



Office of the City Clerk

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CERTIFIED MAIL

May 6, 2025

Cathedral Square Limited Partnership
732 N. Jackson St., Suite 300
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Property Owner:

RE: Resolution relating to Permanent Historic Designation of the This Is It! Building, 418 E. Wells Street, in the Fourth Aldermanic District.

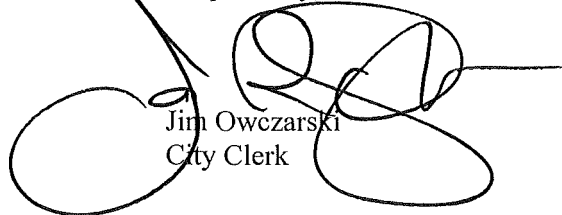
Dear Property Owner:

This letter is to inform you that the above matter will be considered at the June 2nd Historic Preservation Commission meeting, which begins at 3:00 p.m. in Room 301-B of Milwaukee City Hall, 200 E Wells St.

At this meeting, you or a representative may speak on this application for historic designation of your property. I enclosed a copy of a document detailing how to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness if these designations are approved by the Common Council, as well as the application submitted by the nominator. The Commission makes a recommendation, but it must be approved at the Council level.

Any questions relating to this nomination or what it means for your property, may be directed to Andrew Stern, Senior Planner, at 414-286-5722.

Respectfully,



Jim Owczarski
City Clerk





MILWAUKEE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION APPLICATION

An application fee of \$25 (cash or check) is required with this application.

1. Property Name

Historic: This is It!

and/or Common: _____

2. Location

Address: 418 E Wells St, Milwaukee, WI 53202

Aldersperson(s): Robert Bauman

District Number(s): District 4

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Present Use			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> park	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> structure(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> cemetery	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> vacant
<input type="checkbox"/> object(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> religious	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence	<input type="checkbox"/> museum	

4. Owner of Property

Name: Cathedral Square Limited Partnership

Address: 732 N Jackson St, STE 300

City: Milwaukee State WI Zip 53202

5. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory: _____

Date: _____ ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

Depository for survey records:

Organization _____

Street & number _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Previous historic designation:

☐ National Register Date _____ Historic Name _____
☐ City of Milwaukee Landmark Date _____ Historic Name _____
☐ Other Name of Program _____ Date designated _____

6. DESCRIPTION

Condition:

- ☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair
☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins

- ☒ altered
☐ unaltered

Location:

- ☒ original site

☐ moved, date: _____

Building form:

Number of stories 2

Foundation

- ☐ stone ☐ brick ☐ concrete block ☐ concrete
☐ other _____

Roof

- ☐ gable (☐ flank; ☐ end; ☐ cross)
☐ gambrel (☐ flank; ☐ end; ☐ cross)
☐ hip ☐ mansard ☐ flat
☐ other _____

Walls:

- ☐ clapboard; ☒ brick; ☐ stucco; ☐ stone; ☐ wood shingle; ☐ slate; ☐ terra cotta; ☐ asphalt siding;
☐ asbestos tile; ☐ aluminum siding; ☐ artificial stone; ☐ other _____
-

Written description: (Continue on a separate sheet, if necessary)

Two-story, rectangular red brick building with first floor store fronts and flat roof.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Areas of significance:

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> economics | <input type="checkbox"/> law | <input type="checkbox"/> science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> literature | <input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify): |
| <input type="checkbox"/> community planning | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <u>cultural</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion | |

Date built or altered: 1914

Builder/architect:

Written statement of significance: (continue on a separate sheet, if necessary)

This Is It! is the oldest established gay bar in Wisconsin, opening under its current name in 1968. Socially and culturally, it has served as a gathering and safe space for LBTGQ+ peoples and allies for decades. It showcased local artists including drag kings and queens, as well and DJs.

