United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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received

date entered

PA 17120

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms

Type all entries	-complete applicable se	ctions	<u> </u>	
1. Nam	ie			
historic Mo	odern Tool Company			
and or common	People's Market	House		
2. Loca	ation			
street & number	Northeast corner	of State and Fourth	Streets n/	a not for publication
city, town	Erie	$\frac{n/a}{}$ vicinity of		
state Penns	sylvania code	042 county	Erie	code 049
3. Clas	sification			
Category district _X_ building(s) structure site object	Ownershippublicboth Public Acquisition in process being considered	Status _X_ occupied unoccupied work in progress Accessible yes: restricted _X_ yes: unrestricted no	Present Use agriculture _X_ commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park park private residence religious scientific transportation other:
4. Own	er of Proper	ty		
name Mo	dern Tool, Ltd.			
street & number	394 East Town Stre	et		
city, town	· Columbus	n/a vicinity of	state	Ohio 43215
5. Loca	ation of Lega	i Descriptio	n	,
courthouse, real	stry of deeds, etc. Erie	County Courthouse		
street & number	140 West Sixth St	reet		
city, town	Erie	70.	state	PA 16501
6. Rep	resentation i	n Existing S	urveys	
title PA Histor	ric Resource Survey	HUD/CD/Lo has this prop	uis J. Tullio 3/6/ erty been determined elig	80 Jible? <u>x</u> yes <u> </u>
date 1982	,		<u>X</u> federal <u>X</u> state	countyloca
depository for su	urvey records PA Histor	ical & Museum Comm	ission	
city, town	Harrisburg		state	PA 17120

7. Description

Condition X excellent deteriorated X good ruins fair unexposed	Check one unaitered _ X*, altered	Check one X_ original site moved dateN/A
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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The People's Market House/Modern Tool Company (it will be referred to here as Modern Tool for brevity) is a single building constructed in several stages. All of its components contribute to its significance and date from 1895 to 1928. It is located in the heart of downtown Erie, one block northeast of the large park at the city's center, and it occupies about 60% of a city block bounded on the north by 3rd Street, on the south by 4th Street, on the west by State Street and on the east by French Street. Modern Tool occupies the south portion of the block, having been built right against the sidewalk with no setback. The balance of the site has been cleared for parking for a nearby medical center, except for a small brick house at the northeast corner of the site. Modern Tool retains a high degree of integrity, for all the major components of the building built over the years are still standing. These consist of the original People's Market House of 1895 (Section A on the site plan); the State Street facade built sometime between 1916 and 1924 (Sections B, D, E, G and I); and the northern block built about 1928 (Section H). Sections C and F are ancillary structures of brick which were added to the southern and northern blocks. Their dates are uncertain; Section F had to date from 1928 or later, and Section C appears to be of similar age. All components are of brick bearing wall construction, with a combination of wooden and steel interior and roof structures. The building forms a U shape opening to the east, a form it has had since the early 20th century. The structure measures 218 by 330 feet.

To the west, south and east of Modern Tool are blocks of urban structures, a mixture of older buildings, new structures and vacant land. The older buildings to the south have recently been rehabilitated or have work underway now. The blocks east and west of Modern Tool have recently-constructed buildings on them, while to the north the medical center stands some distance away, set back on a campus-like site with considerable open lawn area.

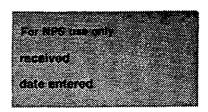
Modern Tool's scale is compatible with that of the area. Nearby structures are built largely of brick, as is Modern Tool, and they are mostly two to four stories in height.

Modern Tool is not built in any particular architectural style. Stylistic features such as the Palladian windows in the south facade or the corner turrets on the south and west facades give the building a distinctive appearance and help to unify its various elements, but overall the building is simple, straightforward in its purpose, and without architectural pretensions.

