

## HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT

### I. NAME

Historic: **Francis (Frank) Niezorawski Duplex**

Common Name:

### II. LOCATION **1722-1724 N. Franklin Place**

**Legal Description -** Tax Key No. 355-0852-000-8  
Partition of Plat of SW ¼ IN NE ¼ SEC 21-7-22  
Block G Lot 12

### III. CLASSIFICATION

Building

### IV. OWNER

Laurel Canyon Properties LLC  
Radovan Stojanovich and Bhupendra Khatri  
4145 N. Lake Drive  
Shorewood, WI 53211

#### ALDERMAN

Ald. Michael D'Amato, 3<sup>rd</sup> Aldermanic District

#### NOMINATOR

Shirley Ferguson

### V. YEAR BUILT

c.1894 (City Directory; Tax Rolls 1894)

#### ARCHITECT:

Unknown

### VI. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Francis Niezorawski Duplex is located at 1722-1724 N. Franklin Place, about five doors north of Brady Street on the city's Lower East Side, just over a mile from the Central Business District. The property is a long, narrow lot that measures approximately 40 feet by 220 feet. On the property stand two structures, a duplex at the front of the lot and a duplex at the rear. The surrounding neighborhood, known as East Village, is a distinctive area of mostly modest frame dwellings built from the 1870s to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Interspersed among the houses are frame stores and a few masonry commercial buildings. East Village is bordered on the south by the Brady Street Historic District (locally designated April 9, 1990; National Register listed March 9, 1990), on the west by Humboldt Avenue, on the north by the Milwaukee River and on the east by Warren Avenue. The character of the area shifts to more upper middle class residential to the east and south and more industrial to the west. East Village was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on January 21, 2004 and received Conservation Overlay District status with the City of Milwaukee on November 1, 2006. The Francis Niezorawski Duplex is a contributing building within the National Register historic district and falls within the boundaries of the conservation overlay district. The neighborhood has remained remarkably

intact to its late 19<sup>th</sup> century appearance but for the recent incursions of new development mostly on Warren Avenue and at Humboldt Avenue.

The Niezorawski duplex is a large, two and a half story, red brick-veneered structure with front gable that sits on an unusual stone foundation. The building rests atop a berm set back from the sidewalk approximately eight feet. It is located almost or right on the property's north lot line. A very beefy looking concrete retaining wall is located between the porch and the sidewalk and anchors the front berm since the adjacent property north at 1728 N. Franklin Place is at lower grade. There is a flight of five concrete steps that ascends the berm for each of the two entrances to the duplex. A concrete walkway extends along the south side of the building to access the side and rear entrances and the rear duplex. The rear duplex is a two and a half story frame structure located at the northeast corner of the property. It is aligned with the primary building but is smaller in scale. It has a walkway along its south side with access to an entrance set near the back of the building. A narrow side yard extends along the south side of the property and is planted with grass and some flowers. The backyard between the two structures has one evergreen and several trees and bushes. A concrete retaining wall borders the north side of the backyard and separates the property from the premises at 1728 N. Franklin Place, which is of lower grade. There is no alley and no driveway or garage on the premises.

The Niezorawski Duplex is a rectangular structure constructed of deep red color pressed brick laid up with knife thin mortar joints sometimes referred to as buttered joints. Many of the first story rectangular windows on the south, east and north elevations are topped with flat (gauged) arches that have radiating brick voussoirs. These tapered brick give a slight flair atop the windows and were an expensive feature found on high-end construction. The gabled roof is clad with asphalt shingles and is oriented east west with a large side gable on the south slope. Two brick chimneys with ornamental corbelling extend from the north roof slope near the ridge. There are two shiny metal vents extending from the south roof slope and a satellite dish has been installed on the south slope near the gable. The three-part foundation is unlike any other in the city. Rusticated limestone blocks form the base. It is exposed on the north elevation due to the change in grade. Atop the limestone blocks is a broad band of rusticated dark grey granite blocks of varying sizes. The water table is set above the granite band and is thought to be Bedford stone. It is cut into long, smooth-finished blocks.

The primary façade fronts west and faces Franklin Place and displays the most ornamental detail. The rectangular block of the building is cut back at the southwest corner and the building is topped with a broad gable. This gable features three one-over-one sash topped by a decorative arch, creating a Palladian window. The tympanum of the arch is relatively plain and features three floral motifs, suggestive of ginkgo leaves. The windows are framed with pilasters and the entablature features a dentil moulding. The upper sash of the center window has been replaced with a vent. The remainder of the gable end is filled with ornamental cut shingles, interspersed with courses of sawtooth shingles. The shingles are framed with broad fascia boards. The soffits of the gable and the gable returns are accented with brackets.

Two entry doors are located on the first story of the front facade, one at either end of the building. Two broad landscape sash windows are located near the center of the façade, one on each story. The first floor's window has a beveled leaded glass transom. It appears that the second story transom has plain glass. It is not known whether or not it originally had an ornamental transom. The first floor landscape sash is also accented with an elaborate terra cotta lintel with scrolled brackets. One-over-one sash are located in the cutaway or canted southwest corner. The primary doors are not visible behind the metal storm doors so it is not known if they are original. A full-length porch extends across the façade at the first story and is one of the character defining features of the building. Fire insurance maps show that there originally had been two, one-story porches, one at each entry. In May of 1913 Francis Niezorawski's widow Mary and son Frank Jr. took out a permit to construct the present full-length porch. We do not know the reason for this alteration. Frank Jr. himself was a mason

and the porch is an outstanding example of the mason's skill. The new porch was all masonry from the ground up in contrast to many porches that had only masonry piers. This is the type of masonry porch that can be found on McKinley Boulevard, for example, a feature giving that boulevard its distinctive character. The brick base of the porch is unbroken except for small vent openings near the ground that are in the form of crosses. Five stout brick piers support the porch roof. Stone is used for the piers' bases, the simple capitals and cross-like decorative forms below the capitals. It is not known if the repetition of the cross forms had any significance to the family. A flight of six wooden steps lead up to each entry. There were once brick wings walls but they have been removed. Wooden handrails now flank each flight of steps. The brick porch piers support an entablature that is crowned with brackets. The upper deck of the porch features wooden piers with thin wooden picket style balusters. It is likely that there were brick piers on this level originally and perhaps they are still extant but covered with the current wood sheathing. The recessed porch on the second story at the southwest corner of the building has exception detailing. Wood pilasters frame the opening and feature strapwork-like rondels as ornament. Polygonal columns flank the piers and are paired along the south portion of the porch. There is a door accessing this upper porch from the second story. The porch ceilings feature the traditional tongue-in-groove sheathing.

The south façade of the Niezorawski duplex carries through some of the high level of detail found on the front elevation. It is obvious that the building was meant to be viewed from the southwest looking northeast. The broad gable echoes that of the front façade and features a Palladian window, ornamental shingles, decorative brackets and gable returns. On the sidewalls, one-over-one windows with stone sills are mostly stacked above each other on the first and second stories and correspond to interior room layouts. The two first story windows closest to the front of the building are embellished with ornamental terra cotta lintels that are supported by scrolled brackets. They replicate the design of the lintel over the first floor landscape sash window. The lintel features a band of bead and reel, a band of dentil moulding, a central blank panel and fluting with beaded shapes. The lintels above the front landscape sash and the first window on the south elevation fit the windows precisely. The lintel second back tops two separate windows, one full length and one short window. The short window extends beyond the edge of the ornamental lintel and there is no bracket at this end. The stone sills appear original and there is no disturbance of the surrounding masonry. This could be evidence that the ornamental lintels were salvaged from another construction project. That would explain why only three are present on the building and why the third was just shy of covering the window tops. The major alteration to this façade is the construction of a flat-roofed, boxed entry that extends from the body of the building about midway along the façade. This projecting element, located at grade, does not appear on fire insurance maps and was likely added in 1938 when permit records show that the building was converted into four apartments and codes required a new stairway from the basement to the second floor that had outside access. This entry extension is built of the same brick as the rest of the house. The new metal door in this entry is slightly smaller than the original and the opening has been blocked down with wood.

