

**BLIGHT DESIGNATION SUMMARY**  
**FORMER T. C. ESSER PAINT CO. PROPERTIES & ADJOINING CITY LOT**

**DATE**  
 March 3, 2009

**RESPONSIBLE STAFF**  
 Benji Timm, 30<sup>th</sup> Street Team (286-5756) & Elaine Miller, Real Estate Section (286-5732)

**PROPOSED ACTIVITY**  
 Declare the former Esser Paint properties at 32<sup>nd</sup> & Galena and one City-owned vacant lot blighted for acquisition. The properties have a key location in the 30<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Initiative and their presence is a major detriment on the City's revitalization efforts. The Esser properties will be acquired by the City of Milwaukee after *in rem* foreclosure later this year as a mechanism to obtain clear title.



**Exterior Views**



- ■ ■ ■ ■ Esser Properties to be declared blighted
- ■ ■ ■ ■ Pending or previous blight designations

**Esser Properties**  
 3131 West Galena Street, a 7,650 SF parking lot  
 3207 West Cherry Street, a 21,830 SF vacant lot  
 1542-46 North 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, a 77,873 SF site improved with over 90,000 SF of industrial space is six, multi-story facilities. The complex was constructed between 1890 and 1925 with small additions in 1950-1960. Manufacturing activities ceased in 1982 and the facility was then used for warehousing and sales until 2000. The property has been vacant since 2000.

Environmental: Hazardous impacts included friable asbestos throughout the buildings, hazardous liquids stored on site and 20-30 underground storage tanks used for lead-based paint and fuel. Portions of the facility have been remediated by Galena in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Authority will continue remediation during and after demolition of the facility.

Overall Condition: The combined property suffers from extensive physical, functional and external obsolescence.

Code Status: The Department of Neighborhood Services has an outstanding raze order on the facility.

Tax Status: All properties are delinquent for 2006, 2007 & 2008.



#### **City Property**

1500 North 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, a vacant lot containing approximately 15,600 SF. The lot was acquired through tax foreclosure in 1989.

#### **BLIGHT FINDING**

The properties can be considered blighted pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes for the following reasons:

- The building and site improvements have substantially deteriorated
- The environmental condition and vacant status substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth and development of the community.
- The lots have irregular and obsolete platting and the site has topographic challenges and difficult access due to the adjacent rail line, which is significantly below street grade

#### **PAST ACTIONS**

On February 19, 2009, the Authority held a public hearing on the blight designation as required by Wisconsin Statutes. After the hearing, the Authority determined that the properties met the statutory definition of blight and authorized the property acquisition.

#### **FUTURE ACTIONS**

The City Treasurer has commenced the *in rem* process for the Esser properties. The City is expected to take title in June or July. The properties will then be conveyed to the Authority along with the adjoining City lot. The Authority will demolish the improvements and continue remediation using federal and state funding sources from the HUD, EPA and WDNR. The Authority's ability to obtain such grants is enhanced by the tax foreclosure.

While demolition and remediation are in process, Authority staff will evaluate feasibility of a Redevelopment Plan for this portion of the 30<sup>th</sup> Street Industrial Corridor. Such a plan would guide future redevelopment.