The original component, at the northeast corner of State and Fourth Streets, was built in 1895 as the People's Market House (the surviving portion is Section A on the enclosed plan). The 39-bay structure fills the

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entire street frontage on 4th Street; it originally measured 54 by 330 feet. It has a large central pavilion of three-and-a-half stories, flanked by two-story wings. Walls are of common bond brick construction, with segmental-arched window openings. The windows are new wooden sash installed during the 1985-86 rehabilitation, but all window openings are original in size and location. Window openings are framed in wood and have little detail. Sills project slightly and are of stone. Except for the casement-type windows in the dormers, windows in Section A are double-hung with 2-over-2, 3-over-3, 4-over-4 and 6-over-6 sash.

Section A has a gable roof, the central pavilion forming a cross gable. The roof on the central pavilion is the original slate, while the flanking wings have black asphalt shingles which have been in place for several years.

On the interior, the market house originally was open from floor to roof, and the wooden roof and interior structures appear not to have received any architectural treatment or decoration. The upper floors of the central pavilion were finished into offices and meeting rooms, with plaster walls covered first with wallpaper and later with stamped sheet metal. These areas were extensively deteriorated and were removed during the rehabilitation, then reconstructed into apartment space.

Some time after conversion of the building to industrial use in 1902, a second floor was added and the first floor wooden support columns were replaced with steel. This construction remains in place. No other major interior alterations appear to have been made, up to the time of the 1985-86 rehabilitation. During that work, the entire interior was divided into rental apartments; much of the original wooden roof structure is visible in the apartments on the second floor.

Past alterations on the exterior are more difficult to read. Illustrations of the building from about 1913 and 1916 show it with two full stories and another half-story under the roof, penetrated by eight roof dormers set well back from the eaves. However, the existing structure is quite different, having a larger number of wall dormers and not roof dormers. Since the existing ridge line and that in the 1913-1916 illustrations are of the same height (rising to just below the eaves of the central pavilion), it does not appear that the sidewalls have been lowered and the roof altered; additionally, study of the roof structure does not

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show evidence of alteration. Since the 1913-1916 illustrations are aerial views, they probably were not made from photographs, and it is reasonable that some unexplained bit of artistic license resulted in an inaccurate depiction of the building.

Changes to the central pavilion are hard to discern also. The 1913-1916 illustrations show a large central door on the first floor of the central pavilion. There is no sign of it on the building as it stands, and the first two floors are an asymmetrical blend of obviously altered door and window openings. No obvious marks on the brick walls indicate where alterations began and ended, but it is likely that the original structure indeed had a symmetrical composition and a large center door for access by patrons. A central doorway was installed during the rehabilitation; like all other entrances in the building, it is simply framed in brick with no other architectural embellishment.

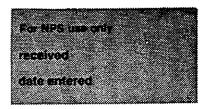
The three-story portion of the complex along State Street (Sections B, D, E, G and I), which has cross-gabled end pavilions, was built by the Modern Tool Company sometime between about 1916 and 1924. Though the enclosed plan appears to show it as five different-sized blocks, its west facade is quite uniform and regular. This portion of the complex, prior to 1916, was first apparently a one-story brick wall with a central gate opening into the complex's courtyard; and later it had become a two-story, flat-roofed structure about two bays deep. It is possible that when the existing west facade was built it incorporated part of the pre-existing structure; no clear evidence in the brick patterning exists. Six-over-six, three and one-over-one double-hung sash are in this section, placed in segmental-arched openings in the brick walls. All windows are new wooden ones installed during the 1985-86 rehabilitation.

The interior of this portion was used for manufacturing, office and storage and was without architectural detailing or embellishment. In the rehabilitation, first floor spaces have been finished as office and restaurant space, and upper floors contain offices.

Section H of the existing complex was likely in place by 1928. It appears to be a complete reconstruction of an earlier two-story block dating from at least 1913. The 1913 structure appears to have been entirely demolished and the existing structure built on its site. It is two stories in height, brick bearing-wall construction, with large steel industrial sash windows (newly installed, but in the same design as the originals) and a central skylight the full length of the flat roof. Inside, marks on the

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second floor level of two central rows of steel columns show that pipe railings once ran along these columns. The central bay on the second floor was probably open to the first floor, allowing light from the skylight to serve both the first floor and the galleries on the second floor. The central bay on the second floor was floored over during the building's use as a manufacturing plant, but today portions of it have been re-opened and stairs with pipe railings have been installed to provide second-floor access.