The rear or east elevation is utilitarian in character. The gable end features a pair of one-over-one windows instead of a Palladian window. The bottom sash of the right (north) window is filled with a vent. The ornamental shingling is similar to that found in the front and east gable ends but here a thirteen-row band and a three-row band of scalloped shingles substitute for the sawtooth cut shingles. Although the gable features returns, it lacks the brackets found at the front and south elevations. The entry at this rear façade is located at the south end of the elevation. A shed roof hood is located above the door, supported by metal posts. The stoop is of concrete. Alterations have been made to the hood. The modern metal entry door is smaller than the original and resulted in the blocking down of the opening. Two, one-over-one sash are located on each floor to the right or north of the entry. A modern floodlight has been added to the southeast corner of the building to provide security lighting for the rear entrance.

The north elevation is likewise utilitarian in character. Since the grade of the adjacent property is lower, the three-part foundation is very visible here. Basement windows are set into the granite band and consist of rectangular sash with two panes of glass. They are covered with either Plexiglas or wood. One-over-one sash are stacked across this façade, corresponding to the interior room arrangement. Three of the shorter windows have been infilled with glass block and likely correspond to interior bathroom spaces.

The rear duplex is much simpler in style and form. The front-gabled, frame structure is two and a half stories high and sits on a cream brick foundation. The gabled roof is clad with asphalt shingles and has a simple brick chimney extending from the south roof slope. The foundation shows signs of alteration with two courses of concrete block resting on the cream brick. This might indicate either the re-use of an earlier foundation or a repair. The building originally had wood clapboards. They were covered with asphalt shingles in 1940. Vinyl siding and vinyl scalloped shingles have been applied to the exterior since the historic preservation section did a photo survey of the neighborhood in 1986. A large one-over-one window in the front gable end had been sided over leaving only a vent in its place. All windows are one-over-one sash. The original wood windows have all been replaced with white vinyl ones.

The front façade faces west and features an entry porch and door at the north end, a pair of windows on the first story, a pair of windows on the second story stacked over those on the first and a single window above the porch. The concrete block porch has a shed roof supported by two wood columns and is approached by a flight of four steps. Handrails and railings are of wood with flat picket style balusters.

The north elevation is utilitarian in character with four windows, two on each story, stacked above one another. It is located right at the north lot line. The south or right elevation has four windows on each story and an entry door at the far east end of the building. The rear (east) of the house is not visible. The building appears to extend right up to or almost up to the east property line.

This rear duplex was not constructed by the Niezorawski family. When the family owned the property, a large, two-story frame barn occupied this site. Access to the barn, which was likely used in conjunction with Niezorawski's contracting business, was from the south to Brady Street through property that Niezorawski owned. That property is where the Suminski Funeral Home was later built. Second owner Stanley Orchowski built the rear duplex in 1922. The permit for the work was taken out on February 16<sup>th</sup> and the work was to be a remodeling of an old barn into a two family flat. Inspector's notes show, however, that the old barn was taken down completely and that an entirely new exterior frame was constructed. There is a note about "working on basement walls" so it is unclear if the cream brick foundation seen today is a remnant of the old barn or new in 1922. Two courses of concrete block sit atop the cream brick and the block looks old. Foundation repairs are documented in permits from 2001 but again, the block on the north foundation looks older than that.

**NOTE: The Niezorawski Duplex was nominated by Shirley Ferguson, resident of East Village, in order to preserve the exterior character of the building, which has had a series of absentee owners in recent decades. There has been concern that repairs and maintenance might not be sympathetic to the original materials and character of the building. Ms. Ferguson's own house and the Niezorawski Duplex are also tied historically. Francis Niezorawski married Mary Stormowski, the sister of Edmund Stormowski, builder and occupant of Ms. Ferguson's house. Ms. Ferguson's husband is the third generation owner of Stormowski House. It was locally designated on November 26, 2002.**

## **VII. SIGNIFICANCE**

The Francis (Frank) Niezorawski Duplex is significant for its identification with one of the most prominent Polish American residents of Milwaukee's East Side Polonia. Niezorawski built a reputation as a feisty character that got things done. A police officer and saloonkeeper for brief periods, Niezorawski's reputation was built on his talents as a mason contractor. He symbolized the hard work and drive among Milwaukee's Poles and was a classic example of an individual who fulfilled the American dream that drew many immigrants to this country and Milwaukee. Having arrived in America with few skills, Niezorawski was able to train as a mason and his talent evolved into his own contracting business. He worked on some of the most notable buildings of his time such as St. Hedwig's Roman Catholic Church (1886), St. Hyacinth's Church (1414 W. Becher Street 1882), the Empress Theater (razed), the Public Service Building (231 W. Michigan Street 1903-05) the Electric Power House, West Allis Machine Shops, Gesu Church (1145 W. Wisconsin Avenue 1893-94), and the Enterprise Building (210 W. Michigan Street, 1905, razed).

Niezorawski was well respected by his fellow Poles and they elected him to three terms as alderman from the 18<sup>th</sup> Ward in 1890, 1892 and 1894. Among his important decisions at the time was the authorization of the construction of the new City Hall and his name along with other Common Council members is inscribed on the Solomon Juneau Bell in City Hall's bell tower. He also was the first Polish American board member of the Milwaukee Commission of Public Works from April 6, 1903 to June 19, 1904 when he resigned. Niezorawski was likewise prominent in the affairs of St. Hedwig's Church, being a charter member of the St. Adelbert's Society, St. Joseph's, St. John Cantius' and other societies at St. Hedwig's Church.

Niezorawski exemplifies the tight knit Polish community that valued family, hard work, church and identification with place. He spent his entire career in the East Village neighborhood, living on Brady Street and possibly constructing two of the most prominent buildings there, Nos. 1214-16 and 1224, then moving around the corner onto Franklin Place into a luxury duplex he built in 1894. Rather than move to a more "elite" neighborhood, Niezorawski remained rooted in his community, a characteristic that is more strongly identified with the Polish immigrant community than other local ethnic groups.

The Niezorawski Duplex is also significant as a form of luxury duplex. In stark contrast to the more modest frame houses and corner stores that characterize the East Village Polish neighborhood, Niezorawski used his masonry talents to construct one of only a handful of brick structures in the area. While most of the neighborhood built frame dwellings that can be characterized as "open-ended", meaning they were built as a means to an end and were added onto or modified as family needs dictated, Niezorawski's duplex was built of masonry with stylish architectural features that were popular in 1894. It was meant to be "finished" as built and not subject to evolution. It stands out a fine example of a front gable duplex with Colonial Revival details and symbolized his accomplishment in the community, his talents as an artisan, his achievement of the American dream. A similar situation existed on Milwaukee's South Side in the Polish neighborhoods where a handful of masonry duplexes stand out among the predominantly frame workers' cottages or duplexes that were continually being modified. The fact that a duplex form was chosen tells us that the immigrant population was still frugal, put a high value on real estate and valued family closeness, much like in the rural villages of the old country. There was little thought to giving over a piece of land to a large single-family dwelling. Fine living quarters could be provided not only for the primary family but also extended family members through the duplex form. The second owners of the Niezorawski Duplex continued in the immigrant tradition. When the large frame barn at the rear of the property was no longer needed, it was taken down and rebuilt as a duplex to maximize income.

