius College.[12] The company also had large contracts outside the City of Buffalo as well like outfitting the Canadian National Railroad offices in Detroit, Chicago, and Boston.[13]

The company's continuing success drove it to grow, acquiring additional adjacent properties and expanding to about 75 percent of the city block presently bounded by Elm, Clinton, Michigan and William.[14] Their success was so great that the company needed additional space offsite, which was located nearby at 185-187 Clinton Street.

Another major transition in the business structure occurred after the deaths of Edward Hager in 1919 and August Hager in 1920. George Hager became president of the company and was joined in 1922 by Walter L. Hoffmeyer, who served as vice-president. The deaths of Edward and August came at a time when the timber framing building method and the lumber building industry was slowly becoming more obsolete and was gradually replaced with the use of steel and concrete. Steel reinforced concrete construction was considered a better alternative to Hager's traditional timber-framed method primarily because of the benefit of increased strength, durability, fireproofing and the ability for higher buildings.

Already an established business but faced with the prospect of obsolescence, Hager & Sons realigned its services from frame construction to interior furnishings. In 1926, the company began to produce "store fixtures, tavern bars, school and bank equipment."[15] As heavy construction work faded, the E. M. Hager Company focused solely on millwork, producing fine, wood-craved interiors of many of Buffalo's stately mansions, including the Goodyear Residence and the Thomas McKinney House and office buildings constructed during this time. The company pursued this path of business for the rest of its existence.

A noted example of the Hager company's residential work is the McKinney (now Arrison) House at 35 Lincoln Parkway in Buffalo, designed by the firm of Esenwein and Johnson and built in 1927-1929. Hager did extensive design and construction work on the interior woodwork for the house including an ornately carved grand staircase in black walnut and highly detailed library paneling and cabinetry. European craftsman from Germany, Switzerland and Italy were brought to the Hager plant to assist with the work. The staircase is particularly notable with fully formed cherub figures and an impressive lion's head at the newel post. The Hager company did an exhaustive search to find, in nearby Alden, New

[12] George J. Hager Obituary. *Buffalo Courier-Express*, 14 July 1954: 7.; Ray Dearlove, "Woodworking Firm's Diversification Proves Successful," *Buffalo Courier-Express,* 18 May 1975: 31.
[13] Martin Wilner, *History of the Niagara Frontier*, 1931.
[14] E.M. Hager & Sons Co., Inc. "A Century of Service."
[15] E.M. Hager & Sons Co., Inc. "A Century of Service."

York, a live walnut tree to meet the specifications required for the woodwork. The lion's head was carved from the thickest portion of the trunk and the wood was cured for two years before the actual carving took place.[16] The house recently underwent an award winning restoration.[17]

George Hager passed away in the summer of 1954, after serving as president of the E. M. Hager and Sons Company for 35 years. He had successfully managed the family business as it specialized in creating beautiful, wood-craved interiors from local businesses and residences rather then as a constructing contractor. Upon Hager's death, Walter Hoffmeyer took over as president of the company. Mr. Hoffmeyer would be "ably assisted by the young and energetic Constant Galus, the general manager and vice-president; Roy Graeber, office manager and treasurer; and Richard Campbell, purchasing-cost-accountant and secretary."[18] Under Hoffmeyer's leadership and by the time of the company's centennial in 1968, E.M. Hager & Sons outfitted over 130 banks, including the First National Bank, the Liberty Bank and the Marine Midland Trust Company offices at Northtown Plaza and the Statler-Hilton Hotel.[19] Temple Beth Zion on Buffalo's Delaware Avenue, the modern concrete temple designed by Harrison and Abromovitz in 1966, has interior wood detailing done by the Hager Company.[20]

The Planing Mill Building Type

Planing Mills in Buffalo

Planing mills were common features in Buffalo's built landscape in the late nineteenth century, though few examples remain in tact today **[Figure 1]**. They were predominately brick structures between two and fiour stories. Common architectural features include simple brick construction with arched entranceways, brick dentils below the roofline, piers of windows with brick segmented-arch lintels and stone sills. They were often rectangular in shape with smaller extensions on one or more sides. The merged buildings and additions reflected the growth and changing needs of the businesses. Companies that operated planing mills were often involved in other related business pursuits such as building, woodworking, windows, and boxes. The mill site reflected the various needs of the business, including floors of open workspace for planing machinery, a factory area for more specialized woodwork, and office space for management.