Articles:

<https://archive.wisgbthistory.com/business/bars/thisisit.htm>

https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2014/11/14/taverns-this-is-it-our-oldest-gay-bar/#google_vignette

8. Major Bibliographical References

Website: <https://www.thisisitbar.com/>

Other Articles:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/This_Is_It_\(bar\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/This_Is_It_(bar))

<https://www.milwaukeeimag.com/milwaukee-gay-bar-guide-best-milwaukee-gay-bars/>

<https://www.tmj4.com/news/milwaukee-tonight/this-is-it-is-milwaukees-oldest-gay-bar>

9. Property Description

Acreage: _____

Obtain from <http://assessments.milwaukee.gov/>

Legal property description:

10. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Sydni Foley

Organization: _____

Street: 921 N Marshall St

City: Milwaukee

State: WI

Zip: 53202

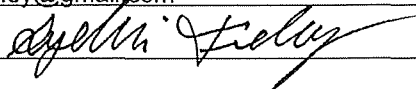
Telephone (days) 6083028321

(evenings) _____

Date: 3/16/2025

Email sydnifoley@gmail.com

Signature _____



Return to:

Historic Preservation Commission
841 N Broadway, Room B-1
Milwaukee, WI 53202
(414-286-5722)
HPC@milwaukee.gov

PRESERVATION TOPICS 2

Historic Preservation Commission

City of Milwaukee

HOW TO OBTAIN A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR A HISTORIC SITE OR STRUCTURE IN MILWAUKEE

The Milwaukee Historic Preservation Ordinance

The historic preservation ordinance, adopted as Section 308-81 (now 320-21) of the Milwaukee Code in June of 1981, provided certain kinds of legal protection for buildings or sites the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee has declared "Historic Structures" or "Historic Sites." The purpose of this ordinance is to preserve Milwaukee's heritage, history, and its superb collection of period architecture. A seven-member Historic Preservation Commission appointed by the Mayor administers the ordinance. The commissioners are dedicated citizens, architects, historians, and other experts selected for their interest and skills in historic preservation. The Commission and its staff are ready to assist the public in any appropriate way to meet these goals.

A complete explanation of the provisions of the ordinance can be obtained by contacting the Historic Preservation Commission staff. In brief, the ordinance provides that any individual or group may nominate a building or place for designation as a Historic Structure, Historic Site, or Historic District. The Historic Preservation Commission reviews the applications and makes a recommendation to the Common Council that a structure or site should be declared "Historic." The Council then acts upon the Commission's recommendation.

Once the structure, site, or district has been designated as locally historic by the Common Council, the structure, site or district is under the protection of the ordinance, and no changes may be made to the exterior unless the owner first obtains a "Certificate of Appropriateness" from the Historic Preservation Commission. This certificate is the Commission's written affirmation that a proposed change is sympathetic to the historic character of the property and is consistent with the intent of the ordinance. When a permit is applied for, the Development Center plan examiner will check to see if the property in question is a designated historic structure, historic site or within a historic district. If it is, the applicant is required to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Obtaining Certificates of Appropriateness

To obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness, the owner of the building files an application with the Historic Preservation Commission as outlined below.

Some certificates for simple projects are issued by staff within a few days of application. Certificate requests for larger or higher impact projects are reviewed by the Commission at a public meeting. The Commission hears opinions and evidence on the proposed changes, and then exercises its best collective judgment as to whether or not the proposed alteration or demolition is compatible with the intent of the ordinance and public interest. If the judgment is favorable, the Commission will direct staff to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness directly to the owner and submit a copy to the Development Center. The owner may then obtain the necessary building permit in the normal way. The Commission may also issue a Certificate conditioned upon the applicant's written agreement to make specified changes in the project necessary to bring it into conformance with the intent of the designation.

In the event that the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the proposed alteration is not consistent with the historic character of the site, structure, or district, and no compromise can be reached immediately, they will refuse to issue a Certificate. Should this happen, a building or demolition permit would not be issued by the Development Center.

Obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is not difficult, but does require some time. Owners are advised to begin the process well in advance, since procedural regulations and the requirements of the ordinance do not permit hasty action on the part of the Commission. The following steps are required:

1. Historic Guidelines

Read the guidelines for the structure or district to determine if your project complies. Most guidelines are found on the Historic Preservation website, www.city.milwaukee.gov/hpc or call the office at 414-286-5712 or 286-5722 to obtain a copy.

2. Apply for a Building Permit

Apply at Development Center, on the 1st floor of 809 North Broadway, in the usual way. When the property is identified as a designated historic structure or a within a historic district, you will then be given an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness or directed to see the Historic Preservation Commission staff. Please note: If you wish to seek the advice of the Historic Preservation staff or apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness before you apply for a building permit, you may do so.

3. Complete the Application

Questions should be addressed to the Historic Preservation Commission staff located in City Hall Room B-4. Call 414-286-5712 or email HistoricPreservation@milwaukee.gov.

4. Prepare Presentation Materials

Certain drawings may be required for review by the Development Center before a building permit can be issued. A set of these same drawings should accompany your application for a Certificate of Appropriateness. You should, in addition, include sketches, drawings, photographs, or any other material that you feel will help the Historic Preservation Commission understand the proposed changes to the structure. The quality of the presentation materials will be an important factor in enabling the Commission to fully understand what you intend to do. The presentation materials will be filed and retained by the Commission, so be sure to make copies for your own records.

5. File the Application and Presentation Materials

Mail or hand-deliver the application with accompanying photographs, drawings and materials samples to the Historic Preservation Commission staff. In most cases HPC staff will be able to approve the work outlined in the application and issue a COA in approximately seven days. If the proposed work cannot be approved by staff, the application will be heard at the next scheduled Commission meeting provided that the application is received at least 12 working days prior to that meeting. Staff is available to meet with you to review your project at any time during the COA application process. Applicants are encouraged to attend the hearing / meeting in order to answer questions. If you have an architect or professional consultant, it may help if he or she is also available to answer questions. At the meeting, the Commission may approve the application, give approval conditioned on the owner's willingness to make specified changes, or refuse the request.

6. Public Hearings on Refused Applications

If your application is refused or you do not agree with the Commission recommendations, a public hearing will be scheduled on all refused applications within thirty days of the original review. At that time, the owner may present further cause as to why compliance with the ordinance may not be feasible or may present other relevant evidence. The Commission will issue a final decision on whether or not to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness not more than fifteen days after the public hearing. If the Commission refuses the application, construction or demolition cannot legally proceed. The applicant has the right to waive the public hearing if he or she wishes to file an appeal with the Common Council.

7. Appeal of Refused Applications

Owners denied a Certificate of Appropriateness by the Historic Preservation Commission may appeal the decision to the Common Council provided that such appeal is made within twenty days of the public hearing cited in step #5.

8. Begin Construction

Construction can proceed legally only after issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness and obtaining a permit for the project. Work done without a Certificate of Appropriateness is a violation of Section 320-21, Milwaukee Code of Ordinances and is subject to correction orders or citations outlined in s. 12-14 of the Milwaukee Code. The progress of the construction will be monitored to assure compliance with approved plans.

9. Changes During Construction Require Approval

Changes made during the construction that affect the exterior of a building or site are not permitted unless they have been approved by the Historic Preservation Commission or Commission staff in accordance with the procedures outlined previously. The Development Center may suspend an issued permit to prevent unapproved changes from being carried forward.

If you have questions or need further information on any preservation-related topic, please contact the Commission staff:

Historic Preservation Commission
Office of the City Clerk
200 E. Wells Street, Room B-4
Milwaukee, WI 53202
Phone 414/286-5712 / 286-5722
FAX 414/286-3004
HistoricPreservation@milwaukee.gov