## **VIII. HISTORY**

### **THE POLISH COMMUNITY**

The Poles came to America in three principal waves of immigration. The first immigration, which lasted roughly from 1608 to 1776, was the period of “gentlemen adventurers.” Several Polish craftsmen arrived at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1608, to help build and staff a glass works for the new colony. The second wave, which lasted from 1776 to 1865, was the period of “political emigrants” and included Thaddeus Kosciuszko, who fought against the British in America’s Revolutionary War. Kosciuszko returned to Poland and died trying to achieve freedom for his homeland. The third wave, which began approximately in 1865, and lasted into the 1920’s, has been called the period of “economic emigrants” and the emigration movement is referred to in Polish as *za chlebem* (“for bread”) (Mikos, EVNR Nomination Section 8 page 2; Carroon, p. 88)

It was during this last period of immigration that most Poles came to Milwaukee. There are some discrepancies as to Milwaukee’s first permanent Polish settler, whether or not to credit Michael Skupniewicz (1846) or Anton Kochanek (1848) although the family of Anthony Stupinski is thought to have settled here in 1842 or 1843. We do know there were 16 Polish families in Milwaukee County after 1850. (Mikos, EVNR Register Nomination Section 8 page 3) The third wave of immigration partly resulted from the failed Polish revolt in 1863 against the Prussians, Austrians and Russians who jointly occupied Poland at that time. Most of Milwaukee’s early Polish settlers came from the Prussian sector of Poland where living conditions were the poorest. (Milwaukee Sentinel 1888 December 23, page 16 paragraphs 2-3; 1874 November 30 page 1 paragraph 2; Wyrwal, 1977 pp. 25-26)

Historian William George Bruce gave this eyewitness account of early Polish settlers arriving at a Near South Side railroad station:

The overflow was so large that it crowded the sidewalks on Reed Street [S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street today] for blocks, and here I beheld scenes that I shall never forget. Polish families sat on the sidewalk in groups, with bags, bedding and bundles. The center of the group was frequently a young woman with a babe at her breast while the father was off looking up his relatives and seeking shelter for his family. (We, The Milwaukee Poles, 1946, p. 62)

Due to the partition of Poland in 1795, immigrant Poles were classified as either German, Russian, or Austrian before World War I so exact numbers in Milwaukee are hard to determine. However, we do know that newspaper accounts indicate that Poles had increased from about 150 persons to about 7,000 between 1866 and 1874 and that by 1895 the number climbed to 40,000 and then 70,000 by 1910. The Poles were concentrated in the southwest part of city and on Jones Island, as well as Lower East Side along Brady Street and up Humboldt Avenue in today’s River West neighborhood. “Seven of the city’s twenty-nine Roman Catholic parishes were Polish. In addition, the Polish population boasted three free libraries, a hundred Polish societies and organizations, and five Polish newspapers.” (Mikos, EVNR Nomination, Section 8 page 3)

## **EAST VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD**

“Like other immigrant groups, Poles induced relatives and neighbors from the old country to join them here, setting in motion a process known as “chain migration.” Because the new arrivals tended to settle near those who had come earlier, chain migration fostered the establishment of enclaves of settlers who had come from the same region of Poland.” (Mikos, EVNR Nomination Section 8 page 2)

Such an enclave developed in what is today known as the East Village neighborhood. This neighborhood is bounded by Brady Street, N. Humboldt Avenue, the Milwaukee River and Warren Avenue. The development of the neighborhood was sparked by the establishment of St. Hedwig parish in 1870. Many of the founders of St. Hedwig’s had previously worshipped at St. Stanislaus Church, established in 1866 with thirty families. “According to local tradition, most of the East Village neighborhood’s early settlers – like the residents of Jones Island – came from the Kaszub region of Poland, near the Baltic seacoast. Their East Side settlement was often referred to as the “Kepa Kaszubow” (Islet of Kaszubes).” When the members of St. Stanislaus decided to build a new

church building, the east side Polish families, numbering around forty, decided to establish a church in their own territory. (Mikos, EVNR Nomination Section 8 page 5)

"In the spring of 1871, with the help of August Rudzinski, a South Side community leader who also helped to fund Saint Stanislaus Church (Saint Stanislaus Church 1941:15; Flower 188 1:910), a group of East Side Polish settlers acquired three muddy lots on the banks of a deep ravine at Brady Street between Franklin Place and Humboldt Ave. Work began immediately on the construction of the new church – a sizable brick-faced wooden structure with the entrance on Franklin Place. The building was dedicated on the feast of Saint Hedwig, October 17, 1871 (Saint Hedwig Church 1946:11-12). (Mikos, EVNR Nomination Section 8 page 5)

"Following the building of Saint Hedwig's church, the surrounding area developed rapidly. Deep pits and water-filled holes in the wild swampy area were leveled, new buildings sprang up, and flower gardens blossomed (Saint Hedwig Church 1946:12)." (Mikos, EVNR Nomination Section 8 page 6)

"By the time St. Hedwig's parish was founded in 1871, there were reportedly about 70 Polish families in the neighborhood (Milwaukee Sentinel 1871). Many of these families were living south of Brady Street and west of Humboldt Ave. but by 1871, property tax rolls indicate improvements (7 of them valued at \$100 or more) on some 25 lots in the East Village Historic District. The neighborhood developed rapidly during the next ten years, and by 1882, there were 137 properties with improvements valued between \$50 and \$1200. The earliest development was along Humboldt Ave. and adjacent to St. Hedwig's, radiating out to the northeast in subsequent years (Milwaukee Department of City Development n.d.)." "The inhabitants were virtually all Polish. Some of the early residents had German surnames, but this was not uncommon among Poles who had immigrated from German-controlled regions of Poland." (Mikos, EVNR Nomination Section 8 pages 8-9)

Fire insurance maps show that the neighborhood was solidly built up by 1888 and almost completely developed by 1910. Characteristic of the neighborhood was the construction of two, three or more buildings on a lot, making this one of the densest developed neighborhoods in the city. This was likely due to fact that many of the residents could not afford to purchase a full lot and that fact that many lots were only 40 feet wide but 160 feet deep. Multiple buildings also allowed the primary resident-owner to gain rental income as well. It appears that in its formative years, not all Poles owned the property on which their buildings stood. They might have owned their houses but not the land. Improvements to lots come and go over the decades raising questions about whether buildings were moved or burned or otherwise dismantled only to be succeeded by a new structure on a lot. Since most of the buildings were frame structures without basements, moving or shifting them was relatively easy. The Milwaukee Sentinel of November 24, 1880 reported that "House mover Hanley is moving about thirty houses of Polack residents in that gully near the Humboldt avenue bridge to Brady Street, the ground-leases having expired. It is said that as soon as a house is fairly off another is built in its place."

The resulting East Village neighborhood is as distinctive today as in its formative years. Although the area generally conforms to the extended city grid pattern, streets like E. Kane Place (formerly N. Water Street) and the north extension of N. Warren Avenue accommodate bends in the Milwaukee River. The diagonal Pulaski Street follows the path of a brick sewer set in a ravine. It was ultimately filled with trash and then paved but is still lower than surrounding streets. The simple frame dwellings, spaced closely together, are generally oriented with the gable end to the street. Some remain as one story or story and a half cottages while others were enlarged by raising a cottage up and building a masonry basement below, partly above grade, a form known locally as a Polish flat. The neighborhood is punctuated with a few masonry buildings that include some residences and stores, built by the prosperous inhabitants of the area. Styles followed those prevalent in American architecture and included Queen Anne, Romanesque, Colonial Revival among others.

The East Village National Register Nomination describes the distinct character of a polish immigrant neighborhood:

Craig Reisser (1977:5) has identified several physical features characteristic of Polish immigrant neighborhoods in Milwaukee: 1) "open-ended" architecture, in which residential structures were enlarged or otherwise modified to provide for additional dwelling units; 2) prevalence of rear houses; 3) evidence of prior existence of small-scale farming, gardening, and animal and poultry husbandry; 4) prevalence of structures combining residential and commercial functions.

The products of what Reisser refers to as an "open-ended" building tradition (as defined by Rapoport 1969:5-6) as well as an abundance of rear houses, are still very much in evidence, and it is these physical characteristics that most clearly distinguish the East Village Historic District. Virtually all of the buildings in the District have been added to, usually more than once. Many of the additions were improvised in clever, if less than elegant ways, to meet immediate needs for space. Relatively little heed was paid to architectural aesthetics. The result is a collection of unorthodox, often idiosyncratic solutions to the problem of maximizing living space.

Only a few of the more prominent citizens in the East Village Historic District hired architects to design their homes. Most buildings were simply put up by carpenters, contractors or owners. Function took precedence over form. Even once erected, a building was less a finished product than a work in progress, to be expanded and "improved" as necessity required and expediency permitted. (Mikos, EVNR Nomination Section 8 page 13)

Prior to the imposition of zoning restrictions in the 1920s, residential and commercial buildings were intermixed throughout the East Village Historic District. Similarly, humble and "high style" buildings co-existed. While a majority of early residents of the East Village Historic District were employed in low-paying occupations, several did achieve professional and political prominence, as well as financial success. Their fashionable homes contrast with their neighbors' more modest dwellings. For example, the imposing Stormowski duplex (1874-76 N. Warren Ave.) abuts a row of Polish flats; and Frank Niezorawski's substantial brick residences (1722-24 N. Franklin Place) is next door to two decidedly modest wood frame dwellings.

The fact that prosperous community leaders like Frank Niezorawski, Edmund Stormowski and John Weiher chose to remain in the neighborhood rather than move to more exclusive parts of the city attests to the strength of family, ethnic and parish ties. Family relationships were central to the lives of Polish immigrants. While natural affection and fear of loneliness certainly helped to keep families together, the financial and social affairs of Polish extended families were often intertwined to a degree unusual in American society. Among Polish peasants, the locus of property was in the family. Any given individual was at most the temporary custodian of the family land, and all the family members, even those not living at home, maintained a lifelong interest in and obligation for the maintenance of the farm. (Mikos, EVNR Nomination Section 8 page 14)

As the Polish community outgrew the boundaries of the East Village neighborhood, Poles moved north of North Avenue into today's Riverwest area and founded a new parish in 1893, St. Casimir's. They also moved to the east bank of the Milwaukee River west of Oakland Avenue between North Avenue and Park Place. The houses in these neighborhoods are noticeably larger than in East Village possibly indicating that established families were moving up the economic ladder in these newer neighborhoods.

The strong Polish character of the neighborhood remained in East Village until World War II. Italian immigrants began moving into the neighborhood in the 1930s and in 1940 there were about 300 Italian-born residents as well as around 300 Poles living in the area between East Brady Street and the Milwaukee River. The Poles remained east of Humboldt Avenue and the Italians west of



Humboldt. Following World War II, many Poles moved to the suburbs and newer neighborhoods in the city. The counterculture hippies were attracted to the area in the 1960s and by 1970 the neighborhood retained only a few descendants of the Polish families. Many of the buildings had transferred over to absentee owners and suffered from neglect. The neighborhood has seen a reversal in the last ten years with restoration of some properties and the resurgence of Brady Street following its designation as a historic district. Development pressures currently consist of efforts to demolish buildings for parking for the Brady Street businesses and efforts to acquire multiple parcels and construct larger multi-unit buildings that overwhelm the character of the neighborhood. The East Village Conservation Overlay District, the first conservation district in the city, is an attempt to maintain the unique ethnic immigrant character of the neighborhood.

### **FRANCIS (FRANK) NIEZORAWSKI**

Frank Niezorawski was one of the prominent citizens of Milwaukee's Polish American community, establishing himself in business, owning real estate and holding public office. Frank Niezorawski was born in Jerski, Germany on October 18, 1854 and after a rudimentary education in the local parochial schools he began to support his widowed mother. At the age of 17 he embarked on his voyage to America and landed in New York on August 27, 1871. After earning money working at odd jobs he located in Milwaukee two months later. It appears he settled in the Brady Street neighborhood right from the start although the city directories list him only sporadically. (Conard, vol. 3 pp. 98-99)

It is not known at this time if Frank Niezorawski had any relatives in Milwaukee's Polonia but he chose to settle in the Brady Street area. Conard's biography of Niezorawski reads as a classic American story of a young immigrant rising to success through hard work and persistence and taking on a variety of challenges.

For several months fate seemed against him. Ambitious and determined to do something, he finally, in 1872, apprenticed himself to learning the brickmaking trade, which required three years. He then worked as a journeyman till 1882, when he received an appointment on the Milwaukee police force, serving two years with great credit to himself. In May, 1884, he established himself in the contracting business, and prosperity attended the venture." (Conard vol. 3 pp 98-99)

A family history authored by one of Niezorawski's descendants indicated that the young man received his appointment as police officer through political patronage (as all were at that time before the creation of the Fire and Police Commission in 1885) and was known as one of the "fighting coppers." He held his own in the scrappy Third Ward against Irish who had no tolerance for law enforcement officials of different ethnicity. After subduing four Irish rowdies for disorderly conduct Niezorawski had no further trouble in the ward. "When a gathering in a saloon got too noisy he would open the door and shout in "Less noise there you fellows, less noise." There was always less noise when the Polish policemen gave orders." (Family History authored by Mary Brost Gawin, March 2003) Newspaper accounts at the time of his death credited him with great physical prowess in his youth, an attribute that would have served him well as a policeman. He lost his position as policeman when a new mayoral administration appointed new members to the force. ("Fall From Stack Kills Contractor") Niezorawski returned to his masonry profession, established his own business and also ran a saloon on Brady Street.

Frank Niezorawski's feistiness made him a natural leader in the community. A riot at St. Hedwig's Church occurred on September 21, 1885 when two factions faced off about the hiring of a new organist/teacher and his inability to speak English. Niezorawski was adamant that the children not be held back by the lack of English. Pastor Rodowicz supported his new employee. A mob of over 2,000 was reported to have gathered at the church and around 100 engaged in fighting. A number were arrested, the rectory was damaged and scores were injured including Niezorawski. Yet another incident occurred in the East Village Polish community. A decorated cart belonging to the Labor Party attempted to give speeches on Brady Street only to be attacked by area residents led

by Niezorawski, a staunch Democrat. The Milwaukee Sentinel carried the story with the headline "Mobbed by Poles, Labor Men Prevented from Holding a Peaceful Meeting by Rioting Democratic Polacks Led by an Alderman." (Alioto; Milwaukee Sentinel 1890 November 4, page 1 column 1)

Niezorawski was well respected by his fellow Poles and they elected him to three terms as alderman from the 18<sup>th</sup> Ward in 1890, 1892 and 1894. Among his important decisions at the time was the authorization of the construction of the new City Hall and his name along with other Common Council members is inscribed on the Solomon Juneau Bell in City Hall's bell tower. In the fall of 1894 he ran for the County office of Register of Deeds but was defeated. He also was the first Polish American board member of the Milwaukee Commission of Public Works from April 6, 1903 to June 19, 1904 when he resigned. ("Fall From Stack Kills Contractor") Niezorawski was likewise prominent in the affairs of St. Hedwig's Church, being a charter member of the St. Adelbert's Society, St. Joseph's, St. John Cantius' and other societies at St. Hedwig's Church.

Niezorawski is probably best remembered for his skill as a builder and mason contractor. Among the buildings he is known to have built is St. Hedwig's Roman Catholic Church (1886), the John Jankowski Grocery Store (1816-1822 N. Humboldt Avenue 1894), St. Hyacinth's Church (1414 W. Becher Street 1882), the Empress Theater (razed), the Public Service Building (231 W. Michigan Street 1903-05) the Electric Power House, West Allis Machine Shops, Gesu Church (1145 W. Wisconsin Avenue 1893-94), Enterprise Building (210 W. Michigan Street 1905, razed).

Frank Niezorawski was 26 years old in the 1880 census when he was living with his wife Mary and three year old son Zacharias, 7 month old son Leonard, and boarders John Weisman (age 27), Ignatz Bruski (age 23), Joseph Pecor (age 25) and Joseph Stormowski (age 22) all at 330 Brady Street. He and Mary Stormowski had married in 1876. The building in which they lived in 1880 is shown on the fire insurance map as a two-story brick veneered structure. It is addressed today as 1224 E. Brady Street. It is not know at this time if he was the contractor and/or owner of the building. City directories show his at this address in 1877.

We do know he acquired other property along this stretch of Brady Street in 1884 when he purchased property at what is today 1214-1216 E. Brady Street from Joseph and Mary Bannach. Again, Niezorawski might have been responsible for the construction of the elaborate brick veneered building which occupies the site today since the improvements on this lot show only minimal valuation through the early 1880's per Milwaukee's tax rolls. The Niezorawski's lived here between 1887 and 1893. (U.S. Census 1880; Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1894; Deeds 701:4 22 dated July 3, 1884) In Flower's History Of Milwaukee, Niezorawski listed himself as a mason and plasterer and a native of Germany and that a son, Leonard, had died on January 27, 1881. In addition to these holdings, Niezorawski also is known to have owned other real estate in the East Village neighborhood. He had a property at 1906 N. Warren Avenue that he rented to his brother-in-law Edmund Stormowski between 1898-1903. He had also owned the lot at 1874-76 N. Warren Ave. that he sold to Stormowski when the latter wanted to build a house in 1904.

Niezorawski purchased the property at what is today's 1722-24 N. Franklin Place (Lot 12) on June 15, 1888 for \$2,300. The lot had been in the possession of members of the Hickey family since 1861. Otis Waldo and his wife Gertrude, the developer who held the undeveloped acres north of Brady Street, sold this parcel to Andrew Hickey for \$400 on September 20, 1861. Conditions of sale required that within 6 months from the date of sale, the premises had to be enclosed with a good and substantial board fence, leaving room for the prospective street opening [what would become Franklin Place]. The deed also required that the buyer erect a house on the lot, to cost at least \$300. It had to be neatly clapboarded, shingled and painted. No pigsty, stable, privy or other offensive structure or "thing" could not be closer than 50 feet from the front of the lot. (Deeds 96:422, 242:266) Conditions of the sale must have been met as a \$100 improvement (per city assessor's evaluation) shows up on the parcel in the city tax rolls from 1871 through much of the 1880s. By the time that Niezorawski purchased the lot, the improvements had gone down to \$50. Hickey also acquired the lot to the south (Lot 11) on which there were improvements valued at \$500. Niezorawski also acquired the east end of Lot 11 from the Hickeys. The purchase of the lots

on Franklin Place gave Niezorawski an L-shaped holding that allowed access from Brady Street to Franklin Place with room for a large barn, storage building and assorted sheds needed for his contracting business. (Sanborn Map 1910)

Niezorawski built the duplex that is the subject of this nomination in 1894. Rather than move away to a more 'upscale' neighborhood, he remained in the old neighborhood, close to his extended family (his young brother-in-law Edmund Stormowski lived nearby and worked for him), neighbors and the church in which he was so active. Tax rolls confirm the jump in assessment for the lot in 1894 and the city directories list Niezorawski at this address beginning in that year. No permit record is available for the work and no reference to the duplex could be found in the newspapers of the time so we do not know if the building was architect designed or the work of Niezorawski himself. The substantial building stands out among the mostly frame buildings of the East Village neighborhood. Only two other masonry buildings are located on this block of Franklin Place, not counting structures associated with St. Hedwig's, and include the building next door at No. 1728-30 (M. Jozwiak Building 1891) and No. 1735 (c. 1874). In addition to this house, Niezorawski built a large, 2-story frame barn located at the northeast corner of the property. It is assumed that since the barn was much larger than ordinary carriage barns, it was used in conjunction with Niezorawski's business.

Details on the duplex show Niezorawski's skill as a mason contractor. The front gabled building is two and a half stories high and built of dark red brick, almost maroon in color. The brick is laid with "butter joints", very fine knife-thin mortar joints. The foundation is clad with cream color rusticated limestone atop which is located a band of random ashlar granite blocks of varying sizes. The water table is broad and of smooth stone. There is no other foundation like this in the city. Other fine details include a landscape sash on the first story façade that has a leaded glass transom, three windows with ornamental terra cotta lintels and large Palladian windows in the front and south side gables. The building originally had separate, small, one-story porches over the front entry doors.

Niezorawski lived here with his wife Mary (Marjanna), sons Frank, Jr., and Anton, and daughters Mamie N. (Mary) and Mollie (Amalia). Sons Frank Jr. and Anton were taken into partnership under the name Frank Niezorawski & Son around 1907. Anton would later move to the building at 1214-16 E. Brady and run the tavern there beginning around 1910.