The mills were often located near lumber yards and/or transportation lines because of their connection to the lumber trade, of which Buffalo was a major hub. The city's location on the Erie Canal and the railroad network promoted the lumber trade and subsequently encouraged secondary markets, such as planing mills and woodworking companies, to develop within the city. At the neighborhood level, the planing mills were among the largest buildings on the block or in the neighborhood, and were often

[16] Anne McIlhenney Matthews, "Buffalo Woodworking Business Notes Centennial," *Buffalo Courier-Express,* 26 May 1968: 34.
[17] The project was awarded Preservation Buffalo Niagara's *Restoration* award for the year 2011.
[18] E.M. Hager & Sons Co., Inc. "A Century of Service."
[19] Ibid.
[20] Matthews, "Buffalo Woodworking Business Notes Centennial."

surrounded by wooden residential buildings. As a result, the mills served as visual reference points and as employment centers for the residents in the area.

Introduction to the Site

The Hager Planing Mill is located in downtown Buffalo, east of Main Street in an area historically filled with manufacturing companies and workers' housing. Once a dense block, today only one other brick building shares the entire city block with the Hager Planing Mill, which is the only building on the block to front Elm Street. The Hager mill is a single brick structure composed of five sections from different building phases.

Development of the Site and Buildings at 141 Elm Street

The current site became associated with the E.M Hager & Sons Company when the partnership with Clark and Feist was formed in 1883. The planing mill was set up in the original 1878 Feist building that was sited between the G.W. Smith & Son lumber company to the south and two wooden structures to the north [**Figure 2A**]. The design is typical of a late-nineteenth century brick factory building with simple brick and stone detailing and minimal decorative wood trim confined to the entrance area and the cornice at the roofline. An elaborate system of conveyor belts and steam engines powered machinery throughout the mill. The first floor of the planing mill was devoted to planing, lumber storage and a sawdust vault. Employees painted, craved and glued woodwork (including window frames, sashes, doors, and other millwork) on the second floor and third floors. The mill operated six ten-hour days per week, using an estimated 100 rail car loads of lumber each year.[21] In the late 1800s, most of the lumber arrived via Buffalo's busy waterfront by canal boat and was delivered locally by horse drawn cart.

The mill site underwent changes that reflect the growth and redirection of the company [**Figure 2B**]. Between 1888 and 1914, the previous wooden lumber and storage area at the southeast corner of the building had been reconstructed with fireproof materials and a new addition to the north side of the building functioned as a drying house. The northern side of the mill, previously one-story was built up to two-stories and used for glazing in addition to storage.

In addition to these changes, there were several (at least five) new fireproof constructions on the block to the north, northeast, and southeast of the Hager building. The largest new building was the Welshofer-Ringer Metallic Co. Iron Work, which fronted Clinton Street and still stands today. Coupled with the loss of the G.W. Smith & Son lumber company, the emergence of the Iron Work represented the shift towards steel framing that led Hager & Sons to transition to fine woodworking in early decades of the twentieth century.

By that time, the mill and surrounding area had undergone further changes [**Figure 2C]**. The one-story wooden building adjacent to the south side of the main building was replaced by a three-story brick addition for offices, which remains today**.** The functions within the Hager complex shifted to

[21] E.M. Hager & Sons Co., Inc. "A Century of Service."

accommodate the newer business plan; the first floor was used for sawing, the second floor for painting, and the third floor for rubbing and glueing. The rear of the main three-story building became the machine shop.

The number of buildings and companies on the city block decreased with demolitions and consolidations. A wholesale plumbers and factory supplies company took over the iron works building, which had been built up with several new additions while many of the smaller residential buildings on the block were removed. In parallel to the increase in automobile dependency, these areas became parking lots, and the northern section of the entire block was removed to accommodate the widening and extension of William Street. As a result, the Hager complex, which had also extended into the adjacent lumber yard (south), became more commanding since street frontage decreased significantly on Clinton and Michigan Streets.

After the Hager Company shut down, the building was used as a restaurant and night club. Plans for a loft project were not carried out.[22] Today, only the main planing building remains from the Hager & Sons complex. The E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Planing Mill is historically significant as a highly intact planing mill that represents the history of the industry in Buffalo**.** The second and third floors have been left almost untouched since the Hager Company vacated the building, and equipment remains in place on these floors. The first floor has been altered only by new surfaces, but the structure remains the same as it was when the Hager Company occupied the building.