Section H was used as manufacturing space. It was a single long, well-lighted room that never was partitioned into smaller spaces. Today it serves as a market and retail space, and the open, well-lighted nature of the space has been retained.

The eastern end of the complex appears never to have been closed off by buildings; it appears always to have been used for vehicle access, and it serves that purpose now.

Integrity

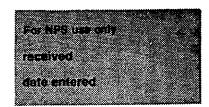
The 1985-86 rehabilitation maintained Modern Tool's integrity, and the structure as it stands today is representative of the period of its significance.

The original 1895 People's Market House (Section A) has largely the same appearance it did at the turn of the century. The most extensive alteration was to the west end, where the Modern Tool Company built one of the State Street end pavilions shortly after acquiring the market house. During the rehabilitation, the most extensive exterior changes to Section A were the addition of the central doorway in the central pavilion and re-building of former doorways in the east end, where false doors were installed, with multi-light windows to serve the first-floor apartment there. The interior was completely infilled with new construction to create apartments, but no significant historic fabric was lost, and much of the roof structure is still visible.

The State Street facade (Sections B, D, E, G and I) likewise has been very little altered. The decorative sheet metal and facade signs have been retained and, as in all parts of the building, new windows were done in the same materials and in the same design as the originals. The storefront on the first floor at State and 4th Streets had been altered extensively over the years, and in the rehabilitation a design was chosen that echoed the dimensions and rhythm of window openings directly above. The most extensive

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alteration on this facade was the conversion of 6 windows into doorways to provide access to the interior courtyard and to the current market/retail area in the north block.

On the interior of these sections, there were no details or finishes of architectural significance. Portions of the interior structure in G and D were removed to provide space for stair and elevator towers; in B and E the upper floors have been finished for office uses, and in I the interior space is part of the market/retail area.

The northern portion (Section H) was not extensively altered in the rehabilitation; the work took advantage of and used the existing open interior space for the complex's principal retail and market area. Steel sash along the north wall were designed to duplicate the appearance of the originals (which had entirely rusted through and could not hold panes of glass any more). The steel and wood interior structure, as well as the wooden floors all remain visible.

The entire building was painted on the exterior during the rehabilitation. Large portions of it, especially along State Street, had been painted in the past, and the new paint was intended to give the building a more unified appearance. Painting was decided to be a less damaging alternative than removing the already-existing paint, and the colors selected are muted and restrained.

Some demolition occurred during the rehabilitation, but this was only of non-significant accretions and additions. The areas demolished were of two types: infill construction between Sections H and E and A and E, where new roof structures spanned between exterior walls to create new enclosed space; and concrete block additions along the courtyard-side walls of Sections A and H. All these demolished areas appeared to date from about the 1940s to the 1960s.

NPS Counting Purposes: The nominated property contains one contributing building.

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Continuation sheet Modern Tool Company 6 Item number French Street People's Market House/ Modern Tool Company Not to Scale 3rd Street C F H North E 土 B G D

State Street

8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899 1900–	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric agriculture architecture artX _ commerce communications	community planning conservation economics education _ engineering _ exploration/settlement	landscape architectur law literature literatury literature literatury literatury literatury literatury literatury literatury literatury literature	e religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	1895, c. 1920, 1928	Builder/Architect H. R	. Dunning	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Modern Tool Company building has commercial and industrial significance in the City of Erie because of its roles as both public market and tool-and-die manufacturing complex. It contains Erie's sole surviving public market house, and the Modern Tool plant, which survives with a high degree of integrity, was Erie's largest tool-and-die plant during the first quarter of the 20th century.

The property's commercial importance dates from the construction of the original part of the complex in 1895. Construction of the southern block along Fourth Street was announced on June 10 of that year as The People's Market House, to be built to a design by local architect H.R. Dunning. The market opened in October of the same year, after an extremely brief construction period.