Frank Niezorawski suffered a fatal accident that took his life on November 23, 1912 at the age of 59. He was the contractor for work on extending the smokestack of the Enterprise Building at 210 W. Michigan Street (built in 1905 by Alfred Uihlein and designed by Kirchoff and Rose). He had been the contractor on the original building. Niezorawski was hoisted up in a bucket to the top of the smokestack to inspect the work, came down, and then decided to go back up. The day was windy. When the bucket was fifteen feet from the top it dropped. No one knows why Niezorawski lost his grip on the rope. The body crashed through the platform at the bottom of the stack into the interior stack hole. The Milwaukee Journal reported that the back part of the contractor's "head was crushed to a pulp." ("Falls 140 Feet: Picked up Dead", transcript of Milwaukee Journal article Saturday November 23, 1912) Niezorawski's will left everything to his widow and in the event of her death, the estate would be divided among his four surviving children. This will also outlined a number of real holdings that he owned throughout the city. (Deeds 701:245)

Widow Mary continued to live on Franklin Place after her husband's death. Son Frank continued as a mason contractor through 1918 after which he worked as a foreman then an inspector for the city's Department of Public Works. The first alteration to the duplex occurred six months after Frank Niezorawski died. On May 5, 1913 son Frank and widow Mary took out a permit to construct a porch at the residence at a cost of \$200. This new porch extended across the full front of the building and united the two entrances under one roof. A complaint was filed on May 10<sup>th</sup> about the work extending over the lot line. The inspectors notes are illuminating in that they mention that the duplex had an iron fence about one foot back from the sidewalk as had "nearly all in the block." The commercial building next door north had a driveway lower than the lot on

which the Niezorawski duplex was located. The Niezorawski's were constructing an eight-foot long retaining wall to keep their front lawn from spilling into the neighbor's driveway. The inspector concluded that the complainant should take down her own wood fence as it was also over the lot line. (Permit records 1722 –24 N. Franklin Place, inspector's notes dated May 10, 1913) The new porch had a host of fine details including stout brick piers with simple stone capitals accented by cross-like forms. Cross like openings for ventilation under the porch are also noticeable. The upper level of the porch is mostly open but has a recessed section at the south end accented with pilasters having strapwork-like ornament and polygonal sided columns. There is a door accessing this porch. The remodeling gave the duplex added presence to the main facade. On June 18, 1913, widow Mary added a gasoline storage tank and pump to the premises.

Mary Niezorawski followed her husband in death on June 25, 1914. She was sixty years old. The property was sold by daughters Mary (aka Mamie N.) Niezorawski and Amalia Niezorawski Gawin to Stanislaus and Julianne Orchowski on July 2, 1918. Mary then moved to 326 Brady, site of the Suminski Funeral Home built in 1916. Frank Jr. continued to stay at the Franklin Place duplex as a tenant through about 1921. (Deeds 766:319)

Stanislaus (Stanley) Orchowski was listed in the directories as a laborer. His wife Julia is shown as a leather worker and daughter Esther worked as a telephone operator. They lived in the Niezorawski duplex. The Orchowski's decided to maximize the rental potential of their property in 1922. On February 16 of that year Stanley Orchowski took out a permit to alter the rear, 42 foot by 50-foot frame barn and convert it to duplex at a cost of \$2,000. Inspectors' notes show, however, that the old building was not being remodeled. The "Old building all down" was reported on May 16<sup>th</sup> and work was being done on the basement walls on May 31<sup>st</sup>. The new building was documented as being "under roof" on August 4, 1922 and completed on November 20, 1922.

After several years at another location, Frank Niezorawski Jr. was back renting one of the rear flats in 1925. He and his family would move to 1743 N. Franklin Place in 1931. He died at the young age of 44 on September 7, 1931. His widow Hattie and son Max would later live at a variety of addresses in the general neighborhood. Anton Niezorawski likewise stayed in the neighborhood. After moving from Brady Street he then lived on Warren Avenue and then rented at 1714 E. Lafayette Place in the 1940s and 1950s and later moved to 1333 N. Franklin Place.

Stanley Orchowski died on December 14, 1930. His widow Julianna remained on the premises until her death at the age of 63 on August 7, 1939. Before her death, Julianna/Julia made major alterations to the building, most likely due to economic necessity. On March 15, 1938 she took out a permit to convert the duplex into a four-unit apartment and arrange for an additional bathroom on the first and second stories and additional kitchens to be installed. An outside entrance to the stairs was also constructed and can be seen today on the south elevation of the building. The project was estimated to cost \$2,100.

City directories show a whole host of occupants after the conversion and six or more tenants are shown in any given year. Deed research could not be completed on the property but city directories show the next owner as Daniel and Esther Lang who lived on the premises from 1940 through at least 1962 or 1963. Lang is shown as a "laborer" and an employee of Schlitz Brewing Co. Additional research will have to be done to determine if Esther Lang was the daughter of the Orchowskis. It was under the Lang's ownership that asphalt siding was applied to the rear duplex per permit dated October 16, 1940. Permit records for gas water heaters and electrical upgrades still list the Lang's as owners through about 1972.

The Lang's have been the last known owner occupants of the Niezorawski duplex. Occupancy remained fairly stable, however, into the 1970s. Long-term tenants included Ernest G. Muth, members of the Garner family, Henry Hofstedt, Hiram P. Cook and DeWayne Guibord. City directories show more turn over since the 1980s. Later owners shown in the city's permit records include James and Judy Durfee (1985), Lee Luenser (1985), Patrick Manders (1988-2001), and

Margaret Ivers (2001). The current owners, Bhupendra O. Khatri and Radovan Stojanovich, known as Laurel Canyon Properties LLC, have owned the Niezorawski duplex since May of 2004.

The Niezorawski Duplex and its rear building maintain their architectural integrity. The full-length porch is considered integral to the duplex and was added on by the original family in 1913. The side entrance appears to have been added in 1938 when the building was converted into a 4-unit apartment. It utilizes the same brick as the original house and does not detract from the building. The upper front porch railing had been repaired with taller and thinner pickets since the historic preservation section surveyed the Lower East neighborhood, including this property, in 1986. Two tall, shiny metal vents have been cut into the south roof slope and a satellite dish has been installed since 2004. No permits document this work. Wooden handrails have replaced the metal rails on the porch steps since 1986. The metal handrails were not original to the building at the time the building was photographed in 1986. A hood over the rear entry has been rebuilt at an undetermined time. New metal entry doors have been added to side entry and rear entry and because they are smaller, the door openings have been blocked down. More alterations have taken place to the rear house. The rear house had asphalt siding at the time of the 1986 inventory. Permits show this had been applied in 1940. Vinyl siding now clads the exterior. The original windows have been replaced with vinyl ones. The metal railings and handrails (not original) have been replaced with wood ones. The metal porch posts (not original) have been replaced by simple wooden Tuscan column. Their age suggests that they might have been original to the house and were reinstalled after 1986 when other porch work was done. Work on the foundation was done in 2001. The foundation wall, on the north end of the house, does show signs of repairs but the condition of the concrete block, placed atop courses of older cream brick, suggest that repairs might have taken place several times in the building's history. Aside from permits to repair the foundation, no other permits exist for the changes outlined above.

## THE ARCHITECTS

As there are no permit records for the house and no mention of the project in the local press, it is not known if an architect designed the Niezorawski Duplex. Niezorawski's skill as a mason contractor might have led him to sketch out his own design, based on the popular styles of the day, and then build the structure with his own crews.

## SOURCES

Alioto, Frank. "The Extraordinary Life and Death of Frank Niezorawski." No date. Article supplied by Shirley Ferguson.

Conard, Howard Louis. ed. History of Milwaukee County from its First Settlement to the Year 1895. 3 vols. Chicago: American Biographical Publishing Company, [1895].

Carroon, Robert G. "Foundations of Milwaukee's Polish Community." Historical Messenger of the Milwaukee County Historical Society, September, 1970.

"Fall From Stack Kills Contractor. Frank Niezorawski Meets Death While Raised to Smokestack in Bucket" Unidentified obituary clipping supplied by Shirley Ferguson.

"Falls 140 Feet; Picked up Dead. Ex-Alderman Loses His Balance at Top of Enterprise Building Chimney." Milwaukee Journal. Saturday, November 23, 1912. Typed transcript from Shirley Ferguson.