[22] Mariann Caprino. “Developers Weigh ‘Loft’ Offices,” *Buffalo Evening News* 6 March 1982: A7 2-5.

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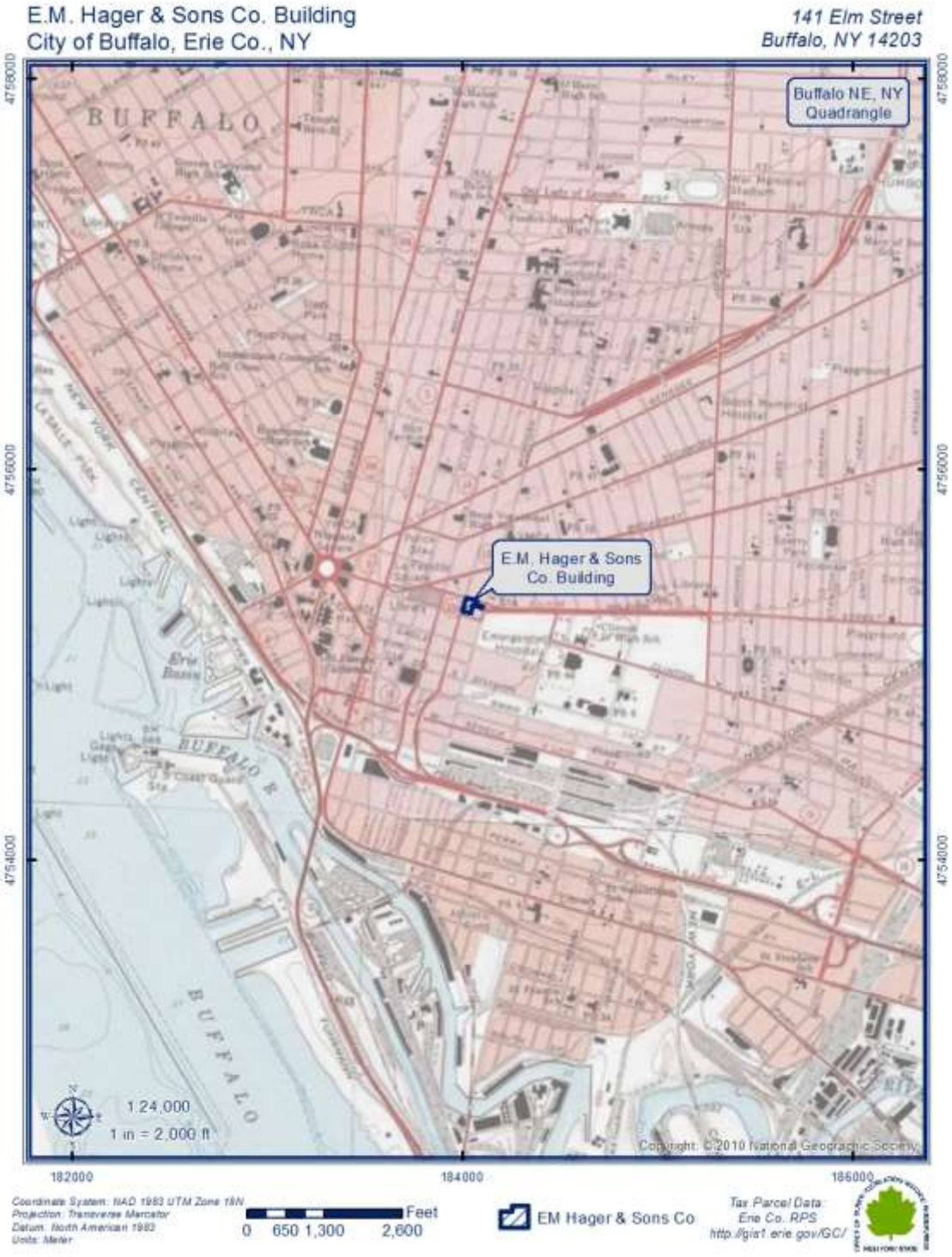
Verbal Boundary Description

SBL # 111.55-8-1.1

The site includes the west half of the block bounded by Elm Street, William Street, Michigan Avenue, and Clinton Street, and a rectangular lot that extends east from the Hager Building to Michigan Avenue

Boundary Justification

These boundaries coincide with the property that Hager & Sons Co. at the time it reached its final configuration (see the 1925-1961 Sanborn Map).


