
MEMORANDUM

TO: Heritage Preservation Commission
FROM: [Jim Voll](#), Principal City Planner, (612) 673-3887
DATE: May 3, 2016
SUBJECT: National Register of Historic Places Nomination – Grain Belt Beer Sign (4 Island Avenue West)

Background

On February 29, 2016, the Minnesota Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) sent the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission a letter requesting comments on the nomination of the Grain Belt Beer Sign to the National Register of Historic Places (Attachment A). The property is located at 4 Island Avenue West in Minneapolis.

As a Certified Local government, the Commission is required by federal law to participate in the National Register nomination process as follows:

- Afford the public a reasonable opportunity to comment on the nomination;
- Prepare a report as to whether or not the subject property is eligible for National Register listing; and
- Have the chief local elected official (the Mayor) submit this report and his/her recommendation to the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer within sixty days of notice from the SHPO.¹

¹ More than a simple comment letter, this report provides the City with significant decision making power in the matter. If both the Commission and the chief local elected official recommend that the subject property should not be nominated to the National Register, the SHPO shall take no further action, unless within thirty days of the receipt of such recommendation by the SHPO an appeal is filed with the State. If such an appeal is filed, the State shall follow the procedures for making nomination pursuant to established procedures. Even then, the City's report and recommendations are included with the nomination submitted by the State to the Keeper of the National Register.

The sign's owner, the August Schell Brewing Company, has retained Hess, Roise and Company to nominate the subject property to the National Register of Historic Places. The sign is in the St. Anthony Falls Historic District, but is non-contributing. The owner proposes to have the sign listed in the National Register primarily to have it recognized and also to make it eligible for potential grant funding sources.

Attachment A includes a copy of the nomination, prepared by Hess, Roise and Company, for your review and comment.

Previous Reviews

The property has not been included in any reconnaissance survey or historic review beyond the 1971 designation of the St. Anthony Falls Historic District.

Nomination Review

To be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, a property must be significant within a given context and retain its integrity, defined as its ability to communicate that significance.

Significance

The nomination has identified that the Grain Belt Beer Sign meets National Register Criterion A - the property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. The area of significance identified is Commerce with a Period of Significance of 1950-1966.

The Grain Belt Beer sign is a freestanding porcelain-enamel sign in the shape of a large (approximately 48 feet by 48 feet) bottle cap. The face consists of the Grain Belt diamond logo, the Minneapolis Brewing Company "M" logo, and copy that reads "Grain Belt Beer." It is located south of DeLaSalle High School and west of the Hennepin Avenue Bridge on Nicollet Island in downtown Minneapolis. The sign was originally installed on the roof of the Marigold Ballroom at 1330-1342 Nicollet Avenue and was moved to its current location on Nicollet Island in 1950.

The Period of Significance relates to the history of Minneapolis Brewing Company and to the company's advertising strategies. The period of significance is from 1950 when the sign was installed to 1966 following the fifty-year guideline.

The Minneapolis Brewing Company was created by combining the John Orth Brewing Company, the Heinrich Brewing Association, the Germania Brewing Company, and the F. D. Noerenberg Brewing and Malthouse. In 1892, the Company constructed a large Brewery at 1220 Marshall Street NE and continued brewing at that site until 1975. The brewery complex

was listed on the National Register in 1990. While the company closed in 1975, the brand was sold to G. Heileman Brewing Company (La Crosse, WI) in 1975, to the Minnesota Brewing Company in 1991, and to August Schell Brewing Company (New Ulm, MN) in 2001 and the beer continues to be produced and sold today.

The company originally marketed its beer through point-of-sale merchandise such as trays, mugs, and posters. In the 1930s, after the repeal of prohibition, advertising expanded to include signage, advertisement on streetcars and in newspapers, as well as ads on the radio. The company also began utilizing outdoor advertising such as the Grain Belt Beer sign.

The Grain Belt Beer Sign is a typical example of early twentieth century outdoor advertising, including the use of porcelain enamel and neon, construction at a scale to be viewed by vehicles, and placement on the rooftops of buildings. After World War II, porcelain enamel and neon signs became rarer as they were replaced by rectangular billboards and by materials easier to maintain and install such as plastic.

The sign is an iconic advertisement for the most commonly produced beer in Minneapolis at the time. It is a visual landmark on the Mississippi River representative of a time from when there was outdoor advertising on the river.

Please see the attached Nation Register Nomination prepared by Hess, Roise and Company, for a more detailed description of the sign's history and significance.

Integrity

The National Register of Historic Places divides integrity into seven aspects: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Possessing several, and usually most of these aspects allows resources to successfully communicate their historical significance within a given context.² The sign retains all aspects of integrity.

It has integrity of location. It has been at the current location on Nicollet Island for sixty-six years.

It has integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. The original porcelain enamel panels are intact and appear to be in good condition. While the lighting is inoperable, it is extant and can be repaired. There is a non-historic sign attached to the rear side of the Grain Belt Beer sign that can be removed.

² National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998) 44-49.

It has integrity of setting. While slightly diminished by the removal of buildings and signage from Nicollet Island and the reconstruction of the Hennepin Avenue Bridge, it is still is an area bounded by DeLaSalle High School, the Hennepin Avenue Bridge, and the Mississippi River.

It has integrity of feeling. The sign maintains the historic materials and design that identify it as an early twentieth century outdoor advertising sign for Grain Belt Beer.

It has integrity of association. The sign is clearly an advertisement for the Grain Belt Brewing Company, which is representative of the history of brewing in Minneapolis.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends the Commission *adopt* this CPED report, *approve* the nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, and direct staff to transmit a letter summarizing the report to the State Historic Preservation Officer.

Attachments

- A. Grain Belt Beer Sign National Register of Historic Places Nomination prepared by Hess, Roise and Company

February 29, 2016

Ms. Laura Faucher, Chair
Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission
250 So. 4th Street
Room 300
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Re: Certified Local Government Comment on the nomination of: **Grain Belt Beer Sign, 4 Island Avenue West, Minneapolis, Hennepin County** to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Ms. Faucher:

The above referenced property may be considered by the State Review Board for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places on May 17, 2016. Because the City of Minneapolis has been granted Certified Local Government (CLG) Status under the provisions of 36 CFR 61.5 and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office's "Procedures for Applying For and Maintaining Certified Local Government Status," the nomination (copy enclosed) is being sent to the Office of the Mayor and to the Heritage Preservation Commission for review at this time.

This nomination is classified as a historical nomination. After allowing a reasonable opportunity for public comment, the Commission may prepare a report indicating its opinion as to whether the property meets the National Register Criteria (copy enclosed). At least one Commission member who meets the Federal Standards for History (see Appendix A of the state CLG procedures) should participate in formulating that opinion.

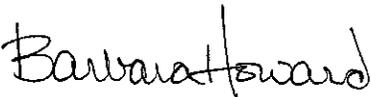
If the Heritage Preservation Commission does not include a member who meets the Federal Standards, the city may choose not to comment on this nomination through the CLG review process (in which case please advise the Preservation Office of that choice), or the Heritage Preservation Commission may obtain the opinion of a qualified professional in the subject area and consider the opinion in its recommendations. The comment must include both the credentials and opinion of the consulted professional. If the city chooses not to comment under the CLG process outlined above, comments on a nomination may be submitted to the Preservation Office in as much as any interested party may submit comments.

The Mayor may transmit the report of the Heritage Preservation Commission together with her comments on the eligibility of the property to Barbara Mitchell Howard, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, at 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul, MN 55102. This response must be received before the close of business on May 13, 2016. Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, if both the Heritage Preservation Commission and the Mayor determine that the property does not meet the criteria, the nomination will not be further considered unless an appeal is filed with the state office.

We should note that the standard notification of State Review Board consideration of this property has been sent to the owner. Appropriate officials will be notified approximately one month before the scheduled meeting.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Barbara Mitchell Howard
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

enc.: National Register Program
National Register Criteria
Copy of National Register Nomination

cc: August Schell Brewing Company, ATTN: Michelle Wood, 1860 Schell Rd., New Ulm, MN 56073
Daphne R. Eastman Living Trust, 10414 Londonberry Dr., Houston, TX 77043

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Grain Belt Beer Sign

Other names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 4 Island Avenue West

City or town: Minneapolis State: MN County: 053 Hennepin

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> Signature of certifying official/Title:	<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> Date
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> Signature of commenting official:	<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> Date
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> Title :	
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

Grain Belt Beer Sign
Name of Property

Hennepin, Minnesota
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Grain Belt Beer Sign
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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____1_____	_____	objects
_____1_____	_____0_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER : Sign

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER : Sign

Grain Belt Beer Sign
Name of Property

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: METAL: Steel

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Please see continuation sheet.

Narrative Description

Please see continuation sheet.

Grain Belt Beer Sign
Name of Property

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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.)

- 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.

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 building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Grain Belt Beer Sign
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Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

Period of Significance
1950-1966

Significant Dates
1950

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
General Outdoor Advertising Company

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Please see continuation sheet.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Please see continuation sheet.

Grain Belt Beer Sign
Name of Property

Hennepin, Minnesota
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Please see continuation sheet.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Minneapolis Collection, James K. Hosmer Special Collections,
Hennepin County Library System; Minnesota Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): HE-MPC-11893

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 0.19 acres

Grain Belt Beer Sign
Name of Property

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Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 44.986092 | Longitude: -93.263470 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lot 8 of Auditor's Subdivision No. 092 Hennepin County, Minnesota, excluding that part of County Road 52 (Hennepin Avenue) located on the property.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries include the parcel historically associated with the sign.

Grain Belt Beer Sign
Name of Property

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Elizabeth Gales
organization: Hess, Roise and Company
street & number: 100 North First Street
city or town: Minneapolis state: MN zip code: 55401
e-mail gales@hessroise.com
telephone: 612-338-1987
date: February 8, 2016

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

See continuation sheet.

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. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Grain Belt Beer Sign
Name of Property
Hennepin County, Minnesota
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Grain Belt Beer Sign is a large porcelain-enamel sign located on Nicollet Island in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Nicollet Island is in the Mississippi River near downtown Minneapolis. The sign was installed in 1950 on the southwest side of the island on a parcel of land at 4 Island Avenue West. The sign faces southwest. The Hennepin Avenue Bridge is to the south and the Mississippi River to the west (Photographs 3 and 4). DeLaSalle High School, the building closest to the sign, is across Island Avenue to the north. A residential neighborhood is located north of the school. Two former industrial buildings are south of the Hennepin Avenue Bridge. Most of the southern tip of the island is a public park. Downtown Minneapolis is on the west side of the Mississippi River and a neighborhood commercial area, also in Minneapolis, is east of the river. The Grain Belt Beer Sign retains good historic integrity.

Narrative Description

The Grain Belt Beer Sign consists of porcelain-enamel panels fastened to a steel structure to form the shape of a large bottle cap (Photographs 1 and 2). The diamond-shaped logo for Grain Belt Beer overlays the bottle cap, and parts of the logo extend beyond the edges of the cap. The bottle cap is 47'-5" wide and 48' tall. The diamond shaped logo is 60'-9" wide and 31'-5" tall. The bottle cap design is rendered in white and four different shades of gray. The diamond Grain Belt logo is red outlined in dark yellow. White block letters spell "Grain Belt Beer" across the face of the sign. At the top of the diamond logo, a smaller, white and gray circle with the letter "M" is the logo for the Minneapolis Brewing Company. A rectangular, green porcelain-enamel frame surrounds the bottle cap, and is also attached to the steel structure. The overall dimension of the sign measuring from the outer edges of the green frame are 63' wide and 52' tall. The steel structure extends down to concrete footings anchored in the ground and is 11'-6" deep from the face of the sign to the rear of the structure (Photographs 6 through 9). The electrical transformer for the sign sits on a platform within the steel framework (Photograph 8). On the building permit for installation of the sign, the overall dimensions are listed as 40' front by 60' depth by 100' tall. Detailed dimensions for the full height of the support structure were not available at the time this nomination was drafted, but are likely close to the 100' listed on the permit.¹

The sign was manufactured by the General Outdoor Advertising Company, a national advertising

¹ Minneapolis Building Permit No. A29226 (June 21, 1950). The current dimensions are taken from a three-dimensional laser scan of the sign, which was completed by Hennepin County in 2015. The dimensions are approximated from the data of the laser scan.

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Grain Belt Beer Sign
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business that had an office in Minneapolis. In April 1941, the sign was erected on the roof of the Marigold Ballroom at 1330-1342 Nicollet Avenue, on the south side of downtown Minneapolis. In March 1950, the sign was removed from the Marigold Ballroom. It was reinstalled in June of that year at its current site on Nicollet Island. The green frame was the most noticeable modification made to the sign when it was moved. The structure that supported the sign was also lengthened since the sign became freestanding.²

Historically, the sign had fixtures for incandescent light bulbs and fixtures for neon tubes. The incandescent fixtures were located on the letters spelling "Grain Belt Beer." The neon fixtures outlined the green frame, the bottle cap, the diamond logo, and the circular Minneapolis Brewing Company logo. Most of the light bulbs and neon tubes have broken, but the fixtures are extant. In 1989, the lighting on the sign was restored. A video posted by a member of the Eastman family, which owned the property at the time, shows that the neon on the frame and the Minneapolis Brewing Company logo were green. The diamond logo and bottle cap were outlined in red. The incandescent bulbs were white and timed to spell out "Grain Belt" one letter at a time before the word "Beer" was lit all at once. The sign remained lit until 1991. On the evening of April 14, 2010, a spotlight illuminated the sign for a few hours to promote the release of Grain Belt Northeast beer. The beer was a new product from August Schell Brewing Company, which purchased the Grain Belt brand in 2002. The sign is currently not lit.³

A smaller, non-historic sign has been attached to the northeast (rear) side of the structure (Photographs 6, 7, and 9). It is a rectangular metal sign box measuring 40'-8" wide and 19'-6" tall. A gold-colored frame studded with incandescent light bulbs wraps the outer edge of the box. The sign is designed to hold a plastic sign face that is backlit by light fixtures within the sign box but there is currently no plastic sign.

Integrity

The Grain Belt Beer Sign retains all seven aspects of historic integrity. The sign has integrity of **location**. The sign was originally mounted on the roof of the Marigold Ballroom on the south side of downtown Minneapolis. After nine years at that location, the sign was moved to its current site at Nicollet Island, and has spent the last sixty-six years in the same place. The sign is popularly known for its current location. The Grain Belt Beer Sign has integrity of **design, materials, and workmanship**. The original porcelain-enamel panels are intact and appear to be in good physical condition. The workmanship that went into creating each colored layer on the panels is visible. The light fixtures on the sign are no longer operative, but the fixtures are extant and can be repaired. The installation of a non-historic sign on the rear of the historic support structure detracts from the historic character of the Grain

² Minneapolis Building Permit Index Card for 2 West Island Avenue, available in the Minneapolis Collection, James K. Hosmer Special Collections, Hennepin County Library, hereafter noted as the Minneapolis Collection; Minneapolis Building Permit Index Cards for 1330-1342 Nicollet Avenue, available in the Minneapolis Collection.

³ Win Eastman, "Grain Belt Sign Relighted," accessed January 21, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SjYBA5L4vAc>; Chris Steller, "Grain Belt Beer Sign, Spotlight," accessed, January 21, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXj1WEH3oog>.

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Belt sign. However, the non-historic sign is small and on its removal would not damage the historic porcelain-enamel sign panels.

The **setting** around the sign has been affected by the removal of several buildings on Nicollet Island along Hennepin Avenue in the late twentieth century. DeLaSalle High School and the residential neighborhood on the north side of the island remain and help to preserve some of the setting. The previous Hennepin Avenue Bridge was replaced with the current suspension bridge in 1990. The newer bridge is wider and the road is now closer to the historic sign. However, the alignment of Hennepin Avenue, and its importance as a transportation corridor, has not changed significantly. The Mississippi River remains a constant feature running in front of the sign. On the opposite side of the river, the buildings of downtown Minneapolis have changed. This includes the demolition and redevelopment of a historic train station and railyards immediately across the river from the sign. On the east side of the river, several historic commercial buildings were replaced with high-density, mixed-use towers. Despite these changes, the Grain Belt Beer Sign continues to be highly visible on the riverfront and from the Hennepin Avenue Bridge.

The sign has integrity of **feeling**. The sign retains the historic design, materials, and workmanship that identify it as a mid-twentieth century outdoor advertisement. The sign also has integrity of **association**. It is a strong visual representative for the Grain Belt Beer brand and the Minneapolis Brewing Company. Although, the company no longer exists, it was the largest Minneapolis brewery and the Grain Belt brand was the company's most famous product. The sign stands as an important connection to the history of brewing in Minneapolis.⁴

⁴ Grain Belt Beer is now made by the August Schell Brewing Company of New Ulm, the state's oldest brewery still in operation.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Summary Paragraph

The Grain Belt Beer Sign is eligible for individual listing in the National Register under Criterion A in the area of Commerce. The sign is the only remaining large-scale, free-standing historic advertisement representing the Minneapolis Brewing Company's popular Grain Belt Beer brand. The Minneapolis Brewing Company was the largest brewer in Minneapolis and one of the largest in the state. Grain Belt Beer is a ubiquitous brand in Minnesota that is still produced, even though the Minneapolis Brewing Company no longer exists. The sign has also become a landmark on the Minneapolis riverfront because it is one of the few remaining outdoor signs installed in the twentieth century. The period of significance begins in 1950 when the sign was moved to its current location. It ends in 1966 following the fifty-year guideline.

The Grain Belt Beer Sign is located within the boundaries of the Saint Anthony Falls Historic District, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The sign is a non-contributing property to the district because it was moved to Nicollet Island after the period of significance for the district.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Golden Grain Belt Beer

The history of the Minneapolis Brewing Company has been thoroughly documented. This narrative will focus on the company's advertising strategies and the significance of the Grain Belt Beer Sign in that context.

The Minneapolis Brewing Company introduced Golden Grain Belt Beer in 1893, the same year that the company was created. The roots of the Minneapolis Brewing Company were based in four smaller breweries: the John Orth Brewing Company, the Heinrich Brewing Association, the Germania Brewing Company, and the F. D. Noerenberg Brewing and Malthouse. The four companies merged in 1890 to create the Minneapolis Brewing and Malting Company. Construction on a massive new brewery complex on the west side of Marshall Street NE began in 1892 (listed in the National Register in 1990). The company was reorganized into the Minneapolis Brewing Company in 1893. The popularity of the Grain Belt label eventually led to the brewery being commonly known as the Grain Belt Brewery.⁵

⁵ Michael Koop, "Minneapolis Brewing Company Historic District," National Register nomination form, March 1988, available from the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul; Doug Hoverson, *Land of Amber Waters: The History of Brewing in Minnesota* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 19, 28; Michael R. Worcester, "From the Land of the Golden Grain: The Origins and Early Years of the Minneapolis Brewing Company," *Hennepin History* 51 (Fall 1992): 11, 13.

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The Minneapolis Brewing Company quickly became the largest brewer in Minneapolis producing an average of 500,000 barrels in 1900. It was also dominant in the statewide market through aggressive distribution of beer using bottling, rail lines, and agencies and other cities. The company promoted its beer through tied houses, saloons that exclusively sold Grain Belt Beer. In 1912, it could boast over sixty-six tied houses in Minneapolis, the most of any brewery. It also actively used print advertising to reach a wide range of consumers including women and the "family trade." Late-nineteenth century advertisements were often run in local newspapers and illustrated the various beers made by the brewery or emphasized the purity of the beer and the health benefits of beer compared to hard liquor. Historian Doug Hoverson highlights a clever advertisement run in the *Moorhead Weekly News* in 1901 "in the guise of a news item about young women working in the U.S. Census Office." The advertisement bemoaned the fact that the women worked so hard that they needed a room for resting. It claimed: "If they were nourished and strengthened with 'Golden Grain Belt' beer, they would not break down. Those who drink it find they can stand a great deal more, for it is a powerful nerve tonic made from the purest barley malt and hops."⁶

The company also promoted its beer through point-of-sale merchandise, known today by collectors as breweriana. The Minneapolis Brewing Company and Grain Belt Beer logos were utilized on everything from bottles to metal tip trays to porcelain mugs to paper posters. The posters often featured professional illustrations of attractive women, patriotic scenes, hunting scenes, or historical vignettes. The merchandise was used in tied houses and other places where beer was sold.⁷

In the early twentieth century, breweries across the country were in a heated battle with the temperance movement. The Minneapolis Brewing Company continued to run advertisements that emphasized the wholesomeness of beer consumption, but it was up against greater forces. The temperance movement used anti-German sentiment during World War I to advocate against the brewing industry, which was dominated by German-American owners. The passage of the Eighteenth Amendment in 1919 brought an end to legal beer production for over a decade. The Minneapolis Brewing Company stayed in business during Prohibition by creating subsidiaries like the Golden Grain Juice Company, which produced near-beer, and the Kunz Preparations Company, which sold denatured alcohol for barbers' supplies and rubbing alcohol. These companies were not as profitable and the brewery shut down in 1928. The company began to liquidate property starting with distribution sites across the Midwest. In March 1933, the board of directors entertained an offer to sell the brewery plant, office building, and other properties for \$550,000. Fortunately on April 7, 1933, the Twenty-first Amendment was ratified by fifteen states, starting the repeal of Prohibition. The Minneapolis Brewing Company was spared and ready to enter its most profitable period.⁸

⁶ Michael R. Worcester, "Been a Long Time A-Brewing: A History of the Minneapolis Brewing Company, 1890-1975" (master's thesis, Saint Cloud State University, 1993), 22, 57-58; Hoverson, *Land of Amber Waters*, 110; "Drink Shops Lined Up As Brewery Controlled," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, July 20, 1912; Worcester, "From the Land of the Golden Grain," 11; Advertisement, *Moorhead Weekly News*, March 28, 1901.

⁷ Ron Feldhaus, *The Bottles, Breweriana, and Advertising Jugs of Minnesota, 1850-1920*, vol. 1 (Minneapolis: Ron Feldhaus, 1986), 19-22.

⁸ Worcester, "Been a Long Time A-Brewing," 63-64, 73-88.

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Thirteen years of Prohibition had led to the consumption of most alcohol in the home. The Minneapolis Brewing Company was well-positioned to handle increased sales of bottled beer for home consumption. The company had invested in a large bottling plant in the early twentieth century, and bottled beer had been part of its pre-Prohibition distributing system across the Midwest. Minneapolis Brewing was back in production with draught beer by October 1933 and the bottling operations were up and running by December 1933. Consumers rejoiced. Many breweries had stories of delivery trucks running around the clock to meet demand and of lines of people at the brewery to buy beer. In the month of June in 1934, Minneapolis Brewing sold a total of 30,000 barrels of beer and demand continued to increase. The company borrowed money to expand its facilities. It introduced tin cans with cone tops and a shorter, 12-ounce, glass bottle, the "steinie." Both the cans and bottles had the same diameter openings as traditional long-neck bottles and could be filled using the existing bottling lines. The new containers were lighter, fit easily into refrigerators, and were "non-tippy" compared to taller bottles.⁹

Bottled beer had become more important for the entire brewing industry because tied houses were abolished after the repeal of Prohibition. Brewers had to operate in an open market using independent local distributors who sold to bars, saloons, and restaurants. They also had to work with independent retailers to reach the family trade. Advertising became vital for brewers to succeed in the new open market, but many brewers were conservative in their advertisements. Historian Hoverson notes that "immediately after repeal, brewers were simply trying to establish their businesses and their names. In some states, beer advertising prohibited any product claims other than the fact that beer existed and that it was on sale in a certain location." By the late 1930s, "brewers built their brands and emphasized the responsibility of (and economic benefits from) the industry."¹⁰

The Minneapolis Brewing Company had adopted a diverse advertising strategy by the late 1930s. It had a dedicated advertising manager, Frank Kiewel Jr., and worked with local advertising firm Erwin, Wasey and Company to develop advertising campaigns. The largest portion of its advertising budget was used for point-of-sale merchandise, which included small outdoor and indoor signs, neon signs, and cardboard, glass, and metal displays. These became more important in saloons, restaurants, and stores where patrons had many beers to choose from. The company also utilized advertisements printed in newspapers, displayed in streetcars, and broadcast on the radio. It invested in outdoor advertising including painted bulletins, wall signs, and large "electric spectaculars."¹¹

Electric spectaculars were large signs with elaborate light displays. The first Grain Belt Beer signs were featured in the February 1938 issue of the company magazine, *The Friendly Faucet*. There were two signs—one on the roof of the Marigold Ballroom at 1330-1342 Nicollet Avenue, and another on the roof of a building at 101 East Hennepin Avenue. The sign on Nicollet Avenue was described in the article as a diamond measuring 70' wide and 35' tall (Figure 1). Vertical red neon bars ran across the entire width

⁹ Ibid., 92-95, 104-105; *The Friendly Faucet*, June 1937, 7; available at the Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minnesota.

¹⁰ Quotes from Hoverson, *Land of Amber Waters*, 149. Worcester, "Been a Long Time A-Brewing," 96.

¹¹ *The Friendly Faucet*, October 1938, 7; *The Friendly Faucet*, March 1938, 3.

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of the sign and were timed to light up from right to left, and then recede from left to right. As the neon turned off, channel letters of white incandescent bulbs lit up to spell out "Grain Belt Beer." Below the large diamond sign was a lit "bulletin board" or billboard. The company planned to update the poster on the billboard every six months with the latest Grain Belt advertising campaigns. The sign on East Hennepin Avenue was similar but was half the size of the sign on the Marigold Ballroom. The article enthused: "When the display is in action it floods the street with intense light, and the area around Nicollet Avenue at Grant Street has the illumination of a Broadway theatre front." The editor also noted that the signs were positioned so that "most traffic flowing either north or south over Minneapolis' main arteries must pass one of the GRAIN BELT electric displays. Traffic counts prove that the two signs 'show' to a maximum audience at all times, giving Grain Belt Beer complete dominance of this spectacular advertising medium."¹²

In 1941, the Minneapolis Brewing Company changed the sign on the Marigold Ballroom to a large bottle cap with the diamond-shaped Grain Belt Beer logo overlaying the cap (Figure 2). Two similar, but smaller signs, were installed on the roofs of buildings at 101 Washington Avenue North and 627 Hennepin Avenue (Figures 3 and 4). All of the signs were constructed by the General Outdoor Advertising Company, a national company with an office in the Seven Corners neighborhood of Minneapolis. The signs ranged in cost from \$1,200 for the Hennepin Avenue sign, which included a billboard, to \$5,000 for the large sign on the Marigold Ballroom. Building permits for the signs are not available, but historic photographs show that all of the signs appear to be porcelain enamel with lights. The sign and billboard on Hennepin Avenue were also lit by gooseneck light fixtures.¹³

There is no mention of the new signs in the company files. It is possible that the 1938 electric signs were replaced because they needed extensive repairs. The company may have also wanted signs that featured the newer bottle cap and diamond logo, which had been in use since 1939 on poster billboards and point-of-sale merchandise. The bottle cap and diamond logo had more visual impact than the diamond-shaped logo with the vertical neon bars and the smaller billboard underneath, especially during the day. The new signs, particularly the ones on Nicollet Avenue and Washington Avenue, were striking for their size, bright porcelain-enamel panels, and unusual bottle cap shape. With the investment in porcelain enamel along with the incandescent and neon lights, the Minneapolis Brewing Company was leading sign trends of the pre-World War II era.¹⁴

Signs for High-Speed Viewing

Everything about the three Grain Belt Beer signs—from the materials used (porcelain-enamel panels, incandescent light bulbs, and neon lights) to the design and the rooftop locations—epitomized advertising in the early twentieth century.

¹² "Northwest's Largest Spectacular," *The Friendly Faucet*, February 1938, 6.

¹³ Minneapolis Building Permit Index Cards for 1330-1342 Nicollet Avenue, 101-107 Washington Avenue North, and 627-629 Hennepin Avenue, available in the Minneapolis Collection.

¹⁴ The Minneapolis Brewing Company papers are at the Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minnesota. The collection includes issues of *The Friendly Faucet* from 1937 through 1940. It is not clear if the company ceased publishing the magazine in 1940, or if the collection is incomplete.

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The technology for the sturdy porcelain-enamel panels that formed the bodies of the signs had been in use since the late-nineteenth century. Porcelain-enamel panels were created by baking frit, a mixture of minerals and glass, onto metal panels. In the late-nineteenth century, cast iron was used for the backing panels, but steel became the dominant backing material in the early twentieth century. Porcelain-enamel signs were expensive and time-consuming to produce. First a layer of frit was baked onto the entire panel to create a base. Then frit in different colors was applied to panels using stenciling, silk screens, or lithography. Each color had to be applied and baked separately. Signs with several colors and intricate designs would be the most time-consuming to manufacture and the most expensive. Although the signs were costly, the porcelain enamel process created a long-lasting finish. After World War II, porcelain enamel signs became rarer as advertising evolved. Rectangular billboards dominated outdoor advertising because they were easy to change with new posters. Materials, like plastic, replaced wood and metal in outdoor signs. The strength of porcelain-enamel panels made them popular as cladding for curtain-wall buildings, including gas stations and skyscrapers.¹⁵

The use of incandescent light bulbs and neon lights on the signs highlighted advances in electricity. As historian Michael Auer has stated, "Electricity permitted signs to be illuminated by light shining onto them, but the real revolution occurred when lightbulbs were used to form the images and words on signs. Lightbulbs flashing on and off made new demands on the attention of the passersby. Lightbulbs blinking in sequence could also simulate movement."¹⁶ Large electric spectaculars first debuted on Broadway in New York City in the 1890s. The signs grew in size and complexity, and contributed to Broadway's nickname, the Great White Way. In the 1920s, neon often supplemented incandescent bulbs on signs. The first neon signs were created in France in the 1910s by Georges Claude, an inventor looking for a practical use for neon gas generated as a byproduct of bottled oxygen used in hospitals and for oxyacetylene welding. He discovered that trapping neon in glass tubing and charging it with electricity produced a bright red color. In 1923, Claude manufactured the first neon sign to be used in the United States, a facade sign for a Packard dealership in Los Angeles. Neon technology quickly spread across the world. By the late 1920s, neon signs could be found in large cities on every continent. The bright colors drew the attention of people traveling in streetcars and automobiles. Neon use peaked in the 1940s and then went out of favor as plastic signage, which was less expensive to fabricate and easier to maintain, became popular.¹⁷

¹⁵ Michael Bruner, *Encyclopedia of Porcelain Enamel Advertising with Price Guide* (Atglen, Pa.: Schiffer Publishing, 1994), 163-165; Thomas Jester, "Porcelain Enamel: Steel in 'Glass Clothing,'" in conference proceedings for the "Preserving the Recent Past Conference," ed. Deborah Slaton and Rebecca A. Shiffer, IV-99-IV-101 (Washington, D.C.: Historic Preservation Education Foundation, 1995); Michael J. Auer, "The Preservation of Historic Signs," *Preservation Briefs* 25 (October 1991), 4-5.

¹⁶ Auer, "The Preservation of Historic Signs," 4.

¹⁷ Denis Gardner, "Neon Billboard, Nicollet Island, Hennepin County," *Minnesota History* 58 (Spring/Summer 2003): 251; Auer, "The Preservation of Historic Signs," 4; Sally Henderson and Robert Landau, *Billboard Art*, ed. Michelle Feldman (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1980), 22; David Kammer, "Neon Signs Along Route 66 in New Mexico," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2002, available from the National Register of Historic Places Program, Washington, D.C., E3-E4.

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Technological advances in sign materials were used to the greatest effect on rooftop signs. Historian Auer notes that rooftop signs became more common in the nineteenth century, but towards the end of the century “the signs became more ornate as well as more numerous.” The signs grew even larger in the twentieth century, coinciding with an increase in building density and height. There were few, if any, zoning laws regulating size and location of signage. Cities, especially the downtown areas, were filled with signs demanding attention. “Elevated trains and electric trolleys increased the pace of city life. And when it comes to signs, speed alters scale. The faster people travel, the bigger a sign has to be before they can see it.” As more people traveled in automobiles, the need for larger signs increased.¹⁸

The three Grain Belt Beer signs combined expensive sign materials with a large, eye-catching design. They used an updated version of the diamond-shaped Grain Belt Beer logo that incorporated the bottle cap. In the 1930s, the lettering on the logo evolved from a finer font to bold capital letters that could be easily viewed at a distance. The bright colors of the porcelain-enamel panels drew the eye during the day. Colorful neon outlining and incandescent light bulbs timed to spell out “Grain Belt Beer” made the signs attractive at night.

An Icon

In March 1950, the Grain Belt Beer Sign was removed from the roof of the Marigold Ballroom. There is no documentation in newspapers or the company’s files explaining the move. In June, the sign was installed as a freestanding object on Nicollet Island facing downtown Minneapolis and the Hennepin Avenue Bridge (Figures 5 and 6). The new location was near the east bridgehead and the sign was installed just above the height of the bridge deck. To people traveling east on Hennepin Avenue the large bottle cap and diamond logo appeared to float next to the bridge. The location was also much closer to the river and downtown than the earlier 1938 sign, which had been two blocks further away on East Hennepin Avenue. The General Outdoor Advertising Company modified the sign by adding a green porcelain-enamel frame around the bottle cap and constructing a taller support structure. The sign was located on property owned by the Eastman family, who had historic connections to the Minneapolis Brewing Company. Pioneer William Eastman served as president of the Minneapolis Brewing Company in 1893. The sign also joined other freestanding billboards and rooftop signs on Nicollet Island. Historic photographs show two additional freestanding signs on either side of the bridge. All of the signs faced downtown Minneapolis, along with rooftop signs on buildings along Hennepin Avenue on Nicollet Island (Figures 6 and 8). The Grain Belt Beer Sign is the only sign, though, that was visible from Hennepin Avenue in the heart of downtown Minneapolis (Figures 7). It was an advertising landmark as people traveled towards the river.¹⁹

It is not clear when the other two Grain Belt signs were removed. Historic photographs show the sign on Washington Avenue extant in 1944 and the billboard sign on Hennepin Avenue existed as of 1953. The City of Minneapolis has not preserved the “H” permits for exterior signage on buildings, and the historic building permit index cards do not note when the signs were removed. When the Grain Belt Beer Sign was moved to Nicollet Island, the city issued an “A” permit, which is typically used for the construction

¹⁸ Auer, “The Preservation of Historic Signs,” 4; Henderson and Landau, *Billboard Art*, 15.

¹⁹ Minneapolis Building Permit No. A29226 (June 21, 1950).

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of buildings. It revealed overall dimensions for the sign of 40' front, 60' deep, and 100' tall.²⁰

In the 1950s, the Minneapolis Brewing Company made significant changes to its advertising strategy, which followed national trends. Hoverson claims that "beer advertising had, in fact entered a new phase in the postwar period." This phase "emphasized the trend toward home consumption, and there the advertising focused largely on packaging and convenience."²¹ The company changed the recipe for Grain Belt to provide a smoother, milder beverage that would be popular with younger consumers. It also revamped the Grain Belt logo in 1954, and began to emphasize canned beer. The advertising firm Knox-Reeves was hired to develop more sophisticated advertising campaigns. The cartoon characters Stanley and Albert were created for billboards and appeared in radio and television commercials. Voice artist Mel Blanc recorded another series of television commercials featuring historical figures, like Napoleon and Sampson, that won the company a national award in 1958. The company branched out into sports-related advertising with signage at sports stadiums and advertising spots using local sports figures. Minneapolis Brewing also began to expand the use of billboards outside of the downtown area to reach new suburban development in the 1950s and 1960s. The creation of interstate highways provided additional advertising opportunities. The billboards allowed for more flexibility in advertising compared to the bottle cap sign on Nicollet Island. Yet the company continued to maintain the sign on Nicollet Island even though the design was older, testifying to the strength of the sign's materials and design, which remained a promotional asset for the Grain Belt brand.²²

The Minneapolis Brewing Company continued to focus on local markets and its local image into the mid-1960s. As historian Hoverson states: "For many people, Grain Belt was the beer associated with their hunting and fishing expeditions in Minnesota. To build on this image, the company sponsored fishing contests during which distributors offered their warehouses as weigh-in stations." In the late 1960s, the company began to focus on the national market, including changing the name of the company to Grain Belt Breweries in 1967 as a way to distance the company from its connection to Minnesota. Companies like Anheuser-Busch, Pabst, and Schlitz were dominating the national market. Grain Belt attempted to join the national stage with the purchase of the Storz Brewing Company in Omaha, Nebraska. The new location would give Grain Belt a foothold to distribute in Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado, and Arizona, but it encountered a hostile environment dominated by Anheuser-Busch and Schlitz. Lack of sales forced the closure of the Omaha brewery in 1972. The company also found challenges on its home turf as national brands expanded their reach with advertising and regional plants. The company began to experience regular losses after 1972, and in 1975 the company was acquired by Minneapolis businessman Irwin Jacobs. The brewery was closed in late 1975 and the Grain Belt name, inventories, and wholesale organization were sold to the G. Heileman Brewing Company in La Crosse, Wisconsin.²³

²⁰ Minneapolis Building Permit Index Cards for 101-107 Washington Avenue North, and 627-629 Hennepin Avenue, available in the Minneapolis Collection.

²¹ Hoverson, *Land of Amber Waters*, 149.

²² Worcester, "Been a Long Time A-Brewing," 104-105, 117-119; Hoverson, *Land of Amber Waters*, 151.

²³ Hoverson, *Land of Amber Waters*, 163; Worcester, "Been a Long Time A-Brewing," 128, 136-152.

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The Grain Belt Beer Sign appears to have been taken over by the Eastman family after the brewery in Minneapolis closed. In 1989, G. Heileman Brewing paid for the restoration of the light fixtures on the sign after lengthy negotiations between the brewery, the Eastmans, and the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission. The sign was relit in May and continued to shine at night until 1991 when it went dark after the Grain Belt brand was sold to the Minnesota Brewing Company. In 2001, the August Schell Brewing Company in New Ulm, Minnesota, purchased the Grain Belt brand after the Minnesota Brewing Company closed. Schell began discussions with the Eastmans to purchase the sign, and the sale was completed in January 2016.²⁴

Conclusion

The Grain Belt Beer Sign is eligible for individual listing in the National Register under Criterion A in the area of Commerce. The property could potentially be eligible under Criterion C but that avenue was not investigated at this time. The sign is an iconic advertisement for the Grain Belt Beer brand, which was the most commonly produced beer in Minneapolis at the time the sign was installed. The billboard signs that came later were ephemeral and only meant to last a few months. Thanks to its long-lasting materials and its strong visual design, the bottle cap and diamond sign was maintained by the company and has been noted as significant in scholarly publications. Breweriana historian Michael Hajicek noted: "Probably one of the most impressive pieces of breweriana in the Twin Cities area is the Hennepin Avenue Grain Belt bottle cap neon sign." Michael Worcester, who thoroughly documented the Minneapolis Brewing Company's history in a graduate thesis, states: "Without doubt, Minneapolis Brewing's most singularly recognizable piece of outdoor advertising is the neon Grain Belt Beer bottle cap sign on the west shore of Nicollet Island in Minneapolis. . . . Even now, it can be seen at night for several blocks, and is a constant reminder of Grain Belt's roots in Minneapolis." The sign has also been noted in *Land of Amber Waters*, where Hoverson discusses the spread of billboards into suburbia and the countryside but "some prominent brewery billboards and signs remained in downtown areas, including the large Grain Belt sign still extant on Nicollet Island in Minneapolis."²⁵

The period of significance for the sign begins in 1950 when the sign was moved to its current location. It ends in 1966 following the fifty-year guideline. The sign has local significance for its importance as an outdoor advertisement. The Grain Belt Beer Sign stands as a prominent visual landmark on the Mississippi River. Other outdoor signs and billboards from the twentieth century have been removed, making the sign a representative of a time when outdoor advertising was more prominent on the river. The emotion that the sign inspires is best described by historian Michael Auer: "Signs often become so important to a community that they are valued long after their role as commercial markers has ceased. They become landmarks, loved because they have been visible at certain street corners—or from many vantage points across the city—for a long time. Such signs are valued for their familiarity, their beauty,

²⁴ Dan Wascoe, Jr., "Historic Grain Belt Beacon Is in the Dark – For Now," *Star Tribune*, November 22, 1991; Rosalind Bentley, "Light Beer: Grain Belt Sign Shines Again on Hennepin Av.," *Star Tribune*, May 25, 1989; "A Legendary Brew Passed Down Through Generations," <http://grainbelt.com/about-grain-belt-beer/>, accessed on January 27, 2016.

²⁵ Michael Hajicek, "History of the Minneapolis Brewing Company," *The Breweriana Collector* 66 (Summer 1989): clipping available in the Minneapolis Collection; Worcester, "Been a Long Time A-Brewing," 105; Hoverson, *Land of Amber Waters*, 151.

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their humor, their size, or even their grotesqueness. In these cases, signs transcend their conventional role as vehicles of information, as identifiers of something else. When signs reach this stage, they accumulate rich layers of meaning. They no longer merely advertise, but are valued in and of themselves. They become icons."²⁶

²⁶ Auer, "The Preservation of Historic Signs," 6.

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Figure 1: A Grain Belt Beer Sign on the roof of the Marigold Ballroom, 1330-1342 Nicollet Avenue, ca. 1938.

Source: *The Friendly Faucet*, Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minnesota.

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Figure 2: A Grain Belt Beer Sign on the roof of the Marigold Ballroom, 1330-1342 Nicollet Avenue, March 4, 1950.

Source: Norton and Peel Collection, Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minnesota.

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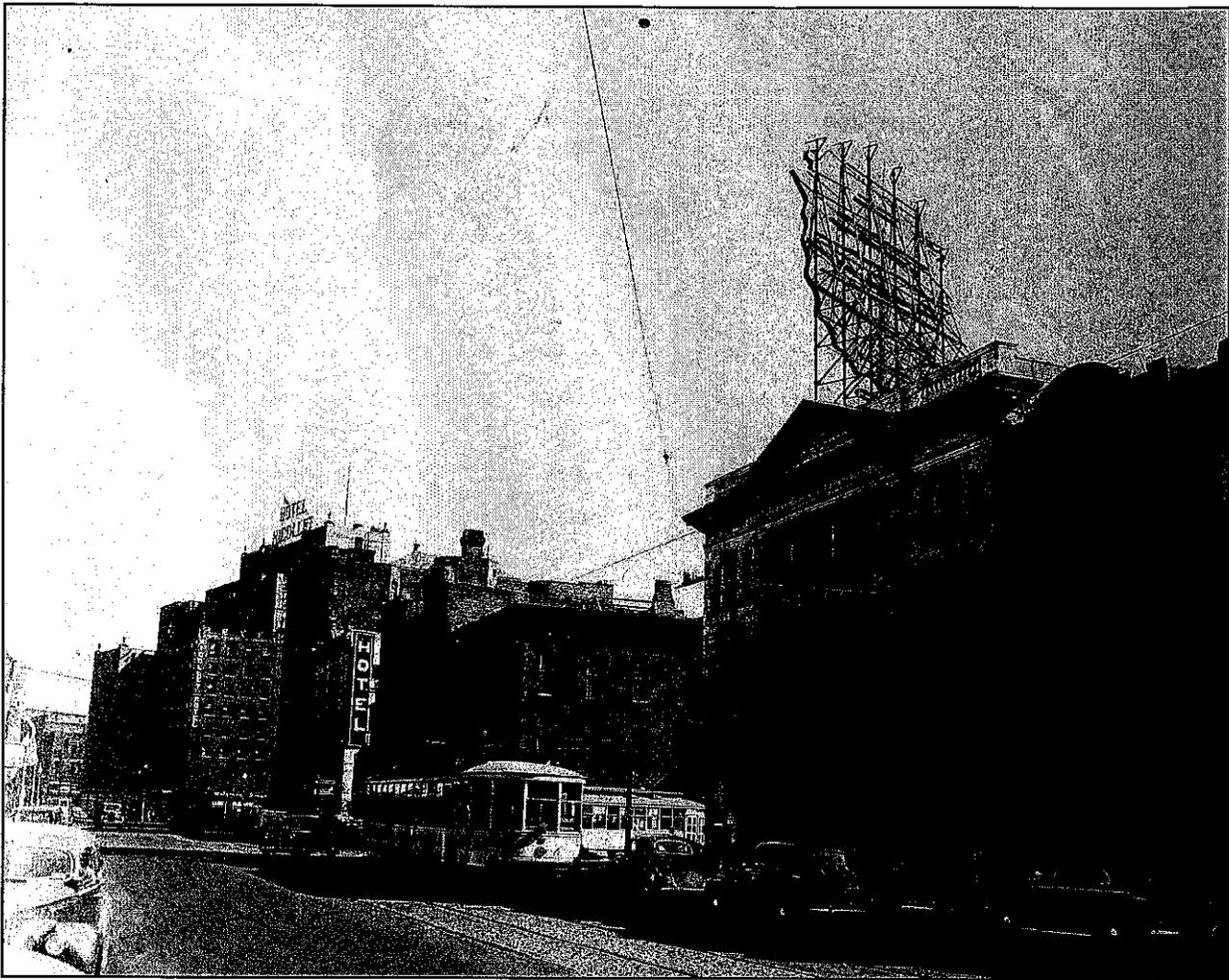


Figure 3: A Grain Belt Beer Sign on the roof of the building at 101-107 Washington Avenue North, August 15, 1944.

Source: Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minnesota.

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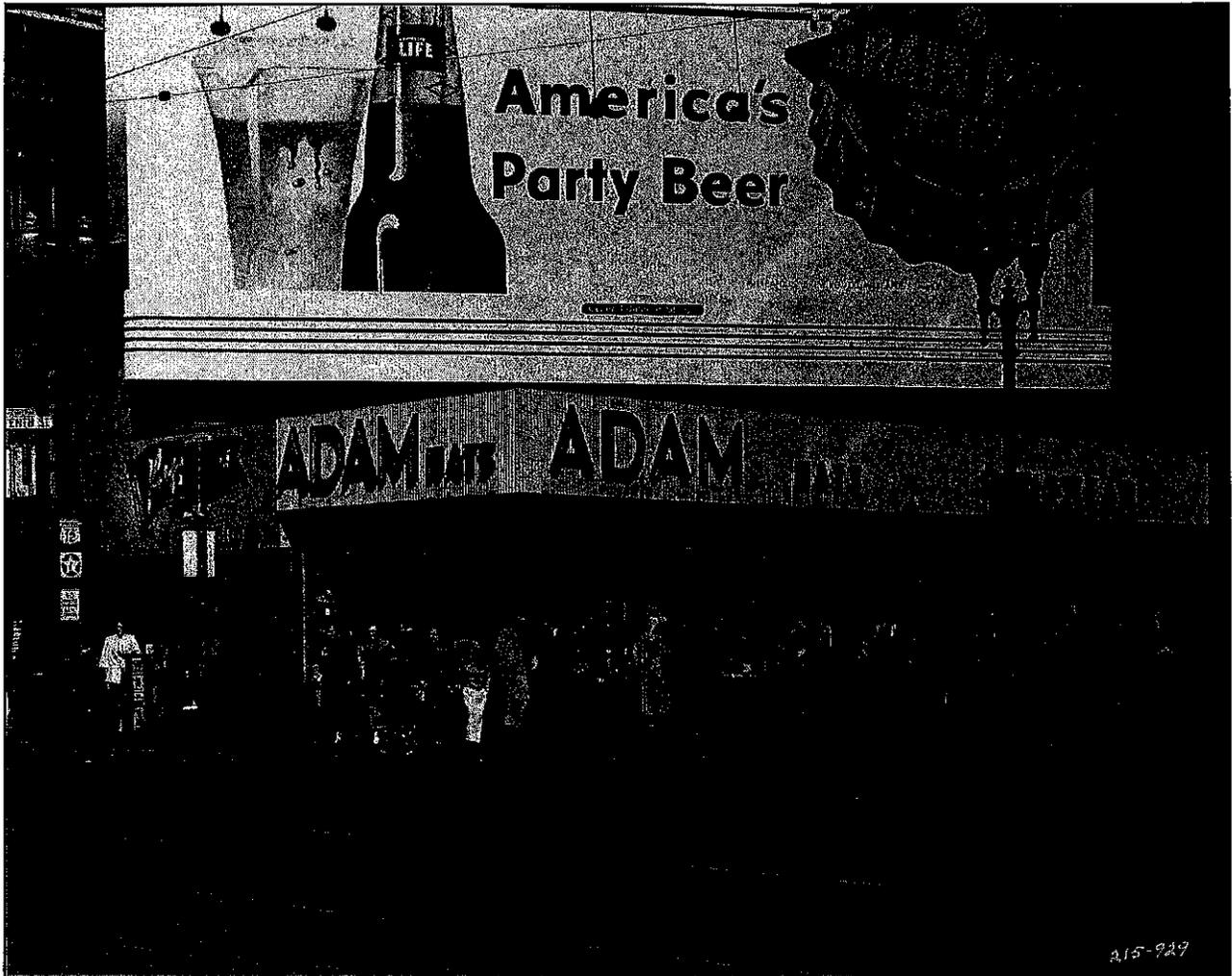


Figure 4: A Grain Belt Beer Sign on the roof of the building at 627-629 Hennepin Avenue, May 11, 1953.

Source: Norton and Peel Collection, Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minnesota.

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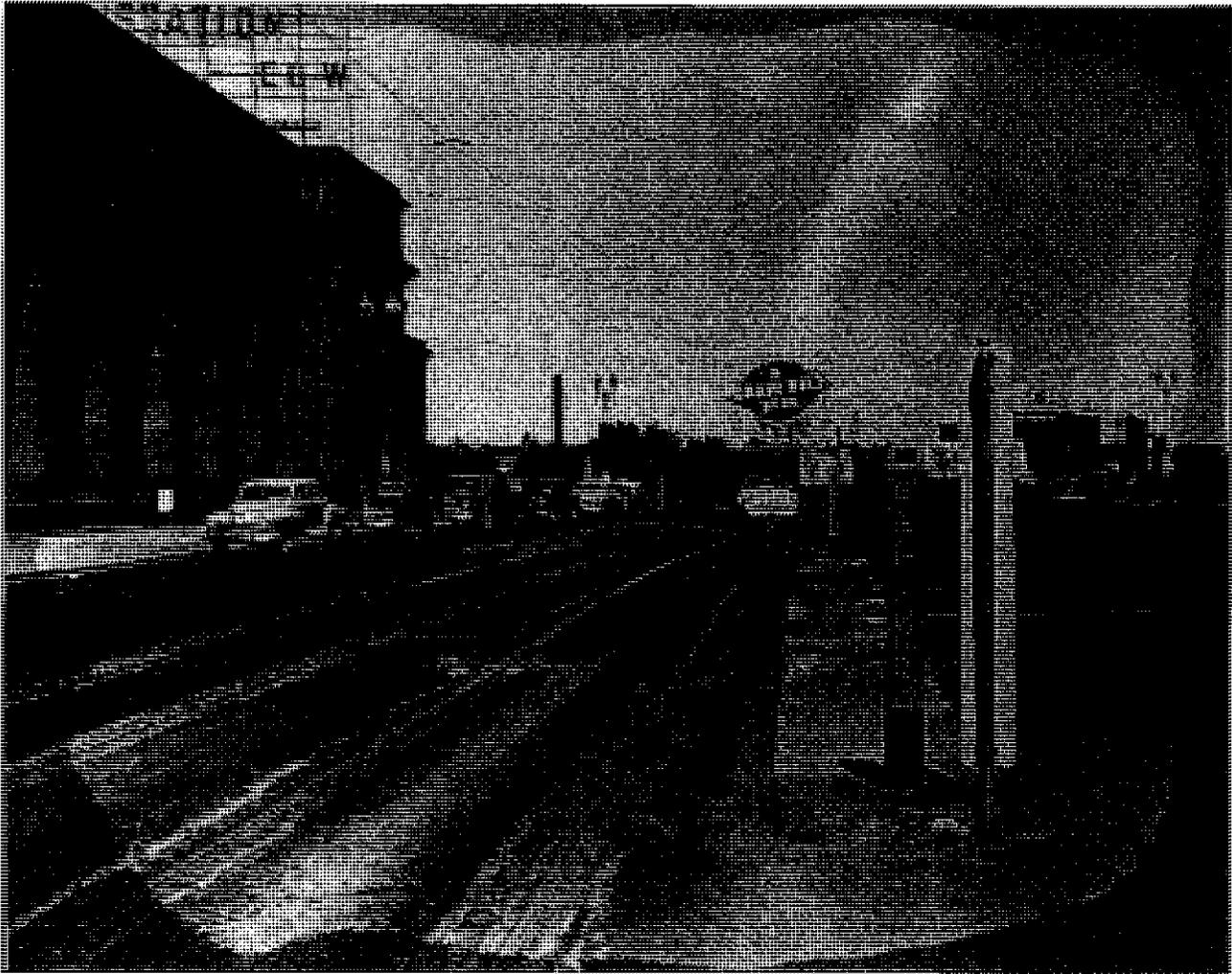


Figure 5: The Grain Belt Beer Sign on Nicollet Island, viewed from Hennepin Avenue near First Street, July 31, 1951. The Great Northern Depot is the building on the left side of the image.

Source: Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minnesota.

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Figure 6: The Grain Belt Beer Sign on Nicollet Island, viewed from Great Northern Depot, May 28, 1953.

Source: Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minnesota.

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation

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Figure 7: Hennepin Avenue at Tenth Street. The Grain Belt Beer Sign is visible in the background, where Hennepin Avenue crosses the river.

Source: Minneapolis Collection, James K. Hosmer Special Collections, Hennepin County Central Library, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Grain Belt Beer Sign

Name of Property

Hennepin County, Minnesota

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Page 8



Figure 8: Aerial view of the Hennepin Avenue Bridge looking upriver (north). Several large outdoor signs, including the Grain Belt Beer Sign, are visible on the east side of the river.

Source: Minneapolis Collection, James K. Hosmer Special Collections, Hennepin County Central Library.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grain Belt Beer Sign

Name of Property

Hennepin County, Minnesota

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Google earth



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Grain Belt Beer Sign
Name of Property
Hennepin County, Minnesota
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation

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Google earth



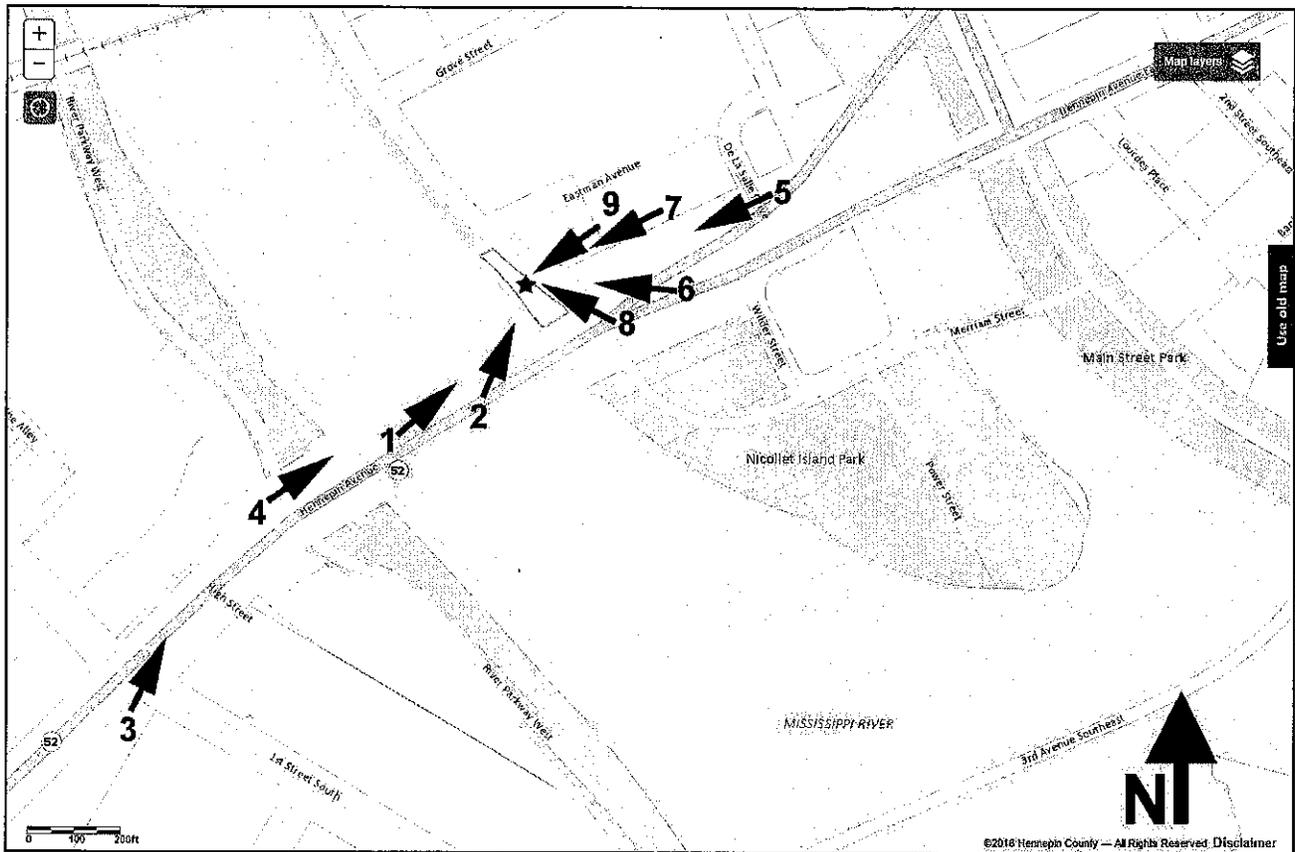
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grain Belt Beer Sign
Name of Property
Hennepin County, Minnesota
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 11

Grain Belt Beer Sign
National Register Sketch Map and Photo Key



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grain Belt Beer Sign
Name of Property Hennepin County, Minnesota
County and State N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 1

PHOTOGRAPHS

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Grain Belt Beer Sign
 City or Vicinity: Minneapolis
 County: Hennepin
 State: Minnesota
 Name of Photographer: Elizabeth Gales
 Date of Photograph: January 2016

MN_Hennepin County_Grain Belt Beer Sign_0001
 Front of the sign, looking northeast.

Name of Property: Grain Belt Beer Sign
 City or Vicinity: Minneapolis
 County: Hennepin
 State: Minnesota
 Name of Photographer: Elizabeth Gales
 Date of Photograph: January 2016

MN_Hennepin County_Grain Belt Beer Sign_0002
 Closer view of the sign face, looking northeast.

Name of Property: Grain Belt Beer Sign
 City or Vicinity: Minneapolis
 County: Hennepin
 State: Minnesota
 Name of Photographer: Elizabeth Gales
 Date of Photograph: January 2016

MN_Hennepin County_Grain Belt Beer Sign_0003
 View of the front of the sign and the Hennepin Avenue Bridge, looking northeast.

Name of Property: Grain Belt Beer Sign
 City or Vicinity: Minneapolis
 County: Hennepin
 State: Minnesota

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grain Belt Beer Sign
Name of Property
Hennepin County, Minnesota
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 2

Name of Photographer: Elizabeth Gales
 Date of Photograph: January 2016

MN_Hennepin County_Grain Belt Beer Sign_0004

View of the front of the sign with the river and the Hennepin Avenue Bridge, looking northeast.

Name of Property: Grain Belt Beer Sign
 City or Vicinity: Minneapolis
 County: Hennepin
 State: Minnesota
 Name of Photographer: Elizabeth Gales
 Date of Photograph: January 2016

MN_Hennepin County_Grain Belt Beer Sign_0005

View of the rear of the sign from Hennepin Avenue, looking southwest.

Name of Property: Grain Belt Beer Sign
 City or Vicinity: Minneapolis
 County: Hennepin
 State: Minnesota
 Name of Photographer: Elizabeth Gales
 Date of Photograph: January 2016

MN_Hennepin County_Grain Belt Beer Sign_0006

View of the rear of the sign and Island Avenue West, looking northwest.

Name of Property: Grain Belt Beer Sign
 City or Vicinity: Minneapolis
 County: Hennepin
 State: Minnesota
 Name of Photographer: Elizabeth Gales
 Date of Photograph: January 2016

MN_Hennepin County_Grain Belt Beer Sign_0007

View of the rear of the sign, looking southwest.

Name of Property: Grain Belt Beer Sign

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Grain Belt Beer Sign
Name of Property Hennepin County, Minnesota
County and State N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 3

City or Vicinity: Minneapolis
 County: Hennepin
 State: Minnesota
 Name of Photographer: Elizabeth Gales
 Date of Photograph: January 2016

MN_Hennepin County_Grain Belt Beer Sign_0008

View of the base of the support structure, looking north-northwest

Name of Property: Grain Belt Beer Sign
 City or Vicinity: Minneapolis
 County: Hennepin
 State: Minnesota
 Name of Photographer: Elizabeth Gales
 Date of Photograph: January 2016

MN_Hennepin County_Grain Belt Beer Sign_0009

View of the rear of the sign, looking southwest.

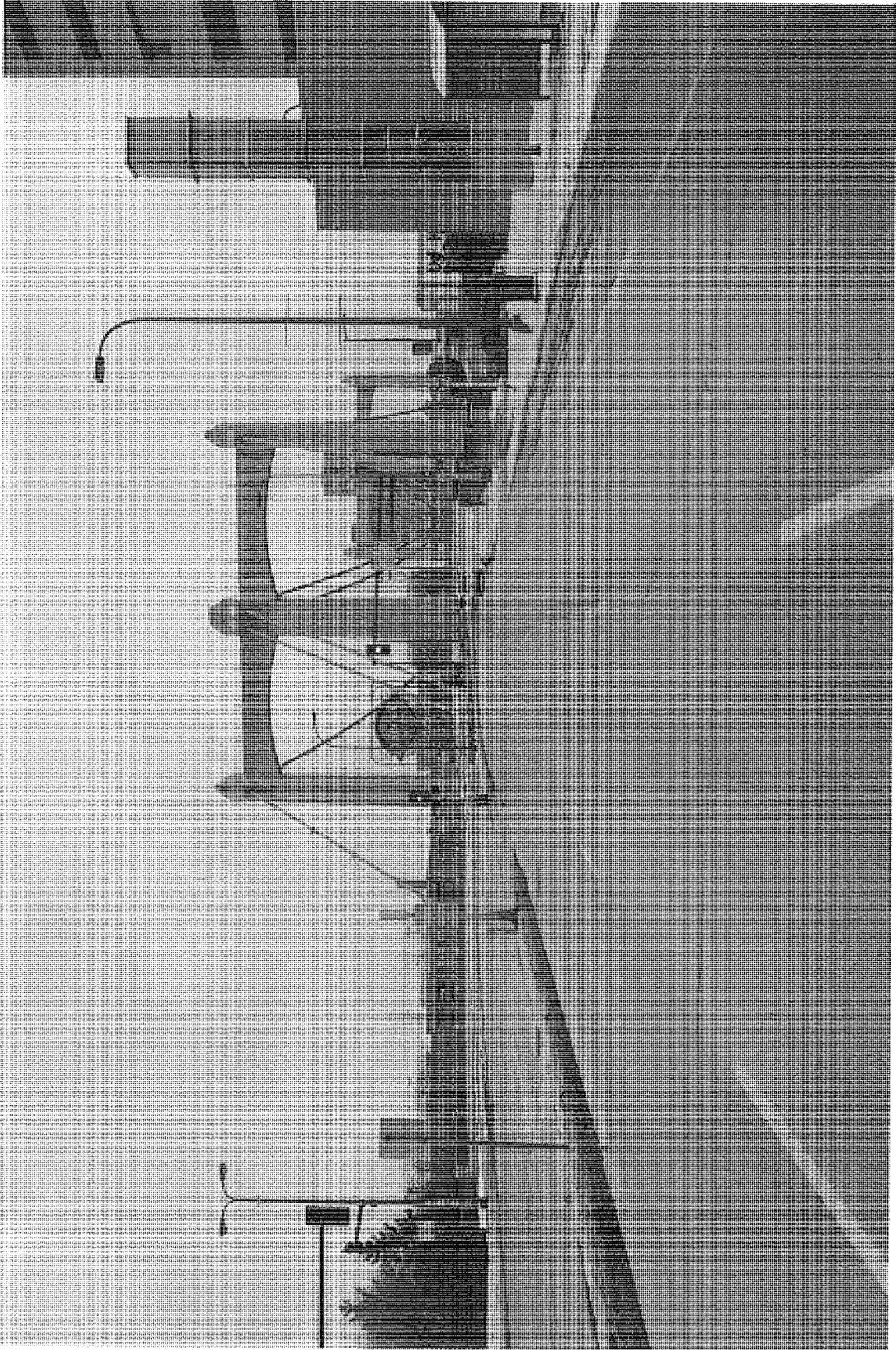


Grain Belt Beer Sign_0001
Front of the sign, looking northeast.



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Grain Belt Beer Sign_0002
Closer view of the sign face, looking northeast.



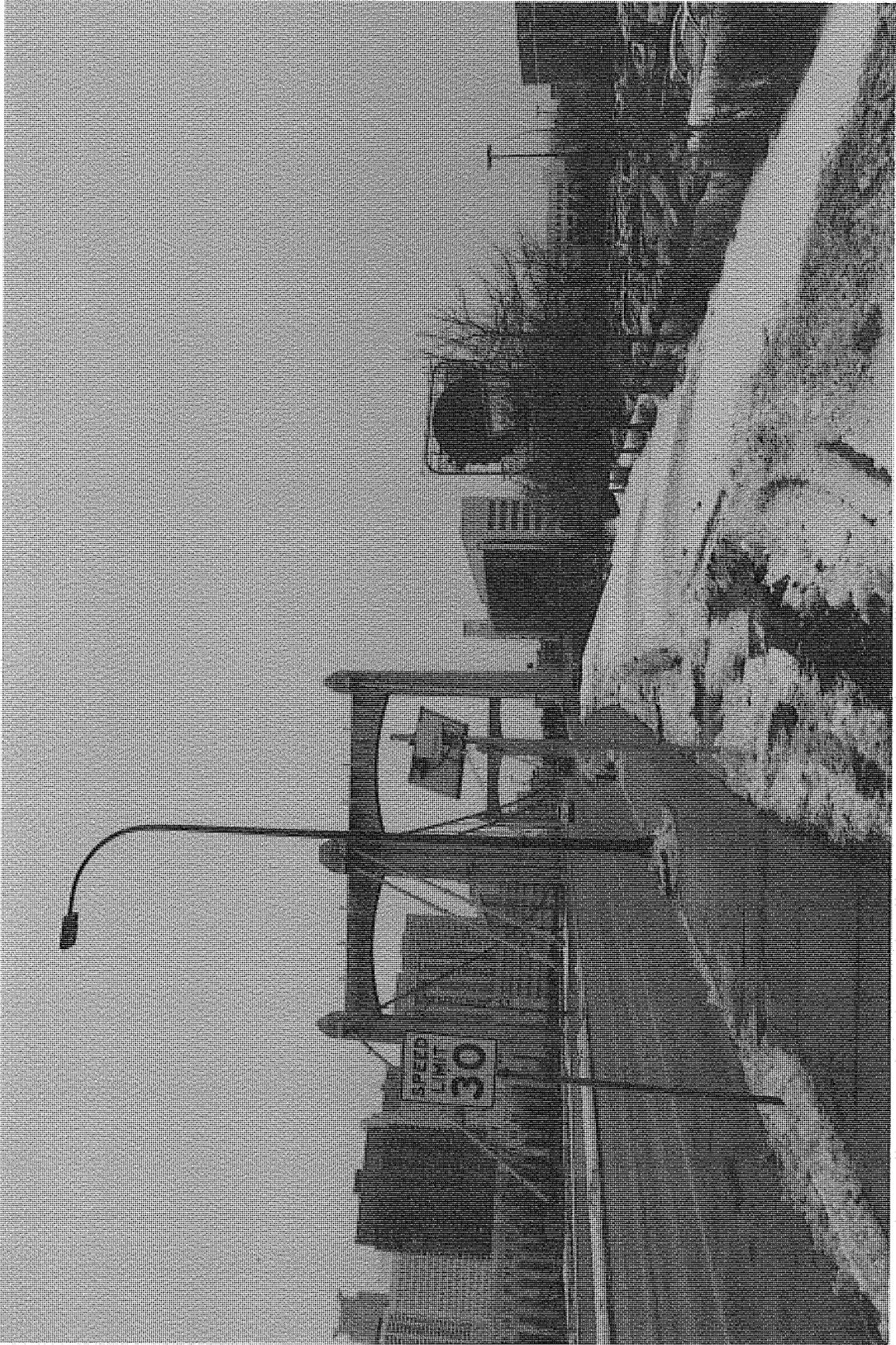
Grain Belt Beer Sign_0003

View of the front of the sign and the Hennepin Avenue Bridge, looking northeast.



Grain Belt Beer Sign_0004

View of the front of the sign with the river and the Hennepin Avenue Bridge, looking northeast.



Grain Belt Beer Sign_0005

View of the rear of the sign from Hennepin Avenue, looking southwest.



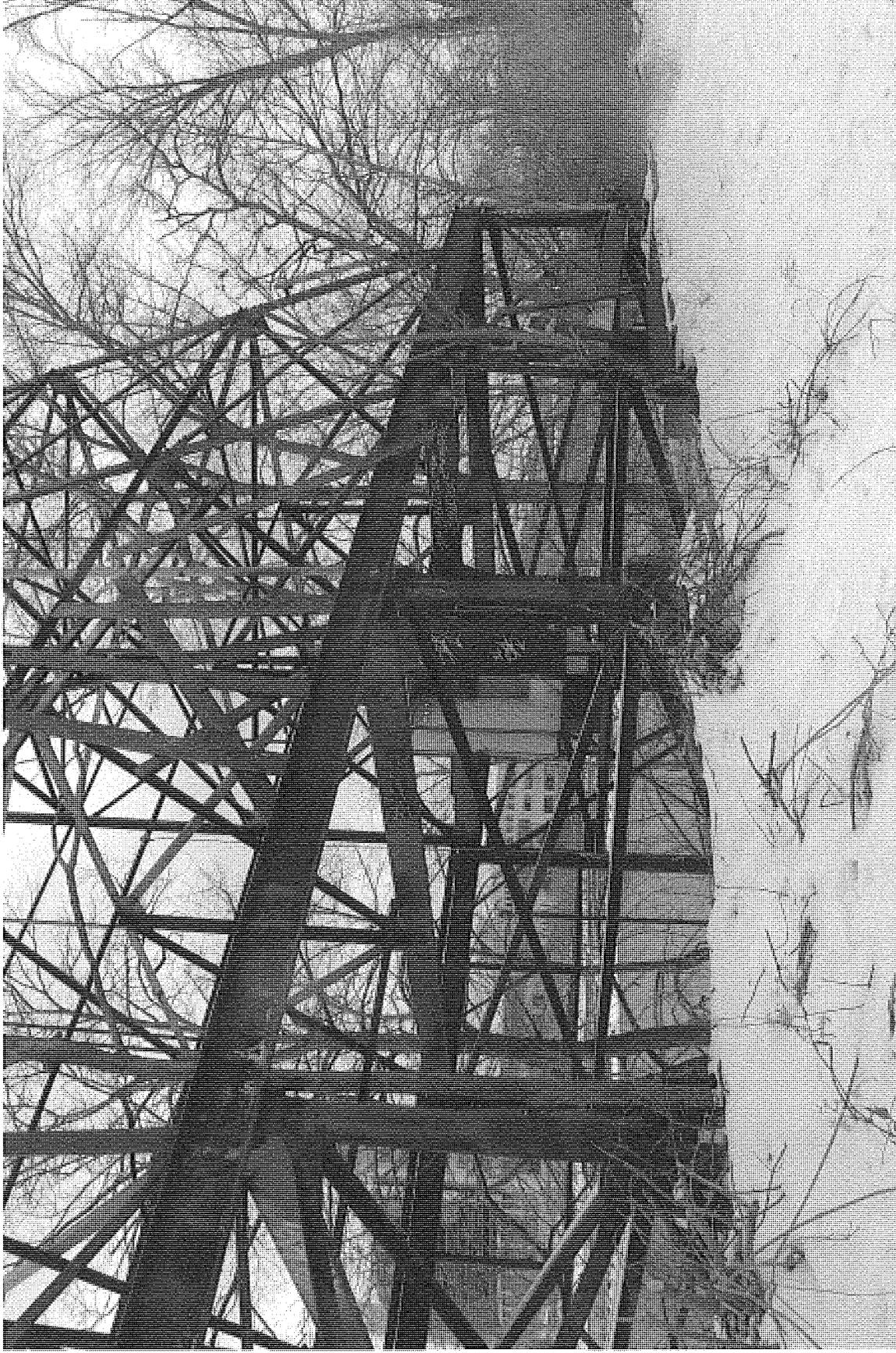
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Grain Belt Beer Sign_0006
View of the rear of the sign and Island Avenue West, looking northwest.



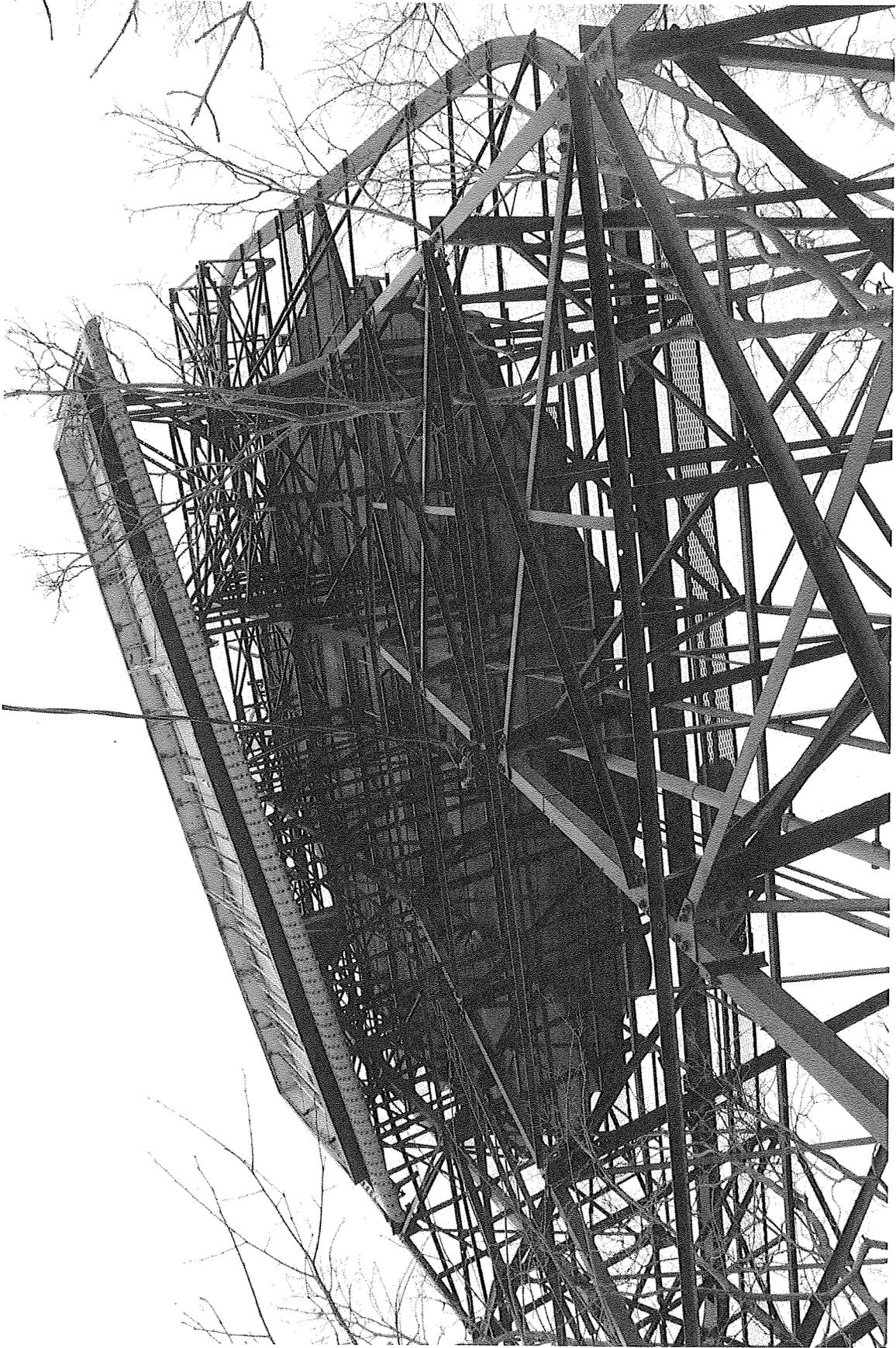
Grain Belt Beer Sign_0007

View of the rear of the sign, looking southwest.



Grain Belt Beer Sign_0008

View of the base of the support structure, looking north-northwest



Grain Belt Beer Sign_0009

View of the rear of the sign, looking southwest.