Gawin, Mary Ann Brost. Family History. March 2003. Selected information from this history provided by Shirley Ferguson.

[Flower, Frank A.]. History of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Chicago: The Western Historical Company, 1881.

Mikos, Susan G. East Village Historic District National Register Nomination. Prepared 2003. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places January 21, 2004.

Milwaukee City Building Permits, 1722-1724 N. Franklin Place.

Milwaukee City Directories.

Milwaukee City Tax Rolls.

Milwaukee Sentinel

Sanborn Insurance Maps of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Co., 1894, 1910.

United States Census, 1880. Frank W. Nieziorawski [sic]. Household 133. Entry 168.

Watrous, Jerome A., ed. Memoirs of Milwaukee County. Madison: Western Historical Association, 1909.

We, the Milwaukee Poles; the history of Milwaukeeans of Polish descent and a record of their contributions to the greatness of Milwaukee. Sponsored by the Casimir Pulaski Council of Milwaukee, on the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of the city of Milwaukee and the Polish settlement in the city. Milwaukee: 1946.

Wytrwal, Joseph. Behold! The Polish-Americans. Detroit: Endurance Press, 1977.

## **IX. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Francis (Frank) Niezorawski Duplex be given historic designation as a City of Milwaukee Historic Structure as a result of its fulfillment of criteria e-1, e-3, e-5 and e-9 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 308-81(2)(e) of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances.

- e-1. Its exemplification of the development of the cultural, economic, social, or historic heritage of the City of Milwaukee, State of Wisconsin, or of the United States.

Rationale: The Francis (Frank) Niezorawski Duplex with its rear dwelling exemplifies the development pattern of the immigrant Polish neighborhood, particularly the community on the east side known today as the East Village neighborhood. Niezorawski acquired property on Brady Street, lived on Brady Street then expanded his holdings to accommodate his business. He eventually accumulated an L-shaped parcel. He built his own fine home off busy Brady Street but the remainder of the property was occupied with a large barn, storage building and an assortment of sheds. Fire Insurance maps show most of the properties in East Village had two or more buildings per lot with small businesses sandwiched in front of or behind dwellings. This pattern was a continuation of village patterns from the old country.

- e-3. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city of Milwaukee.

Rationale: Francis (Frank) Niezorawski was one of the most prominent residents of Milwaukee's East Side Polonia. Not only had he worked his way up to building a prominent mason contracting business, but he was elected to public office and was

active and influential in the affairs of St. Hedwig's Church. While a number of the buildings he worked on are still standing, like Gesu Church and the Public Service Building, they are credited to the architectural firms that designed them. Niezorawski's residence on the other hand, can be associated solely with his life and work. It was while living on Franklin Place that his business grew and he worked on some of the most important buildings of his day. His home was also the headquarters for his business .

- e-5. Its embodiment of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen.

Rationale: The Francis (Frank) Niezorawski Duplex is a fine example of a luxury duplex. The construction details are outstanding and include a limestone-granite-Bedford stone foundation not seen anywhere else in the city, fine masonry work, ornamental shingles, prominent gables and distinctive porch columns that would have been eye catching in any part of the city. The fact that a man as prosperous as Niezorawski must have been at the time would build a duplex rather than a single family home attests to the frugal nature of the Polish immigrant community and the desire to keep family members close. The duplex form was popular throughout Milwaukee and not exclusive to the Polish community but unlike many examples built on speculation or as investment properties, members of the Polish community tended to occupy one flat in the building while having extended family members live in the other.

- e-9. Its unique location as a singular physical characteristic, which represents an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community or the city of Milwaukee.

Rationale: The Niezorawski Duplex stands out almost like a mansion in the East Village neighborhood. A majority of the dwellings and corner stores were of modest scale and clapboard-sided. They were "open-ended" structures, easy to modify, alter, and add onto as dictated by the owners' changing needs. Niezorawski's duplex in contrast was built as a complete entity, with stylish details and materials that do not lend themselves to easy alteration. His duplex showed that he had achieved status within the community. On this block of Franklin Place, only two other masonry buildings exist, excluding buildings for St. Hedwig's church.

## X. PRESERVATION GUIDELINES

The following preservation guidelines represent the principal concerns of the Historic Preservation Commission regarding this historic designation. However, the Commission reserves the right to make final decisions based upon particular design submissions. Building maintenance and restoration must follow accepted preservation practices as outlined below. Review of maintenance projects with historic preservation staff is required. Note: this designation also includes the duplex at the rear of the property. It is an important part of the property and an example of the development pattern of the Polish community in the East Village neighborhood.

### A. Roofs

Retain the roof shape. Skylights are discouraged but may be added to roof surfaces if they are not visible from the street or public right of way. No major changes can be made to the roof shape of the Niezorawski duplex, which would alter the building height, roofline or pitch. Locate mechanical systems and vents on portions of the roof not visible from the public right of way and paint them out to minimize impact. The existing tall, metal vents, added since 2004, may be removed in the future or replaced with a different system that has less visual impact. If the building gets re-roofed, consultation with historic preservation staff is required to approve the new material and to determine how to mitigate the vents and the satellite dish that was likewise installed after 2004. Satellite dishes are subject to the Satellite Dish Policy adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission on July 16, 2001. Retain existing original chimneys, with their ornamental corbelling, in their full height as they are an important design element of the house. They may not be removed. No rooftop construction is allowed, as this would interfere with the viewing of the house. The same guidelines apply to the rear duplex. The construction of dormers or other features, addition of skylights and satellite dishes, and re-roofing require review by Historic Preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness.

### B. Materials

#### 1. Masonry

- a. Unpainted brick, terra cotta, or stone must not be painted or covered. Painting masonry is historically incorrect and could cause irreversible damage if it was decided to remove the paint at a later date. Covering masonry with other materials (wood, sheet metal, vinyl siding, etc.) is not allowed.
- b. Repoint defective mortar by duplicating the original in color, hardness, texture, joint finish and joint width. See the masonry chapters in the books, As Good As New or Good For Business for explanations on why the use of a proper mortar mix is crucial to making lasting repairs that will not contribute to new deterioration of the masonry. Replaced mortar joints should be tooled to match the style of the original. Avoid using mortar colors and pointing styles that were unavailable or were not used when the building was constructed. Consultation with historic preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness is required before starting any repointing. The masonry work on the Niezorawski Duplex is characterized by very thin mortar joints. Some inappropriate repointing work is evident in places on the exterior. Future repointing should not replicate this inappropriate work.



- c. Clean masonry only when necessary to halt deterioration and with the gentlest method possible. Sandblasting or high pressure water blasting or the use of other abrasive materials (soda, nut shells, etc.) on limestone, terra cotta, pressed brick or cream brick surfaces is prohibited. This method of cleaning erodes the surface of the material and accelerates deterioration. Avoid the indiscriminate use of chemical products that could have an adverse reaction with the masonry materials, such as the use of acid on limestone. Work should be done by experienced individuals. Consultation with historic preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness is required before any cleaning would begin.
- d. Repair or replace deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible. Avoid using new material that is inappropriate or was unavailable when the building was constructed. Consultation with historic preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness is required before attempting work on the masonry foundation of the rear duplex since there is evidence of both cream brick and concrete block being used.