The market on Fourth Street was one of four built in Erie around the same period and is the only one to survive. The others were the Central Market at 16th and State Streets, opened in February of 1894; the Second Ward Market at 12th and Parade, opened in May of 1895; and the Parade Street Market House at 10th and Parade, opened in July of 1895. This surge in market-building, all of which was done by for-profit stock companies with numerous local shareholders, was spurred by a city ordinance banning the street market along State Street, which had grown in size and popularity since the Civil War period. Ostensibly because of crowding, noise and sanitation problems, the city outlawed open street markets in 1895; speculation in some local histories, however, is that the ban was engineered by market house interests anxious that their new ventures should have adequate tenants.

The other markets lasted into the mid-20th century, though not all as markets. Central lasted as a market until 1958 and was demolished in the early 1960s. Second Ward and Parade were gone by 1951. Only the People's Market House has survived, as part of the Modern Tool building but still clearly discernable, as a reminder of the period before supermarkets when small business owners gathered in a central location to serve the shopping public.

The People's Market House was, in its size and use, typical of Erie markets, but it was atypical in its more substantial construction. The others were of frame or frame-and-sheet-metal construction, while People's was of brick.

Ultimate abandonment of the public markets was the result of changes in food retailing, especially after World War II. The increasing suburbanization of cities, with the concomitant construction of new.

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clean-looking, well-lighted supermarkets in conveniently-located shopping centers with large amounts of parking, was a trend the public markets could not counter.

The reason for the People's Market serving such a short time as a market (1895-1902) is not known. Since it was by far the farthest north of the four markets, it may have been inconveniently located for farmers coming to the city from the agricultural areas to the south; or it is possible the Modern Tool Company made the market's owners a good offer. In any case, in 1902 the People's Market House was leased to Modern Tool Company.

In the city's industrial history, the Modern Tool Company building is significant for its association with the Modern Tool Company, an important Erie business of the early 20th century.

The Modern Tool Company itself was important to Erie as the largest among a small number of tool and die makers in the city during the early 20th century. Tool and die makers are critical to any locale with an industrial base, for these firms build the tools and machines that in turn build manufacturing machinery.

Erie's growth as a major industrial city began after the Civil War, and between 1870 and 1900 its population tripled as its industrial base became firmly established. The city's "golden era" of heavy and durable goods production (the kind most dependent upon the skills of tool and die makers) was between the turn of the century and the onset of the Depression. In 1900 the city had 10,579 working people out of a population of 52,733. By 1920, employment had risen by 140% to 24,783, while population went up by only 66 percent to 93,372. Riding the boom following World War I, Erie hit \$40 million in wages and salaries in 1920, dropping below that figure during the 1920s and then surpassing it in the "banner year" of 1929. Despite the ravages of the Depression, which like all business slowdowns hit the durable goods industries first, hardest and longest, by 1936 Erie still could boast 277 manufacturing plants; but by this time total payroll had failen to just over \$29 million.

The Modern Tool Company's history followed this same path of rise and fall. It was organized in 1898 by a group of Erie men. The firm's original plant appears to have been on 12th Street, west of Cranberry, until the 1902

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lease of and move to the market house at State and Fourth. Here the firm grew rapidly (it was described in a 1909 history as "one of Erie's principal industries"), and additions were soon made to the original market structure. The company was sold to Consolidated Machine Tool Company of America in 1922 (Consolidated was formed expressly for the purpose of acquiring Modern and four other eastern tool companies). Modern operated as a division of Consolidated until it moved completely from Erie to Rochester, N.Y. in 1928.

Major additions to the original building were made between 1916 and 1924 (State Street side) and by 1928 (north block). By 1928 the building had assumed its present form, except for the small later additions which were removed during the 1985-86 rehabilitation.

Specific information about product lines and employment at Modern Tool was disappointingly difficult to find, but some information has come to light; and it helps assess Modern Tool's position in the Erie machine tool industry.

