

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

1. Name JACKSON KOEHLER EAGLE BREWERY

RECEIVED

historic

DEC 31 1981

and/or common

PH & MC
Historic Preservation

2. Location

street & number 2131 State Street not for publication

city, town Erie vicinity of congressional district 24th

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Erie code 049

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Industrial Surplus Services, Inc.

street & number 8621 Buffalo Road

city, town Harborcreek vicinity of state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder of Deeds, Erie County Courthouse

street & number West Sixth Street

city, town Erie vicinity of state Pa

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Pennsylvania Inventory of
title Historic Places

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date Sept. 1, 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

city, town Harrisburg vicinity of state Pennsylvania

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The complex located at 2136 State Street consists of a series of contiguous additions extending westward from the Brewhouse to the Rathskeller. Each area in between reflects a manufacturing function. At ground level the complex covers approximately 17,000 square feet.

The design of the brewhouse is functional, suited to the specific requirements of the processes that took place inside. The walls are over two feet thick since the structure had to support such heavy loads. Furthermore, a thermal benefit was gained, necessary for the conversion of grains and corn in mashing and lautering from starch to fermentable sugar at 57° to 59° F.

Because brewing beer is a gravity system, building height was a necessity. Grains were conveyed to the roof and stored in malt and grit bins. On the next level down, grains were mixed with hot water and cooked into a mash. Then they were conveyed to mashing and lautering tubs. The level below housed the copper brew kettles with adjacent hop rooms. On the ground floor were the master brewer's office, laboratory, mill room, water purifiers, and wort pumps.

Behind the brewhouse to the west was the racking room, filter room, and keg wash room. This was the initial part of the complex and covered a site area 75' x 116'. The storage cellar, which rivals the brewhouse in height, was added next. In 1933, Kirshner Brothers added the keg receiving and storage rooms to the south of the complex. The storage rooms are no longer standing. The Rathskeller was added to the complex in 1936, making it the most recent structure.

The 75' wide front elevation has undergone some modification. Original frame and glass fenestration was replaced with glass brick during the 1950's. Window placement was dictated by the levels in the brewing process. There was no functional reason for their number. Architecturally, the windows were used as a decorative element. The remainder of the facade was originally done in red brick with a stucco coating applied in the 1960's. Plans are underway to restore the original character to the facade.

The major feature of the interior of the brewhouse is a cast iron staircase with brass handrail. Support columns are facsimiles of Romanesque with cast Corinthian caps.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1891 Builder/Architect Louis Lehle / Joseph Frank

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) The Jackson Koehler Eagle Brewery is significant for its association with the brewery industry in Erie and as a architecturally unique brewhouse in northwestern Pennsylvania. George Frey and Peter Schaaf established the first brewery on this site in 1855. Frey had emigrated from Germany in 1840, and had learned the brewer's trade from his uncle Peter Fischer in this city. Frey is generally credited with introducing lager beer to both Buffalo and Erie.

When the building burned two years later, Frey returned to his uncle's firm, and Schaaf acquired a new partner - Henry Kavelage. Both Schaaf and Kavelage had previously operated grocery stores on the city's near east side. In 1863 Kavelage became sole proprietor of the business and named it the Eagle Brewery, most likely because it was located adjacent to a district called Eagle Village. This was a district heavily populated by people of German extraction, providing both workers and customers for the fledgling brewery. Then in 1883 the property was purchased by Jackson Koehler, whose descendants continued brewing operations there until closing in 1978.

The Koehler name itself had long been associated with the local brewing industry. Charles Koehler, a native of Holland, arrived in Erie in 1840 and went to work for Frederick Dietz, owner of a well-established brewery at 17th and Parade Streets. Upon Dietz's death in 1858, Koehler succeeded to the business, but left four years later to form a new brewery with his sons at 26th and Holland Streets. Fred, the oldest son, inherited that business in 1869, and he and Jackson continued in partnership until the latter took possession of the Eagle Brewery in 1883.

In the 1880's Erie's brewing industry consisted of four lager plants, and one ale and porter plant, which in addition to supplying the home market, did a brisk trade with the surrounding region. Now one plant seemed to have a competitive advantage over the other. Recognizing that he would have to enlarge and modernize his facilities in order to achieve a dominant position, Jackson Koehler in 1890 engaged Louis Lehle, the nationally recognized brewer's architect from Chicago, to design a new brewhouse. The result was the structure which is standing today.

In the short space of time Koehler had spent over \$200,000 on new buildings and machinery but still felt vulnerable to encroachment from large companies with national market aspirations. So he proposed that several Erie breweries unite to form one entity that would be strong enough to

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Jackson Koehler Eagle Brewery, Erie County

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Significance contd.

withstand the mounting pressures. On April 1, 1899, Fred Koehler & Company, National Brewery, Cascade Brewery, and Eagle Brewery merged into the Erie Brewing Company, under the leadership of Jackson Koehler. The wisdom of this move became more apparent year after year, as other small breweries disappeared from the local and national scene. When Erie Brewing Company closed its doors in 1978, it was just one of a few family owned and operated concerns still in existence. While Koehler beer is no longer produced locally, the patents were acquired by Schmidt's of Philadelphia, who continue to brew and market it to original standards. So in a sense, the Koehler family brewing traditions survive.

But beyond the contributions of Jackson Koehler and his descendents to their industry where he pioneered company owned taverns; and to the community where he helped launch several philanthropic and social organizations - the brewery building is important in itself. The structure embodies some of the most distinctive and unusual industrial architectural to be found in any city. The style typifies late 19th century American brewhouses such as the American Brewery in Baltimore, and the Tivoli Brewery in Denver, both undergoing rehabilitation. It is not easily defined architecturally, but can probably be best described as "Germanesque-Teutonic." The height of the grain tower is reminiscent of a bell tower, and this image is reinforced by the application of small spires to the facade with numerous arch forms. One might call it a mixture of Gothic Cathedral and Bavarian castle. Certainly the several stories, towers, decorative brickwork and varied window openings - in arched, round, rectangular, and square shapes; present an overall effect which is exotic to say the least.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- a. One Hundred Years of Brewing. (Chicago: H. S. Rich & Co., 1903).
- b. Erie Pennsylvania Illustrated 1888. (Erie: Herald Printing & Publishing Co., Ltd. 1888).

10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property 1.08

Quadrangle name Erie South

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

17	57	6	6	9	0	46	6	2	7	7	0
Zone	Easting			Northing							

B

Zone	Easting			Northing							

C

Zone	Easting			Northing							

D

Zone	Easting			Northing							

E

Zone	Easting			Northing							

F

Zone	Easting			Northing							

G

Zone	Easting			Northing							

H

Zone	Easting			Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

A parcel of land and buildings on the west side of State Street between West 21st Street and West 23rd Street, containing 47,000 square feet of

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
		land, fronting on State St. 124.12 ft. with access to the rear of the property from Peach St. by an alley.	

11. Form Prepared By

name/title J. Martin Megenau & John R. Claridge

organization Erie County Historical Society date August 1981

street & number 417 State Street telephone (814) 454-1813

city or town Erie state Pennsylvania

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Larry E. Tise,

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 2/20/02

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Major Bibliographical References contd.

- c. The BREWER'S DIGEST (October 1964).
- d. FROM THE CASHIER'S HOUSE (Erie County Historical Society, Winter, 1978).
- e. Erie Times, 21 May, 1891.
- f. American Guide Series, Erie: A Guide to the City and County. (Philadelphia: William Penn Associates, 1938).
- g. The Industrial Advanatages of Erie, Pennsylvania. (Erie: James P. McKinney, 1892).
- h. Benjamin Whitman, History of Erie County Pennsylvania. (Chicago: Warner, Beers & CO., 1884).
- i. Historical Reference Book of Erie County Pennsylvania. Erie: S.B. Nelson, 1896).

ERIE SOUTH

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
TOPOGRAPHIC AND GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

1928 U.N.E.S.
ERIE NORTH

89°07'30"
42°07'30"

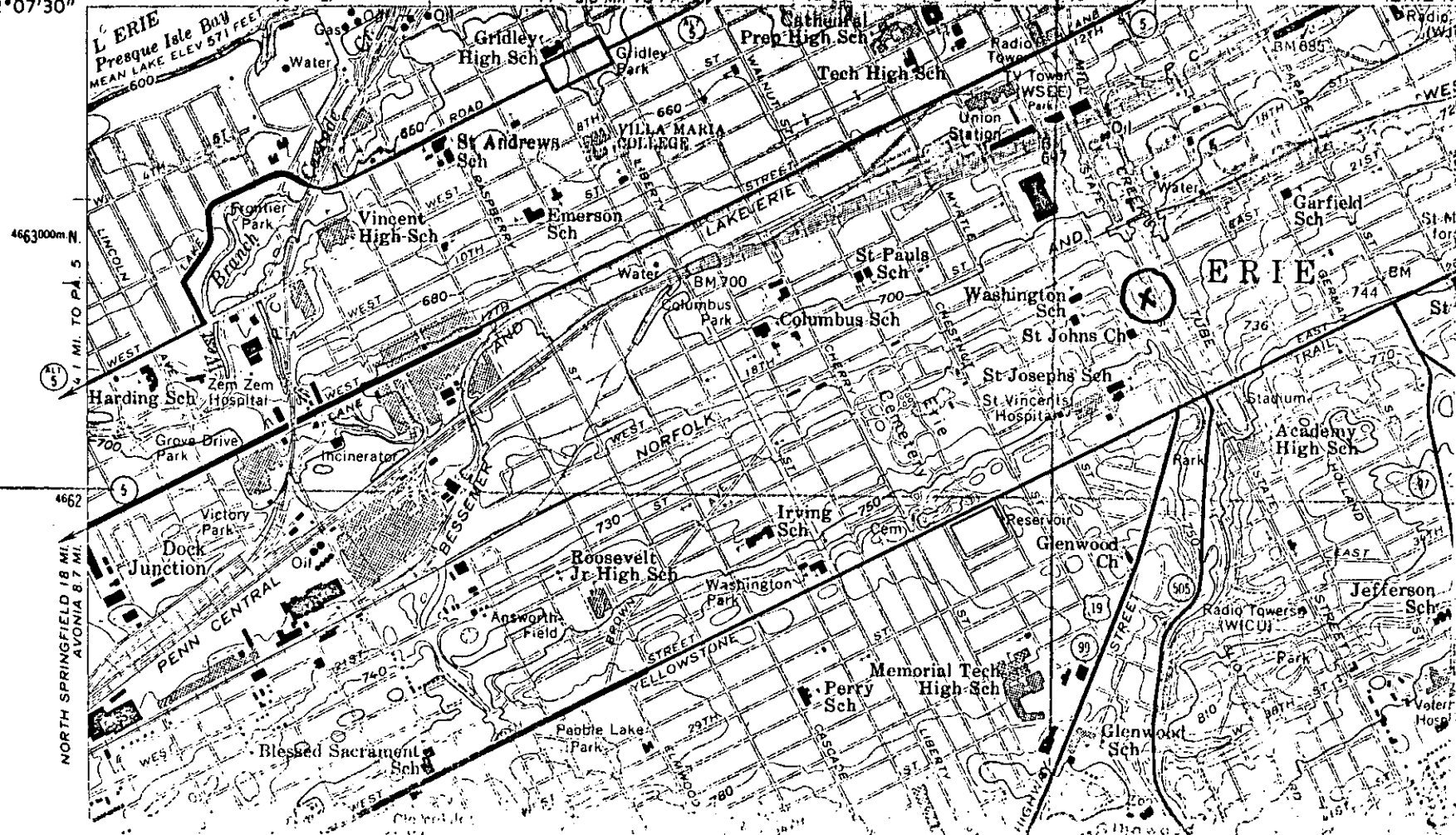
573000m E.

574 3.5 MI. TO PA. S.

575

576

DUNKIRK, N.Y. 60 MI.
ORCHARD BEACH 18 MI.
4068 M. (ERIE N.)
Radio Tower (WVTE)



4663000m N.
571 MI. TO PA. S.
4662
NORTH SPRINGFIELD 18 MI.
AVONIA 87 MI.

Radio Tower (WVTE)

ERIE

Radio Towers (WICU)