2. Wood/Metal

- a. Retain original material, whenever possible. Avoid removing architectural features that are essential to maintaining the building's character and appearance.
- b. Retain or replace deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the appearance of the old as closely as possible. Avoid covering architectural features with new materials that do not duplicate the appearance of the original materials. Covering wood or metal with aluminum or vinyl is not permitted. Ornamental wood shingling on the gable ends of the Niezorawski duplex must be retained. Spot replacement of any deteriorated shingles is encouraged rather than complete removal and must replicate the pattern, dimension, spacing and wood species of the original. The rear duplex has been completely re-clad in vinyl siding and there are vinyl shingles in the gable end. Historic Preservation staff would approve the removal of the vinyl and restoration/repair/replacement of the original wood siding should the owner want to remove the vinyl in the future.

C. Windows and Doors

- 1. Retain existing window and door openings. Retain the existing configuration of panes, sash, surrounds and sills, except as necessary to restore to the original condition. Avoid making additional openings or changes in existing fenestration by enlarging or reducing window or door openings to fit new stock window sash or new stock door sizes. Avoid changing the size or configuration of windowpanes or sash. Use storm windows or protective glazing which have glazing configurations similar to the prime windows and which obscure the prime windows as little as possible.

2. Respect the building's stylistic period. If the replacement of doors or window sash is necessary, the replacement should duplicate the appearance and design and material of the original window sash or door. New glass must match the size of the historic glass. Avoid using inappropriate sash and door replacements. Avoid the filling-in or covering of openings with inappropriate materials such as glass block or concrete block. Avoid using modern style window units, such as horizontal sliding sash or casements, in place of double-hung sash or the substitution of units with glazing configurations not appropriate to the style of the building.

Any original windows on the Niezorawski duplex should be retained and repaired if at all possible. That includes windows on the first and second stories and in the gable ends. Vinyl or metal clad prime window units are not permitted. Vinyl windows have already been installed in the rear duplex. If the owner would want to remove them in the future, wood double hung windows with one-over-one sash would be appropriate replacements. Several window openings on the north elevation of the Niezorawski duplex have been blocked up with glass block windows. When it comes time to replace those windows, the glass block may be removed in the future and the openings fitted with wood one-over-one sash windows that match the originals. Glass block basement windows are not permitted. Basement windows on the Niezorawski duplex are already protected with plexiglass/Lexan or its equivalent. Retain all existing art glass/leaded glass windows. Door openings on the south and east elevations have been blocked down to accommodate new steel doors. Should the owner wish to change these doors, the replacements will more closely match the originals in design and fit into the original openings. Changes to doors and windows require consultation with Historic Preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness.

3. Steel bar security doors and window guards are generally not allowed. If permitted, the doors or grates shall be of the simplest design and installed so as to be as unobtrusive as possible. A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for this type of installation.

#### D. Trim and Ornamentation

There should be no changes to the existing historic trim or ornamentation except as necessary to restore the building to its original condition. Replacement features shall match the original member in scale, design, color and appearance. Existing historic trim in terra cotta and stone, found on the porch and lintels, shall not be removed unless it is for the purpose of repair. Decorative brackets may not be removed from the porch or gable ends. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required before any changes or repairs are made to upper portion of the front porch and the hood over the rear door so that the inappropriate work can be corrected. Retention of ornamental shingling is addressed above.

#### E. Additions

No additions will be permitted on the west (front) or south (right side) elevations of the Niezorawski duplex as this would destroy the character defining features of the building. Any other addition requires the approval of the Commission. Ideally an addition should either compliment or have a neutral effect upon the historic character of the building. Approval shall be based upon the addition's design

compatibility with the building in terms of window size and placement, building height, roof configuration, scale, design, color, and materials, and the degree to which it visually intrudes upon the principal elevations or is visible from the public right of way. Additions must be smaller than the building and not obscure the historic building. These guidelines apply to both the Niezorawski duplex and the rear duplex.

F. Signs/Exterior Lighting

The installation of any permanent exterior sign or light fixture shall require the approval of the Commission. Approval will be based on the compatibility of the proposed sign or light with the historic and architectural character of the building. a large security light is located at the southeast corner of the Niezorawski duplex and may remain. If the owner would want to change the fixture in the future, consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required to assist in the selection of a more appropriate fixture. Plastic internally illuminated box signs are not permitted.

G. Site Features

New plant materials, paving, fencing, or accessory structures (garden sheds, storage sheds, gazebos) shall be compatible with the historic architectural character of the building if visible from the public right of way. Any rear deck or patio installation requires a Certificate of Appropriateness. Inspector's notes from 1913 indicate that the Niezorawski duplex once had a front yard iron fence. A period appropriate iron fence no more than 30 inches in height would be acceptable if the owner would want to install a fence. No retaining wall is permitted along the front of the property. The retaining wall at the north end of the front of the property and the retaining wall along the north line of the property at the rear of the Niezorawski duplex are to remain. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required before starting any repairs to the retaining walls or if the walls need to be replaced due to deterioration.

H. Guidelines for New Construction

It is important that new construction be designed to be as sympathetic as possible with the character of the structure. No principal dwelling or structure shall be constructed in the rear yard. Small-scale accessory structures, like a gazebo or fountain, may be permitted depending on their size, scale and form and the property's ability to accommodate such a structure.

1. Siting

New construction must respect the historic siting of the building. It should be accomplished so as to maintain the appearance of the building from the street as a freestanding structure.

2. Scale

Overall building height and bulk, the expression of major building divisions including foundation, body and roof, and individual building components, such as overhangs and fenestration that are in close proximity to a historic building must be compatible to and sympathetic with the design of the building. New construction is to be smaller in size and shorter in height than the historic building.

3. Form

The massing of the new construction must be compatible with the goal of maintaining the integrity of the building as a freestanding structure. The profiles of roofs and building elements that project and receded from the main block should express the same continuity established by the historic building if they are in close proximity to it.

4. Materials

The building materials which are visible from the public right-of-way and in close proximity to the historic building should be consistent with the colors, textures, proportions, and combinations of cladding materials used on the historic building. The physical composition of the materials may be different from that of the historic materials, but the same appearance should be maintained and materials not available when the house was constructed should be avoided.

I. Guidelines for Demolition

Although demolition is not encouraged and is generally not permissible, there may be instances when demolition may be acceptable if approved by the Historic Preservation Commission. The following guidelines, with those found in subsection 9(h) of the ordinance, shall be taken into consideration by the Commission when reviewing demolition requests. The rear duplex is considered contributing to the historic character of this property. Historic tax credits are available for its restoration or repair.

1. Condition

Demolition requests may be granted when it can be clearly demonstrated that the condition of a building or a portion thereof is such that it constitutes an immediate threat to health and safety and is beyond hope of repair.

2. Importance

Consideration will be given to whether or not the building is of historical or architectural significance or displays a quality of material and craftsmanship that does not exist in other structures in the area.

3. Location

Consideration will be given to whether or not the building contributes to the neighborhood and the general street appearance and has a positive effect on other buildings in the area.

4. Potential for Restoration

Consideration will be given to whether or not the building is beyond economically feasible repair.

5. Additions

Consideration will be given to whether or not the proposed demolition is a later addition that is not in keeping with the original design of the structure or does not contribute to its character.



**Francis Niezorawski Duplex**  
 1722-24 North Franklin Place

Map provided by the DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION CENTER  
 Phone: 312-600-3111 (City Hall) or 312-600-1111 (Planning Department)  
 City of Chicago - Department of City Development  
 Generated: 11/18/2009, 10:50:51 AM  
 Date: 11/18/2009, 10:50:51 AM - 11/18/2009, 10:50:51 AM