No company records, catalogues or other primary data appear to have survived. Neither the Erie County Historical Society nor the Erie Public Library has any such material. Individuals in both Erie and Rochester were contacted (these were people who had relatives associated with Modern Tool or its successor), but no one had specific recollections about employment or products, and none had any company records or knew whether any existed. The successor company, Consolidated, had been sold at least twice since the 1920s and had moved from Rochester.

One individual recalled that he thought Modern Tool produced both "expendable" tools (cutting and shaping tools) and capital (durable) equipment. This gave at least some gross measure of Modern Tool's size, since it had capacity to produce both categories of tools.

A few references found in secondary sources have given some further information. A program from the Erie Exposition in 1916 included an illustration of the Modern Tool plant and the following: "Manufacturers of grinding machines for cylindrical and conical surfaces, die and tool grinders, self-opening dies, solid dies, hollow milling tools, Magic chuck equipment, and tapping attachments."

Several issues of The Erie Magazine for 1912 through 1915 include stories, illustrations and advertisements concerning Modern Tool. An issue from 1912 states that the origin of Modern Tool was "...a patented self-opening Die Head for cutting absolutely true and accurately straight threads, which to-day is a standard in its class. To this has been added,

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from time to time, the 'Modern' Adjustable Solid Die, Milling Tool, Tap and Die Holder, the 'Magic' Chuck and Collet, the 'Star' Tapping Attachment, Universal Graduating Machine, Chaser and Tool Grinder, Plain, Universal and Internal Grinding Machines, all of which are precision tools of the highest class..."

The same 1912 article refers to Modern Tool's employment at that time: "...over one hundred fifty skilled mechanics." With the addition of management, clerical, maintenance and other staff, total employment may be assumed to have exceeded 200.

Later issues contain articles and ads from Modern Tool featuring the self-opening dies, grinding machines and "Magic" chucks and collets. which appear to have been the company's particular specialties.

Modern Tool earned at least a footnote in the automobile industry because of its production, between 1906 and 1909, of the Payne-Modern, an automobile of advanced design named both for its manufacturer and for the Payne family of Erie, which had been involved in the founding of Modern Tool and also of the American Meter Company and Daka Paper Company of Erie.

Unusual features of the Payne-Modern included an overhead-valve, air-cooled engine of four or six cylinders in a V-configuration; a smooth-riding elliptical spring suspension; and four forward and four reverse speeds. It had a curious barrel-shaped front hood, and it lacked a windshield. The car's price was high - \$4,000 for the six-cylinder model so it likely just priced itself out of the market.

Clearly, however, Modern Tool's main line of business was serving the needs of the metal-working industry through its lines of both expendable and capital tools. But other than the sources mentioned, no source of information could be found on work force size or items produced. Investigation of U.S. Census records was of little help: records since 1900, according to the Chief of the Census History Staff at the U.S. Department of Commerce, have been destroyed, so only the published data in the U.S. Census of Manufactures is available.

This material is of minimal usefulness, both because it is too general and because tool companies such as Modern Tool were, prior to 1919, grouped with several other firms such as welding shops and auto repair shops.

The U.S. Census of Manufactures for 1914, published in 1919, showed 39 machine shops in Erie employing 1,330 people, but the Census does not contain information in greater detail than that.

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Lack of information about Modern Tool is matched by lack of information about other tool makers in Erie, so a statistical comparison of production and employment is impossible. About all that can be stated for sure is that Modern Tool was one of the 39 "machine shops" in Erie, and it had employment of at least 150 in 1912. It is reasonable to assume that employment stayed at least that high for the next two years, so it can be assumed that in 1914 Modern Tool had 11.3% of all employment in the category of "machine shops," and the other 38 firms employed the remaining 88.7%. If Modern Tool in fact had total employment of about 200, it had 15% of employment in that category.

A 1917 atlas of Erie provides reliable information about the physical size of Erie machine tool companies of the time and permits a comparison of firms on that basis; because products produced are often shown on the atlas maps, it also permits elimination of some firms shown as "tool manufacturers" in the directory but which produced hand tools or other retail-market tools rather than machine tools of the type made at Modern Tool.

