

Gipfel Brewery
423-427 West Juneau Avenue
Milwaukee
Milwaukee County
Wisconsin

HABS No. WIS-248

HABS
WIS,
40 MILWA,
11-

DRAWINGS
PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

GIPFEL BREWERY

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WIS,
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Location: 423-427 West Juneau Avenue (south side of West Juneau between North Fourth and North Fifth Streets), Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin.

Present Owner: David A. and Dorothy Berther

Present Occupant: Berther Brothers Restaurant Equipment Supplies

Present Use: Offices, showrooms, and storage for the Berthers' food service distributing firm.

Statement of Significance: The structure has both architectural and historical importance: an early-day Milwaukee brewery, it is one of the city's older extant buildings, and one of the few remaining examples of the Federal style.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

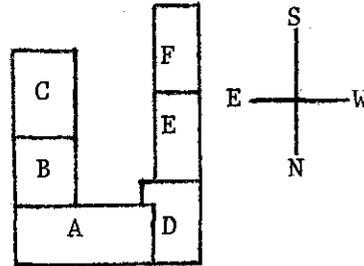
A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: A nineteenth-century historian, whose account may well have been based on conversations with Charles Gipfel, states that the first Gipfel brewery building on this site was erected in 1843, but that the present one was constructed ten years later. This writer has thus far found no evidence to contradict him.
2. Architect: Unknown
3. Original and subsequent owners: The building was constructed either for David Gipfel or for his older son Carl Wilhelm (Charles) (see 1, above). Family ownership of the property dates back to June 30, 1843, when David Gipfel purchased the lot from Daniel and Cordelia Brown for \$400.00. He added adjoining property to his holdings with the purchase from Harvey Birchard on November 25, 1845. It is documented that the Gipfels operated a small brewery on this site during the 1840's. By 1851 at the latest, Charles Gipfel had assumed control of the firm, which he called the Union Brewery, and he remained in business here through the late nineteenth century--at various times as a brewer, a saloonkeeper, and a dealer in wine and liquor. During the present century the structure has belonged to, among others the Seefeld (Siefeld, Siefeld) family, Mrs. Ila Warren, the Marman Soap

Company, the Cooks family, and now, the Berthers. It has served both residential and commercial purposes. Among Milwaukeeans its best remembered twentieth-century occupant was the Elsner harness shop and leather goods firm.

4. Builders and suppliers: Unknown
5. Alterations and additions:

a. Additions:



To the mid-nineteenth-century fabric (A) there have been five additions, the date of only one of which is certain at present. The two-story brick wing (B) on the southeast corner of the original building was constructed in 1892 for Charles Gipfel by R. Siebert and Son. Adjoining this addition to the south is a one-and-one-half story wood-framed wing (C), which dates back at least as far as the 1870's. To the west are three single-story additions (D, E, and F).

- b. Alterations to the original building: As the numerous building permits, the old photographs, and inspection of the building all reveal, it has been altered considerably during its long history. On the exterior, the entire facade may not be original. A building permit was issued in 1912 allowing the owner to "remove and remodel store and remove one wall." The materials used were brick and glass. The store front was probably made to appear much as it does today at that time, although since then an additional entrance has been added to the west of the original entrance. A photograph, c. 1915-20, reveals that the slightly pedimented window lintels of the second and third floor front windows have since been removed and the spaces filled in with brick.

As for the interior, it is probable that only the basement and the attic retain much of their original character. The request to "remove one wall" could account for the removal of most of the north-south

bearing partition of the first floor and the insertion of a square post. Part of the east-west bearing partition on the third floor has also been removed, necessitating additional structural support for the attic floor.

B. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: Photographs in the collection of the Milwaukee County Historical Society.

2. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Book of Deeds, City of Milwaukee, K, 245-246; P, 488-489; LXIX, 454-455, Milwaukee County Courthouse, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Book of Mortgages, City of Milwaukee, XX, 22-24; XXI, 373; XXIX, 48-49; XXXVI, 31; XL, 550-551; XLIX, 488; L, 143, 354, Milwaukee County Courthouse, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Brewery index, Milwaukee County Historical Society.

Building permits and other documents for November 29, 1892, February 23, 1912, May 20, 1912, May 28, 1912, March 30, 1932, January 1, 1933, March 22, 1933, January 4, 1949, August 1, 1958, November 6, 1961, November 19, 1962, December 3, 1962, October 9, 1963, October 10, 1966, and December 19, 1967, General Office, Inspector of Buildings, City of Milwaukee, Municipal Building.

Inspection of building August 22, December 19, 22, and 26, 1968.

Interview with Dorothy Berther, August 22, 1968.

b. Secondary and published sources:

History of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Chicago, 1881, 1460.

Milwaukee City Directory, 1847 and later.

Perrin, Richard W. E. Historic Wisconsin Buildings. Milwaukee Public Museum Publications in History, No. 4, Milwaukee, 1962, 52.

_____. "Milwaukee Landmarks: Part III, Commercial and Industrial Building," Lore, XVI (Fall, 1966), 133-134.

Unidentified newspaper clippings in the collection of the Milwaukee County Historical Society.

3. Potential sources not consulted: Local newspapers other than the Milwaukee Sentinel, including the German-language press.

Prepared by Mary Ellen Wietczykowski
1111 North Astor Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
December 27, 1968

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This brick building is a good example of the severely simple Federal style popular for residences and commercial blocks in pre-Civil War Milwaukee.
2. Condition of fabric: Poor

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions:
 - a. Original building: 35 feet 6 inches wide, 30 feet deep.
 - b. Present building: The facade (sections A and D on diagram above) is 52 feet wide; the depth of A, B, and C is 94 feet; the width of B-C wing, 19 feet; depth of D, E, and F wing, 102 feet; width D-E-F wing, 16 feet.
2. Foundations (original building): Brick; north wall reinforced with concrete in 1912 according to Building Permit 2043 dated May 20, 1912. The present foundation has caved in. Since the visible brick repairs are neither uniform in size nor regularly spaced, one can deduce that it is merely patchwork for the caved in foundation wall.
3. Wall construction (original building): Milwaukee pressed brick, cream-colored, mottled; portions now painted.

4. Framing or structural system: Masonry bearing wall construction. A close examination of the attic reveals a trussed beam (not original), 8" wide by 6- $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep, running north-south beneath the floor with 2" x 6- $\frac{1}{2}$ " floor joists notched in. The shallow depth of the beam required a bearing partition on the third floor to support it at mid-span. Portions of this wall have since been removed, thus necessitating the secondary or "pseudo-truss" that was added to counteract the deflection of the beam once the partition was removed. This is composed of diagonal, 3" x 10", double members let into the beam beneath the flooring about 9" from the interior facing of the brick bearing walls, with a short horizontal member tying the upper ends together just below the apex of the roof. Suspended from this is an iron tie rod that supports the beam at mid-span. The 2" x 6" roof rafters are supported on purlins, which in turn are supported on vertical posts resting on the beam.
5. Chimneys: Three; brick; but none on the original structure.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors (original building): There are two entrances on street level in the facade; the one to the west, with the cast-iron columns on either side, is the original entrance, the one to the east was added at an unspecified date. There is a doorway, probably not original, in the attic story, east elevation; and there was a door in the corresponding location on west elevation, but this has been filled to form a window. In the rear there is a doorway in the second story to an outside staircase, and one in the basement. Doors are wooden and rectangular.
 - b. Windows (original building): Throughout the building the windows have wooden double-hung sash with the exception of the large first floor display windows. On the north facade there are five windows in the second story, five in the third, all but one having one-over-one double-hung sash. All are regularly spaced, rectangular, and all have brick sills and lintels. In the east wall, a six-over-six double-hung window is approximately centered in both the second and third stories. In the west wall, one window (formerly a door), is in the attic. The south wall has six-over-six double-hung windows in the second floor and three, irregularly spaced, on the third floor. The attic has three louvered air vents. The extant glass in the attic is believed to be original. The front (north) wall of the two separate basement compartments reveals brick infill where basement windows may once have been.

7. Roof (original building):

- a. Shape: Gabled; ridge parallel to West Juneau Avenue; stepped gable ends. What probably is part of a wood roof shingle is visible between the roofing boards in the attic. Here is an unusual arrangement of wide boards with a narrow board in the space usually left open.
- b. Framing: Timber, pegged
- c. Cornice: Brick dentil cornice with irregularly spaced corbeled brackets across the facade.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans (original building): Numerous changes have been made over a long period of years to the brewery externally and internally to obscure forever the room arrangement. The second and third floors, possibly the original living quarters of the Gipfel family, have been extensively altered since the building's construction c. 1853. A basement coal chute, filled-in by the present owner, is noted near the northeast corner of the structure.
2. Stairways: A stairway on the southeast corner of addition B joins ground and second stories. Stairs at the rear of the original building connect the upper floors and attic, which no doubt were apartments in the twentieth century. There is evidence along one wall that an internal staircase has been removed. All stairways are wooden.
3. Flooring (original building): Basement--earth; ground story and above--wood.
4. Wall and ceiling finish (original building): The basement and attic are unfinished and largely original. Various walls are plaster-on-lath, dry wall, masonite and even plain cardboard.
5. Doorways and doors: Wood, rectangular. There are doors on most of the rooms of the second and third stories, but these quite likely are not original.
6. Trim: No doubt it was wood, but it is difficult to ascertain whether any of the original wood trim has survived. One window sash on the third floor differs from the others in its simple design, and may be original. It is also possible that some of the simple, square trim of the upper floor doors is original.

7. Hardware: It appears that no original hardware remains, except perhaps, the hinges of the attic door.
8. Lighting: Electric throughout
9. Heating: No evidence was found of fireplaces to heat the upper floors. Numerous stove pipe holes in both the east and west walls indicate that the rooms were heated at one time by individual stoves. A basement coal chute, filled in by the present owner, is noted near the northeast corner of the structure, and a Sears and Roebuck coal furnace, model 522, was found in the east basement compartment. In 1962 a building permit issued on November 17 allowed the building of an enclosure for the boiler room and the installation of a gas heating system.

D. Site:

General setting and orientation: The building faces north and is bounded on the east by an alley, on the south and west by parking lots, and on the north by West Juneau Avenue. In the nineteenth century, West Juneau (then Chestnut) was called "brewery row," for quite a number of breweries--small ones like the Gipfel firm and such giants as Blatz and Pabst--were in business here.

Prepared by John N. DeHaas, Jr.
Supervisory Architect
National Park Service
September 10, 1969

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were made during the 1969 Milwaukee Project which was sponsored by the Historic American Buildings Survey, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, and the Milwaukee Landmarks Commission of the City of Milwaukee, Richard W. E. Perrin, Chairman. The project was done under the direction of James C. Massey, then Chief of HABS, and the team members included architect John N. DeHaas, Jr. (Montana State University), Project Supervisor, Mary Ellen Wietczykowski--now Mary Ellen Young--(Milwaukee Landmarks Commission), Project Historian, and student architects Larry Hermsen (Iowa State University), Roger Little (Kansas University), Thomas Sanford (Washington State University), and Donna Woodrum (Virginia Polytechnic Institute). The drawings were edited by HABS architect John Burns and the data prepared for transmittal to the Library of Congress by HABS editors Carolyn R. Heath, Mary Farrell, Candace Reed and Philip Hamp. Photographs were taken by HABS staff photographer Jack Boucher.