E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY
141 Elm Street
Buffalo, NY 14203
Buffalo NE, NY
Quadrangle
E.M. Hager & Sons
Co. Building
BUFFALO
1:24,000
1 in = 2,000 ft
Copyright: © 2010 National Geographic Society
4758000
4756000
4754000
182000
184000
186000
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter
Feet
0 650 1,300 2,600
EM Hager & Sons Co
Tax Parcel Data:
Erie Co. RPS
http://gis1.erie.gov/GC/

E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY
141 Elm Street
Buffalo, NY 14203
∑ = .95 Acres
184054E 4755300N
Elm St
Williams St
Clinton St
Jesse Clipper Sq
1:3,000
1 in = 250 ft
184000
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter
Feet
0 85 170 340
EM Hager & Sons Co
Tax Parcel Data:
Erie Co. RPS
http://gis1.erie.gov/GC/

Name of Property:	E.M. Hager & Sons Co.
City or Vicinity:	Buffalo
County:	Erie County
State:	NY
Name of Photographer:	Jason Wilson
Date of Photographs:	October 2012
Location of Original Digital Files:	257 Lafayette Ave., Buffalo, NY 14213
Number of Photographs:	20

NY_Erie County_E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building_ 0001
Primary (west) façade, camera facing east

NY_Erie County_E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building_ 0002
North elevation, camera facing south

NY_Erie County_E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building_ 0003
East elevation, camera facing west

NY_Erie County_E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building_ 0004
West and south elevations, camera facing northeast

NY_Erie County_E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building_ 0005
West façade cast iron columns, camera facing northeast

NY_Erie County_E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building_ 0006
South elevation, camera facing north

NY_Erie County_E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building_ 0007
1st floor entry vestibule, camera facing northwest

NY_Erie County_E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building_ 0008
1st floor southern section, camera facing southeast

NY_Erie County_E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building_ 0009
1st floor arched window, camera facing south

NY_Erie County_E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building_ 0010
1st floor northern section, camera facing east

NY_Erie County_E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building_ 0011

1st floor northern section back room, camera facing south

NY_Erie County_E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building_ 0012
2nd floor northern section back room, camera facing south

NY_Erie County_E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building_ 0013
2nd floor northern section back room, camera facing west

NY_Erie County_E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building_ 0014
2nd floor southern section doorway, camera facing north

NY_Erie County_E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building_ 0015
2nd floor southern section staircase, camera facing northeast

NY_Erie County_E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building_ 0016
2nd floor southern section space, camera facing southwest

NY_Erie County_E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building_ 0017
2nd floor southern section staircase, camera facing east

NY_Erie County_E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building_ 0018
3rd floor northern section space, camera facing northwest

NY_Erie County_E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building_ 0019
3rd floor northern section skylight, camera facing up

NY_Erie County_E.M. Hager & Sons Co. Building_ 0020
3rd floor southern section mezzanine, camera facing west

Figures

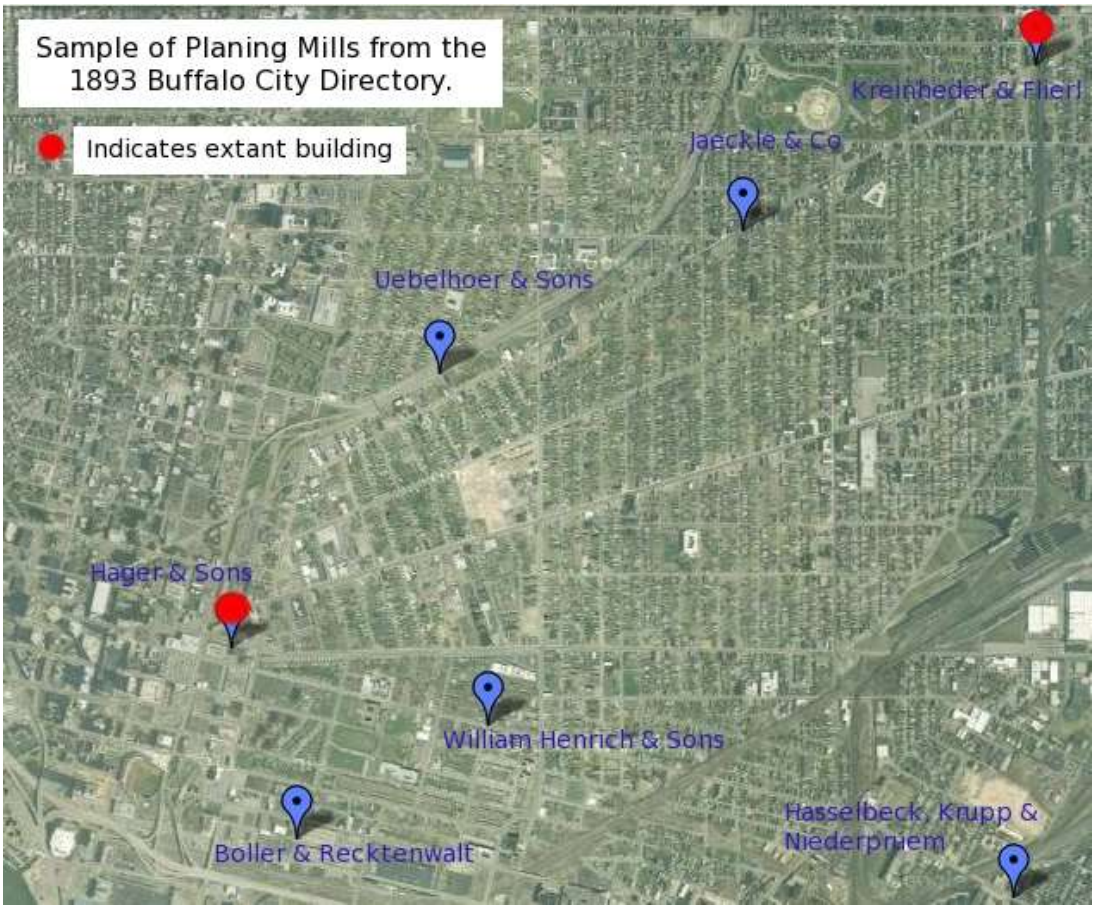


Figure 1: Planing Mills in Buffalo

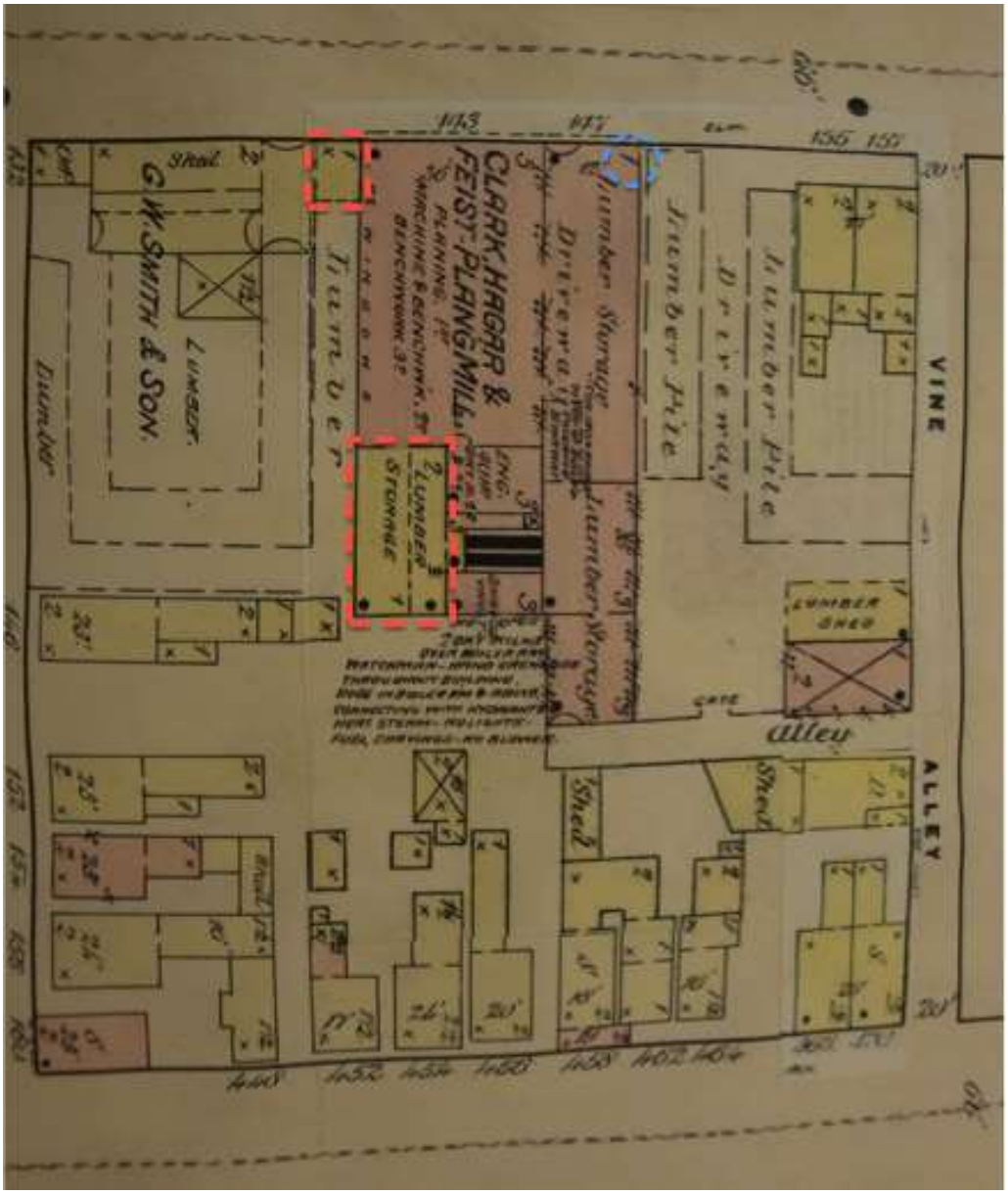


Figure 2A: Sanborn Map, 1881-1888 v.1.

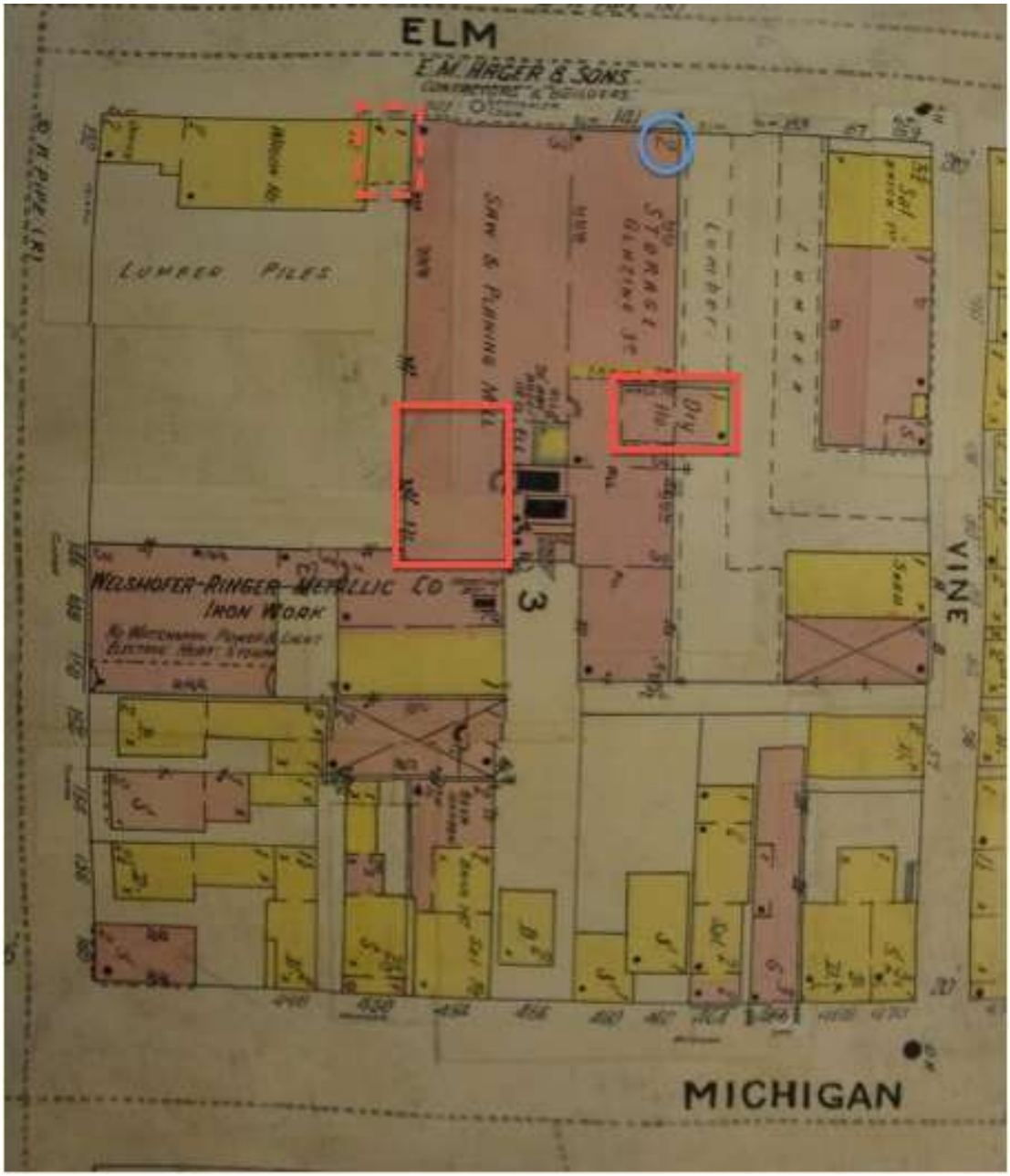


Figure 2B: Sanborn Map, 1889-1914 v.2.

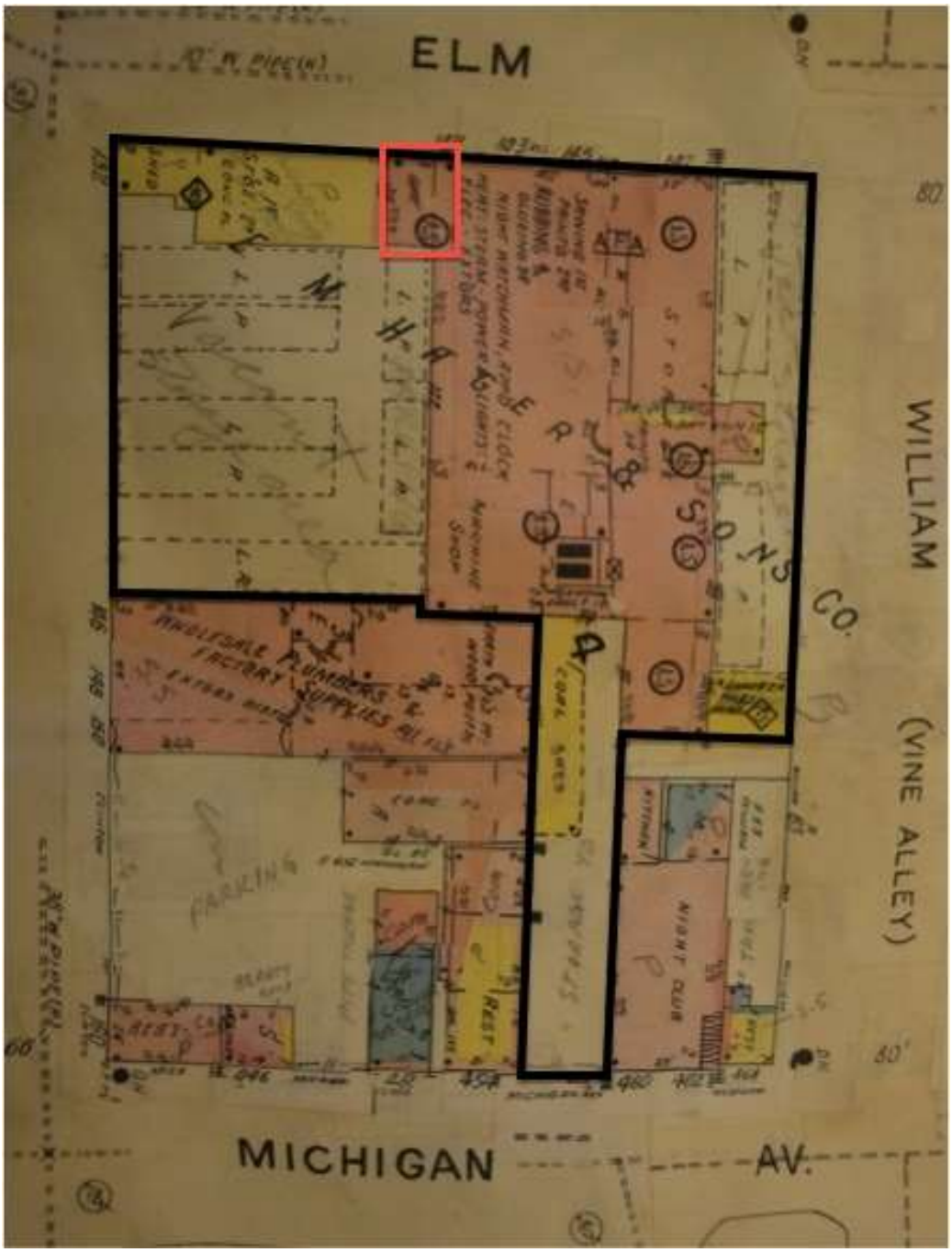
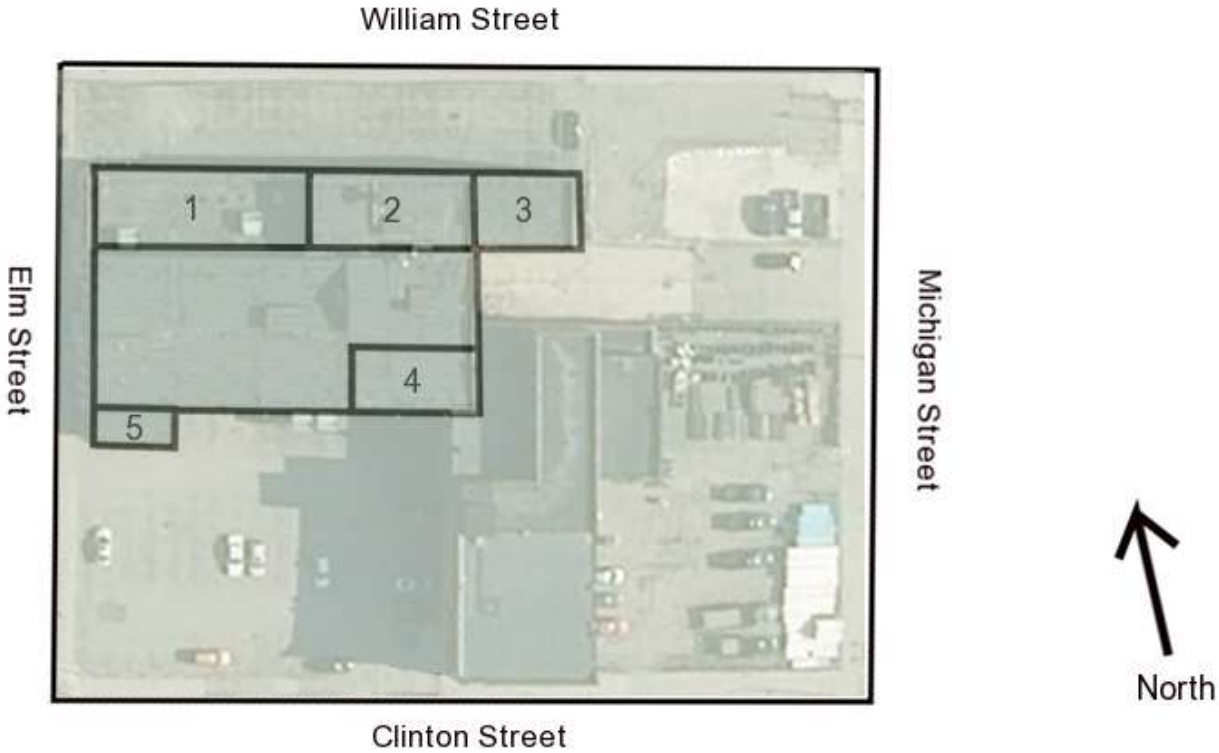


Figure 2C: Sanborn Map 1925-1961.

Additional Information

Addition History of the Hager Planing Mill



Original building constructed circa 1878
1 - One-story addition circa 1880, was later modified to a two-story addition circa 1890
2 - Three-story addition circa 1880
3 - Three-story addition circa 1880
4 - One-story section originally used for lumber storage was fireproofed circa 1890
5 - Three-story office addition circa 1920

Preservation Studios

NO
STANDING
HERE TO
CORNER

AVAILABLE
716 855 3700
CBRE

AVAILABLE
43,000 SF Empire Zone
716 855 3700
BRE | Buffalo
PARKING RESTRICTED
EXCEPT FOR RAIDER MILL
LOFTS ONLY
ALL OTHERS KEEP OUT
Jeep
LIBERTY

WEEKLY DRAWING
DINNER FOR TWO
DROP YOUR BUSINESS
CARD HERE