Under "tool manufacturers" for 1917 the directory lists 12, up from six in 1915, probably due to increased demand from war production work. Several of the 12 were not machine tool makers: C.L. Chapman produced cream separators; Chicago Penumatic made air-powered tools such as jackhammers; Reed Manufacturing produced "vises and pipe tools"; Williams Tool Company produced pipe cutters.

The eight remaining firms could, then, have been machine tool makers like Modern Tool. Following are their names and the square footage of their facilities:

Coblentz Tool and Supply	1,800 s.f.
Erie Tool Works	8,250
Erie Tool and Model	4,674
Holland's Manufacturing	7,875
Lewis Manufacturing Company	4,674
Modern Tool Company	48,345
National Forge and Tool	21,875
Rickert-Shafer	6,600

Modern Tool Company was 2.21 times larger than the next largest firm, and it was 5.86 to 26.85 times larger than the other six. While simple physical size is not necessarily conclusive, it is apparent that Modern Tool was a major presence in the Erie machine tool industry.

Modern Tool has significance also for having survived largely intact. The various maps clearly showed that the physical facilities of all the other firms changed radically during the 20th century: some were demolished outright, others were added to and completely enclosed in new construction. Modern Tool is the only one to have survived in substantially the same form it had during its period of significance, and this form was very little changed during the 1985-86 rehabilitation.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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organization	The Removale C	roup, Inc.		date August	27, 1986 224-2753
street & num	nber 374 East Tow			telephone ,	
city or town	Columbus			state Ohio	43215
12. S	tate Histor	ric Preser	vatior	Officer of	Certificatio
The evaluate	ed significance of this pr	operty within the state	is:		
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Keeper o	t the National Register				
Attest:				date	

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NPS Form 10-800-s (3-82)

ONB Approval No. 1024-0018

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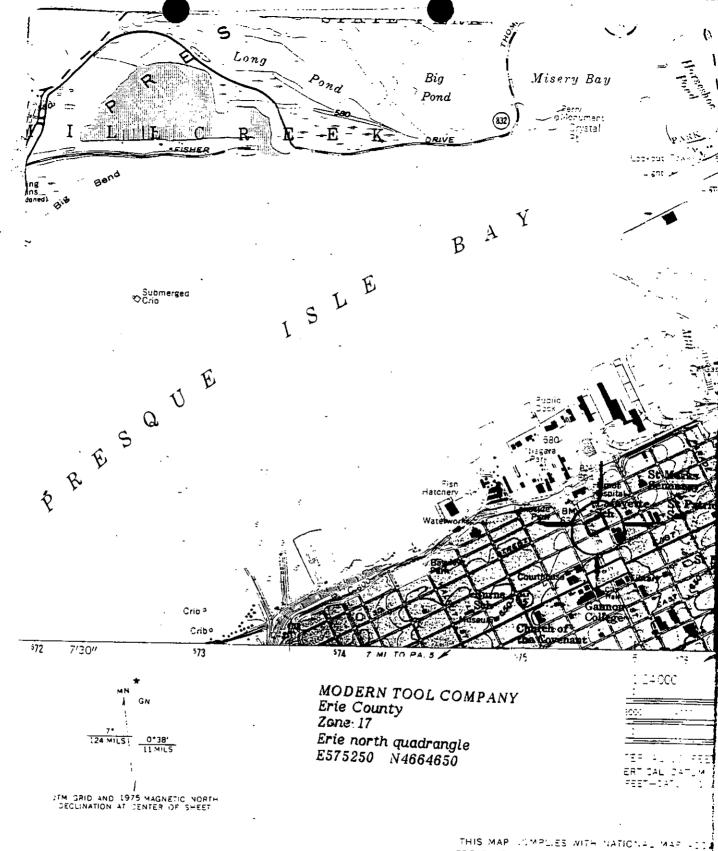
Modern Tool Company

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Boundary Justification

The nominated property contains the contributing building and all historically associated land.



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THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP CONFIDENCE FOR SALE BY J. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTOR A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLES