



31st and Wisconsin Historic District

PERMANENT HISTORIC DESIGNATION REPORT
CCF 231388
FEBRUARY 2024

31ST & WISCONSIN
PERMANENT HISTORIC DESIGNATION REPORT
AND PRESERVATION GUIDELINES
FEBRUARY 2024

PROPERTY NAME

Historic: Grand Avenue/West Wisconsin Avenue

Common: 31st & Wisconsin Historic District

LOCATION

Addresses: 3035 W. Wisconsin Ave., 3111 W. Wisconsin Ave., 3121 W. Wisconsin Ave., 3127 W. Wisconsin Ave., 3133 W. Wisconsin Ave.

Classification: District

NOMINATION DETAILS

Owner: 3035 W. Wisconsin Ave.
BERRADA PROPERTIES 111 LLC
BERRADA PROPERTIES 112 LLC
PO BOX 241191
Milwaukee, WI 53224

3111 W. Wisconsin Ave.
SAVANNAH HOLDINGS LLC
3111 W. Wisconsin Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53208

3121 W. Wisconsin Ave.
QUID ROE LLC
ATTNH: MARK ROEKER
3121 W. Wisconsin Ave. #3
Milwaukee, WI 53224

3127 W. Wisconsin Ave.
JOES PROPERTIES IN KC LLC
PO BOX 82469
Las Vegas, NV 89180

3133 W. Wisconsin Ave.
3017 HIGHLAND AVE, LLC
PO BOX 241191
Milwaukee, WI 53224

Nominator: Jim Dieter
Aldersperson: Ald. Robert Bauman, 4th District

DISTRICT DATA

YEARS BUILT 1889-1925
ARCHITECTS Martin Tullgren & Sons Company, Crane and Barkhausen, Otto Strack, Edward Townsend Mix
STYLES Queen Anne, English Revival, Prairie School, Beaux Arts

GENERAL CHARACTER

The 31st & Wisconsin Historic District consists of five properties, three of which were originally constructed for single-family residential purposes and two of which were developed as apartment buildings. The buildings range in date of construction from 1889 to 1925 and cover the period of development along West Wisconsin Avenue that includes grand “country estates” for wealthy Milwaukeeans in the 1870s-1910s through the development of apartment buildings in the 1910s-1920s. The buildings all have a general setback from W. Wisconsin Ave. of approximately sixty feet and contain large front lawns with a mix of landscaping material. All of the buildings are on large lots that extend at least two hundred feet south from W. Wisconsin Ave. The three mansions are all two-and-one-half stories tall, while the apartments range from three to eight stories tall. Over time, the residential buildings have been converted to commercial or office use, though the external modifications have been minimal and they retain their residential appearance.

HISTORY

The proposed 31st & Wisconsin Historic District is located on the south side of West Wisconsin Avenue on the western portion of the W. 3000 block and the W. 3100 block on Milwaukee’s Near West Side in the Merrill Park neighborhood. West Wisconsin Avenue, originally known as Spring Street, and later, Grand Avenue, is a heavily trafficked corridor containing an eclectic mix of apartment complexes, churches, schools, civic buildings, and residences.

The Near West Side slowly developed from east to west through the nineteenth century as the city center expanded, development moved westward, and industry developed in the Menomonee Valley. Originally consisting of forested lands and Native American trails, the area gave way to large farm tracts, which were subsequently subdivided to rectangular “country estates” as farming activities decreased after the 1850s.¹ Spring Street was the

¹ Landscape Research. *Built in Milwaukee: An Architectural View of the City* (Prepared for the City of Milwaukee, 1981), 163.

third major corridor in the area, following Watertown Plank Road and Wauwatosa Plank. As described in *Built in Milwaukee*, “the development of the West side provided the city with some of its most architecturally distinguished neighborhoods. West Side neighborhoods have a variety of building types and architectural styles, and reflect the diverse ethnic origins and socio-economic levels of their inhabitants.”²

In 1876, Sherburn S. Merrill pushed for Spring Street to be renamed Grand Avenue, to recognize the prestigious nature of the grand estates constructed along the street. Vast, eclectic Victorian residences belonging to meat packers, industrial barons, and financiers lined the street, which was only second to Prospect Avenue in terms of grandiosity.³

Among the grand mansions erected along Grand Avenue was the William H. Simpson House at 3127 W. Wisconsin Avenue (3119 Grand Ave, old). The house was designed by renowned Milwaukee architect Edward Townsend Mix for Simpson in 1889. Simpson, born in 1846, the son of Irish immigrants. He had pursued a number of occupations in the Illinois and Mississippi River area before moving to Milwaukee in 1877 to serve as the superintendent of the North Western Fuel Company, a coal firm based in St. Paul, Minnesota.⁴ He held the position with North Western Fuel Company until his death in 1919. The April 29, 1889 permit for the dwelling indicated a cost of \$7,500 for the house. The house was later subdivided for use as a rooming house in the middle of the 20th century, before being used for office space since the mid-1980s.

The Rudolph Stafford House, 3111 W. Wisconsin Ave. (3101 Grand Avenue, old), was designed by Milwaukee architectural firm Crane and Barkhausen in 1892. The house was built for Stafford, president of the R. Stafford Company. The company, formerly known as Fuller & Stafford, advertised themselves as “Purveyors of Fruit and Fancy Groceries.”⁵ Stafford was born in 1847 and arrived in Milwaukee from New York State in 1879. Following Stafford’s death in 1915, the property was sold to Milwaukee County Corporation Counsel Oliver L. O’Boyle.⁶ The house was later purchased by Bertha Wilcox and converted to a rooming house. The house was purchased by the Milwaukee Board of Realtors for use as their office in 1954. The Board of Realtors undertook a \$60,000 restoration project of the house in 1976 to match architectural details from the 1890s that had been removed. The Board of Realtors sold the building in 1985 and it has subsequently been used as attorney’s offices.

The William H. Meyer House, 3121 W. Wisconsin Avenue (3107/3113 Grand Avenue, old) was designed by Otto Strack in 1899. The building permit issued in April 1899 indicated a cost of \$12,000 for the brick-cased dwelling.⁷ William H. Meyer was born in Kolenfeld, Germany in 1848 and came to the United States in 1867. He excelled in business and became one of the owners of the Milwaukee Tug Boat line. He was also president of the Sheriff’s Manufacturing Company, president of the Milwaukee Worsted Cloth Company,

² *Ibid*, 164.

³ *Ibid*, 168.

⁴ National Register of Historic Places, Milwaukee-Western Fuel Company Building, City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin. National Register # 92000108, 12.

⁵ “Realtor’s Building Recaptures Its 1890s Flavor,” *Milwaukee Journal*, April 4, 1976

⁶ *Ibid*.

⁷ “Building Permits Issued,” *Milwaukee Journal*, May 1, 1899.

and manager of the steamer Christopher. Meyer died of a heart attack while on a business trip in Denver in 1906.⁸ By the 1950s, the residence had been renovated for use as a realty office. The building has contained a number of professional offices since that time.

Following the completion of the Wisconsin Avenue Viaduct in 1911, the owners of many of the grand mansions slowly relocated to Milwaukee suburbs, spurred by increased traffic and congestion along the corridor and increased costs of the large estates.⁹ The increased demand for apartment living in the early-20th century, coupled with the increased costs associated with grand mansions, and decrease in demand for these estates, redevelopment of numerous mansion estates for new apartment buildings.

As the National Register of Historic Places Determination of Eligibility form for the Millerand Apartments states:

The number of apartments built along the Grand Avenue (later W. Wisconsin Avenue) corridor grew tremendously in the first decades of the twentieth century and throughout the 1920s. The extant buildings along the corridor consist of a variety of apartment forms including row houses and flats, block apartments, and court apartments with various amenities including elevators. Flats and row houses constructed during these early decades included the Hudson Flats (3200 W. Wisconsin Avenue) in 1907, a series of row houses at N.15th Street (nonextant), the Granada Flats (nonextant) at N. 14th Street, Roseneath Flats (2335 W. Wisconsin Avenue), and the Blenheim Flats (nonextant) at N. 26th Street.³⁰ Examples of court apartments built along the corridor included the c.1914 and 1916 Maryland Court Apartments (2039-2041 W. Wisconsin Avenue) and the 1915 Patrician Apartments (2101 W. Wisconsin Avenue). The Grand Ann Apartment building (2904 W. Wisconsin Avenue) was constructed in 1920 and is an example of a block apartment building.

Many buildings were constructed with elevators, including the 1924 Roosevelt Arms Apartments (2324 W Wisconsin Avenue). Others featured an array of amenities like the 1928 Ambassador Hotel (2308 W. Wisconsin Avenue) and the Astor Hotel at 924 E. Juneau Avenue, two examples of apartment hotels. Those responsible for the design of these apartments included many of Milwaukee's notable architects and design firms, such as Hood and Tullgren, Martin Tullgren & Sons, Leiser & Holst, Rosman & Wierdsma, and Backes & Ulthus. Grand Avenue was renamed Wisconsin Avenue in 1926 following the loss of so many mansions that had once made it so grand.¹⁰

Two such apartments to develop along W. Wisconsin Ave. in the first decades of the twentieth century are the La Lenore Apartments, 3133 W. Wisconsin Ave., constructed in

⁸ "Death Comes for W.H. Meyer," *Milwaukee Journal*, September 17, 1906.

⁹ Emily Pettis and Angela Hronek, "Millerand Apartment Building." Wisconsin Historical Society Determination of Eligibility Form. Division of Historic Preservation, Wisconsin Historical Society, 12.

¹⁰ Emily Pettis and Angela Hronek, "Millerand Apartment Building." Wisconsin Historical Society Determination of Eligibility Form. Division of Historic Preservation, Wisconsin Historical Society, 13.

1914, and the Millerand Apartments, 3035 W. Wisconsin Ave., constructed in 1925. The three-story La Lenore apartments were constructed by prolific local developed Oscar Brachman at a cost of \$55,000. The apartments were designed by local architect Martin Tullgren and constructed on an undeveloped parcel on the southwest corner of W. Wisconsin Avenue and N. 32nd Street. When the apartments were advertised for leasing, the building was described as the “prettiest new apartment in the city,” with amenities such as a sun parlor, steam heating, and screened porch highlighted.¹¹

The property that now contains the Millerand Apartment was once home to one of the mansions that made Grand Ave. grand. Sometime prior to 1892, lumberman Anson K. Mayhew had constructed a palatial three-story brick mansion at 3027 Grand Ave. (now 3035 W. Wisconsin Ave.). The house was described as having six rooms on the first floor, six bedrooms on the second floor, and four large rooms on the third floor. The house contained beautiful mantels, inlaid floors, a roomy basement and had both steam and hot air heating and both gas and electric light. The reception hall, staircase, parlors, and bedrooms were individualized with quarter-sawed oak, birch, mahogany, cherry, red oak, pine, and birds’ eye maple.¹² Anson died at his home on November 15, 1921. The property was offered for sale in 1923 for \$25,000, with a note that the house could not but built at that time for \$50,000. The property was sold for redevelopment, like many other Grand Avenue estates.

The Millerand Apartments were constructed by real estate developer Morris Miller for Miller Investment Company at an estimated cost of \$650,000. Miller hired noted architectural firm Martin Tullgren & Sons Company to design the building. The apartment building opened for inspection and leasing in late-1925. The advertisement described that “every apartment is light, airy, and spacious with the finest of interior woodwork and Tiffany decoration, modern electric fixtures, and clothes closet space.”¹³ The advertisement further listed amenities, such as free mechanical refrigeration, tiled bathrooms, built-in fixtures, white enamel ranges, automatic passenger elevators, terrazzo floors, a tea room and rooftop garden. This 72-unit building, the largest apartment constructed in Milwaukee in 1925, opened in 1926.

¹¹ “For rent – flats,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 31, 1915.

¹² *A Wonderful Home At a Wonderful Price*, *Milwaukee Sentinel*, September 23, 1921.

¹³ “The Millerand Apartments,” *Milwaukee Journal*, December 20, 1925.

DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY OF INDIVIDUAL BUILDINGS

Millerand Apartment Building **3035 West Wisconsin Avenue** **(1925) Martin Tullgren & Sons Company, architect**

The Millerand Apartment Building is an eight-story, U-shaped apartment building on the southeast corner of W. Wisconsin Ave. and N. 31st St. in the Merrill Park neighborhood on Milwaukee's Near West Side. Real estate developer Morris Miller hired the Milwaukee architectural firm Martin Tullgren & Sons Company to design the building in 1925. The luxury apartment was designed with seventy-two units, consisting of four and five room suites.¹⁴ The building had a basement tea room and roof garden for tenant use.¹⁵ It is one of many outstanding apartment buildings designed in the city by the firm.

The apartment building is set back approximately sixty feet from W. Wisconsin Ave., matching the setback of adjacent properties. The apartment has a large grassy lawn with mature trees along the eastern property line. The primary entrance is located within the U-shape of the building via a modern enclosed aluminum storefront-style vestibule with metal roof. The entrance is accessed via a landscape-lined sidewalk from W. Wisconsin Ave. A three-foot, metal picket fence frames the sidewalk along W. Wisconsin Ave. and continues along the eastern property line. On the N. 31st St. elevation, the building is located right on the property line. The property extends approximately fifty feet south behind the building before zigging east thirty feet behind the primary east property line and extends south one hundred fifty feet to W. Michigan Ave. The area behind the building primarily paved and used for vehicle circulation and parking. A small landscaped area is located behind the parking lot along W. Michigan Ave. The parking lot is enclosed by a metal picket and chain link fence.

The building is designed in the Beaux Arts style, clad in variegated brick with terra cotta and copper accents and prominent string courses located between the second and third floors and the seventh and eighth floors. It is eight stories tall with a partially exposed basement level and partial ninth floor penthouse located in the center of the building. The building has a flat roof above the eighth floor, with copper coping at the parapet. A two-story tower projects from the center of the building and is topped with a hipped, standing seam copper roof. A brick chimney rises above the roofline on the south of the two-story tower. The building rests on a masonry foundation clad with glazed terra cotta. Terra cotta quoins featuring a spiral design are located along the building corners and box bays on the north and west façades. The majority of openings are one-over-one double hung windows, with examples of original six-over-six leaded glass windows present.

¹⁴ "Apartment to Open," *Milwaukee Journal*, January, 31, 1926.

The east façade is U-shaped and contains the one-story entry within the courtyard of the building. The entry consists of a modern glass entry which connects to the projecting historic entry vestibule. The historic entry has “Millerand” inscribed in the terra cotta above the entry doors. The door openings are flanked by multi-light leaded glass windows and decorative terra cotta pilasters.

The two arms of U-shaped portion of the building face east, with the southern arm projecting further east than the northern arm. Both exhibit similar ornamentation, with variegated brick with terra cotta accents and string courses located between the second and third floors and the seventh and eighth floors. Paired and single windows are located on both arms, with limestone sills and lintels found at each opening. The first two stories have brick headed courses. Terra cotta panels with swag details are located above the primary window openings of the first floor. The eighth floor is more highly decorated than the lower floors. It is located about a wide decorative terra cotta band. The center two bays of both the north and south arms contain two sets of paired windows set in a carved terra cotta surrounds with scrolls and decorative entablature. The two outside windows per arm contain simpler terra cotta surrounds and each have a terra cotta cartouche above. These bays also have terra cotta panels in the parapet with copper hoods above. Copper coping extends along the top of the parapet. The center courtyard bay of the east façade continues the design motive found on the arms. The ninth floor contains the penthouse level. This floor contains three paired window bays of leaded glass windows set in terra cotta surround with scroll columns and rounded hoods with cartouches. This section is capped with decorative copper leaf band topped with a stepped copper parapet.

The north façade faces W. Wisconsin Ave. and is set back on a large, grassy lawn. A sidewalk runs adjacent to the partially exposed basement and connects to the primary entry walk. The façade contains nine window bays across each of the first seven floors and continues the brick and terra cotta design motif found on the east façade. A slightly projecting oriel bay contains the westernmost two window bays on floor three through seven and is flanked with terra cotta quoins and spiral columns. The eighth floor contains a center portion of five window bays with minimal ornamentation and topped with a pitched, standing seam copper roof. The end bays of this façade contain three narrow window bays with intricate terra cotta surrounds and window hoods.

The west façade of the building is located right at the property line along N. 31st Street. The grade change along the street results on progressively more of the basement level being exposed from north to south. A secondary entrance is located a third of the way south along the façade, with the entry door flanked by decorative terra cotta pilasters and header inscribed with “Millerand.” Above the entry door is a leaded glass window with terra cotta balustrade, surround, and scroll pediment. Further south on the basement level is a less ornate entry door with rounded door surround. The ornamentation on this façade continues that found on the north and east facades, with terra cotta bands, brick header courses, decorative panels with swag insets, upper oriel bays, and copper standing seam roof.

The south façade is much less ornate than the other three facades. This façade faces the parking lot and is more utilitarian in nature. The basement level is poured

concrete with simple cream brick located on the floors above. Of the twelve window bays, one contains a paired double-hung sash opening and the remainder are single window bays. A chimney projects from the façade towards the eastern end of the façade and projects above the roofline. Two simple doors are located at the basement level of the façade.

There have been no substantial exterior additions or alterations from the originally constructed apartment building, aside from the rather modest modern entry vestibule. Aluminum storm windows have been added to the majority of the window openings and a number of original windows have been replaced, though a number of original leaded glass windows remain intact.

DEVELOPER

The Millerand Apartment Building was developed by real estate developer Morris Miller. Miller was born in Kovno, Poland, on July 10, 1872. He immigrated to the United States in 1887, initially settling in St. Paul, Minnesota, before moving to Milwaukee in 1892. Upon arriving in Milwaukee, he established a clothing business with his brother, Issac. They operated for fifteen years at N. Plankinton Ave. and W. Wells St.¹⁶

Miller entered the real estate development business around 1907 and was one of the city's pioneers in the development of large-scale elevator apartments. Along with the Millerand, Morris also developed the Martin Tullgren & Sons-designed Morrison Apartments (2127 E. Capitol Drive) and the Shoreland and Lakecrest Apartments (intersection of E. Wells & N. Cass Street, no longer extant).¹⁷ He also owned and developed additional downtown real estate, particularly the west side of downtown. In addition to his development business, he was an organizer and director of the Liberty State Bank, whose president was his brother-in-law, Isaac J. Rosenberg. He was also a member of the Elks Club and Brynwood Country Club.¹⁸

Miller was married to Ms. Anna Rosenberg and had two sons and three daughters. His sons, Armin and David, operated the Miller & Miller rental agency. He was prominent in the city's Jewish community, affiliated with Temple Emanu El-B'ne Jeshurun and Congregation Beth Israel. He was also a philanthropist to such causes as Home for Aged Jews and the Jewish orphan home. Morris Miller died on March 24, 1932, at the age of 59.

ARCHITECTS

Martin Tullgren & Sons Company were the architectural firm that designed the Millerand Apartment Building. Martin Tullgren (May 7, 1858-February 23, 1922) was a Swedish-born and trained architect who established an architectural practice in Chicago in 1881. He is primarily associated with the work later in his career during his years in

¹⁶ "Realty Dealer, M. Miller, Dies," *Milwaukee Journal*, March 24, 1932.

¹⁷ Emily Pettis and Angela Hronek, "Millerand Apartment Building." Wisconsin Historical Society Determination of Eligibility Form. Division of Historic Preservation, Wisconsin Historical Society, 2015.

¹⁸ "Realty Dealer, M. Miller, Dies," *Milwaukee Journal*, March 24, 1932.

Milwaukee. He interrupted his early career to prospect for gold and superintend mines in the west for a number of years. Tullgren resumed his architectural career in Chicago at the turn of the twentieth century, taking Archibald Hood into partnership with him. By 1902 the firm had established a branch office in Milwaukee and Tullgren settled here permanently in 1905. Tullgren and Hood designed numerous apartment buildings throughout the city and maintained ownership interest in a number of their buildings.

Martin Tullgren dissolved his partnership with Hood in 1909 and began a new practice with his sons Herbert and S. Minard under the name Martin Tullgren and Sons Company. Both of his sons had worked for him earlier as draftsmen. The firm designed some of Milwaukee's most outstanding, early twentieth century apartments, small commercial buildings, and movie theaters such as the Downer Theater.

Following the death of Martin Tullgren died in 1922, his sons continued the firm while maintaining the Martin Tullgren & Sons Company name. Biographies seem to indicate that Herbert was the chief designer of the firm after his father's death while Minard handled construction. After Minard's unexpected death in 1928, Herbert continued the practice alone until the middle of the Great Depression, when the business finally closed in 1935.

Herbert Tullgren would have been the designer of the Millerand Apartment Building. Herbert Tullgren (1889 – February 22, 1944) was born in Chicago and educated in the public schools there before attending Staunton Military Academy in Virginia from which he graduated in 1908. Having served as a draftsman for his father Martin from 1905 through 1908, he became partner in 1909. Until his death in 1944 he continued to design hotels for the Schroeder hotel chain, at least fifty apartment buildings, and the grade and high schools in Whitefish Bay and Plymouth, Wisconsin and even participated with associated architects in the design of the city's Parklawn Housing Project.

Martin Tullgren & Sons Company left a statewide legacy of well-designed and iconic buildings, a number of which have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places or locally designated in their own communities. Examples of their work include the Marggraff Apartments (1915) at 1981 N. Prospect Ave., the first part of the Astor Hotel (1922) at 924 E. Juneau Ave.; the Patrician Apartments (1915) at 2101 W. Wisconsin Ave.; the Bertelson Building (1927) at 2101-11 N. Prospect Avenue; the Watts Building (1925) at 761 N. Jefferson St.; and the Shorecrest Hotel (1924) at 1962 N. Prospect Avenue.

Rudolph Stafford House; Milwaukee Board of Realtors

3111 West Wisconsin Avenue

(1892) Crane and Barkhausen, architect

The Rudolph Stafford House, 3111 W. Wisconsin Ave., is an intact example of a Cream City brick late-Victorian residence. The house was designed by the architectural firm of Crane and Barkhausen and constructed in 1892. The fourteen-room mansion had a cost of \$10,000 when constructed. It is a large, two-and-a-half story Queen Anne-style house with a limestone foundation and cross gable roof. The upper half-story is sided with wood

shingles. A three story projecting tower is located on the right side of the front façade. Brick corbelling is found between the first and second floors at the projecting tower and along an oriel window on the east façade. A variety of window sizes are present and all are one-over-one windows. Two large, corbelled chimneys are visible projecting from the roofline.

ARCHITECTS

The house was designed by the architectural firm of Crane and Barkhausen and constructed in 1892. Both Charles D. Crane and Carl C. Barkhausen trained under renowned Milwaukee architect Edward Townsend Mix before establishing their own firm in 1888. The firm designed a number of outstanding residential projects, including The George J. Schuster House (1891), 3209 W. Wells St.; The John F. Kern House (1899), 2569 N. Wahl Ave.; and The Conrad Trimborn Rowhouse (1897), 1422-32 W. Kilbourn Ave. Among their non-residential commissions are The German-English Academy Building (1890), 1020 N. Broadway; The First German Methodist Church (1896), 2024 W. Highland Avenue; and The Button Block (1892), 500 N. Water Street. For a more comprehensive history on the firm, refer to the Historic Designation Study Report for the George Shuster House.¹⁹

William H. Meyer House; Brokers Building

3121 West Wisconsin Avenue

(1899) Otto Strack, architect

The William H. Meyer House, 3121 W. Wisconsin Ave., was designed by architect Otto Strack and constructed in 1899. The house is a two-and-a-half story brick structure with characteristics of the Jacobethan style. The front façade is symmetrical, with front gabled ends. The first floor of the gable ends contains a window bay with three double-hung windows with three transoms. The second level contains paired one-over-one windows with transoms, while the attic level contains a much smaller bay of with three double-hung windows with three transoms. Large stone lintels and smaller sills are found around all window bays. The center bay is a modern projecting brick entryway with a single entry door and transom on the first level and fixed window on the second level.

ARCHITECT

Otto Strack (1857-1935) designed the William H. Meyer House in 1899. Strack was one of Milwaukee's outstanding nineteenth century architects. Some examples of Strack's work include the Pabst Theater (1895) located at 144 East Wells Street, the Kalvelage Mansion (1895-96) located at 2432 West Kilbourn Avenue, and the William Goodrich residence (1894) located at 2232 North Terrace Avenue (all listed in the National Register of Historic

¹⁹ City of Milwaukee, Historic Preservation Commission. "Permanent Historic Designation Study Report, George Shuster House." 2007.

Places). For additional information on Strack, refer to the Permanent Historic Designation Study Report, Brady Street Historic District.²⁰

William H. Simpson House
3127 West Wisconsin Avenue
(1889) Edward Townsend Mix

The William H. Simpson House, 3127 W. Wisconsin Ave., was designed by noted Milwaukee architect Edward Townsend Mix in 1889. The large two-and-a-half story Queen Anne stands on a limestone foundation and is clad with wood siding. The siding is narrow clapboard on the first level, with squared and scalloped shingles on the second level and scalloped shingles in the front gable. Windows are a mix of single and paired double-hung wood sash windows. A three-story projecting turret is located on the east of the front façade. The third level of the turret features an open-air porch, while the conical roof is clad with wood shingles. The large front gable has decorative vergeboards with painted medallions. A Queen Anne-style window is located in the upper front gable.

ARCHITECT

The William H. Simpson House was designed by **Edward Townsend Mix**. Mix was arguably the premier Milwaukee architect in the late-nineteenth century. Among his notable Milwaukee designs are Northwestern Branch, National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers Historic District (1867), 5000 W. National Ave.; Mitchell Building (1876), 207 E. Michigan St.; Mackie Building (1879), 225 E. Michigan St.; Milwaukee Girls' Trade and Technical High School (1885), 1820 W. Wells St.; and St. Paul's Episcopal Church (1890), 904 E. Knapp St. For a more comprehensive biography on Mix, refer to the Permanent Historic Designation Study Report Final and Revised, Jefferson Street Historic District.²¹

Oscar Brachman; La Lenore Apartments
3133 West Wisconsin Avenue
(1914) Martin Tullgren, architect

The La Lenore Apartment Building at 3133 W. Wisconsin Ave. (3125 Grand Avenue, old) is a red brick clad, three-story apartment designed by Martin Tullgren & Sons Company in 1914. The apartment has a long, rectangular plan with a symmetrical front façade featuring two projecting bays with newer vinyl slider windows, two recessed outer bays with one newer slider window, and a central courtyard entry with a partially infilled entryway covered in vinyl and a new metal door. The addition of vinyl windows and removal of the original door occurred in 2016. Newer projecting wood awnings are located about the second story in the center three bays of the front façade and above the entryway. The side

²⁰ City of Milwaukee, Historic Preservation Commission. "Permanent Historic Designation Study Report, Brady Street Historic District." 19.

²¹ City of Milwaukee, Historic Preservation Commission. "Permanent Historic Designation Study Report Final and Revised, Jefferson Street Historic District." 14-15.

facades are relatively unadorned but contain a beltcourse above the first level and decorative brickwork along the parapet. The building has been severely altered by recent modifications and lacks historic integrity.

DEVELOPER

The La Lenore apartment building was developed by prolific local developer Oscar Brachman. Brachman was born in Milwaukee in 1887 and graduated from West Division high school. He entered the real estate business with the firm of Sol H. Ettenheim prior to 1910, before establishing his own development business. He rose to become president of Real Estate Management, Inc. and was at one time an officer or director of 44 buildings and investment companies.²² Among his downtown developments were the Commerce Building (1927, 744 N. Vel R. Phillips Ave.), Mariner Tower (1929, 606 W. Wisconsin Ave.), and Carpenter Tower (1930, 1040 W. Wisconsin Ave.). He was also developed numerous hotels, including the Shorecrest, Ardmore, Astor, Belmont, Royal, and Tower. Through his association with the Saxe Brothers, he developed a number of theaters, including the Wisconsin, Tower, Uptown, Garfield, and Oriental.²³ Brachman hired Martin Tullgren and Sons Company as the architectural firm for a number of his developments. Brachman died in September 1939.

ARCHITECT

The Oscar Brachman apartment building was designed by **Martin Tullgren** in 1914. See the section on **Martin Tullgren & Sons Company** under the Millerand Apartment Building description for additional information on Martin Tullgren.

MAJOR SOURCES

City of Milwaukee, Historic Preservation Commission. "Permanent Historic Designation Study Report, George Shuster House." 2007.

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Milwaukee City Building Permits.

Milwaukee Journal (1900-1980)

Milwaukee Journal. "Realty Dealer, M. Miller, Dies," March 24, 1932.

Milwaukee Sentinel (1890-1980)

Milwaukee Sentinel, "A Wonderful Home At a Wonderful Price," September 23, 1921.

²² "O. Brachman, Realtor, Dies," *Milwaukee Journal*, September 11, 1939.

²³ *Ibid*.

- National Register of Historic Places, Prospect Avenue Apartment Buildings Historic District, City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin. National Register #90000640.
- National Register of Historic Places, Milwaukee-Western Fuel Company Building, City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin. National Register # 92000108.
- Pettis, Emily and Angela Hronek, "Millerand Apartment Building." Wisconsin Historical Society Determination of Eligibility Form. Division of Historic Preservation, Wisconsin Historical Society, 2015.
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RECOMMENDATION

Staff was unable to find that the proposed nomination constitutes a valid historic district. The Millerand building and the mansions on the 3100 block are from distinctly different periods of development. Further, the 3133 W. Wisconsin Ave. building has been too drastically altered and lacks integrity; therefore it does not contribute to the character of a district that is primarily significant for its architectural value. This leaves a sandwich of mansions between two apartment blocks of substantially different significance. While this does show the change of the development pattern in the neighborhood and emphasizes the transition from mansion to apartment that is exemplified by the Millerand, the change in character is drastic.

Staff recommends that commission find that the standard for a district is not met. However, it is likely that the three mansions on the south side of the 3100 block and the two on the north side of the 3000 block of W. Wisconsin Ave. constitute a district unto themselves. They are the last surviving cluster of 19th century mansions from the Grand Avenue era.

The Commission should continue with permanent designation of the Millerand Apartments, through their findings. The significance of the Millerand has already been well established in the report for the temporary designation and earlier in this document.

Staff recommends that the Millerand Apartment Building be given permanent historic designation as a City of Milwaukee Historic Site as a result of its fulfillment of criteria f-5

and f-6 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 320-21(3) of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances. These findings are laid out in a companion report for permanent designation of the Millerand building alone.

PRESERVATION GUIDELINES FOR THE 31ST AND WISCONSIN HISTORIC DISTRICT

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 design submissions. Building maintenance and restoration must follow accepted preservation practices as outlined below. The intent of the guidelines are to preserve the buildings as closely as possible to their original form and details. Nothing in these guidelines shall be construed to prevent ordinary maintenance or restoration and/or replacement of documented original elements.

Any exterior alteration, exclusive of painting of non-masonry surfaces, will require a Certificate of Appropriateness. Any existing exterior features can remain for their lifespan. The historic designation does not mean that owners are required to restore their buildings to original condition, but that changes are subject to review so that they are compatible with the historic character of the building.

These guidelines are based upon those contained in MCO 320-21-11 & 12 of the historic preservation ordinance. These guidelines serve as a guide for making changes that will be sensitive to the architectural integrity of the structure and appropriate to the overall character of the building.

I. Roofs

- A. Retain the original roof shape. Dormers, skylights and solar collector panels may be added to roof surfaces if they do not visually intrude upon those elevations visible from the public right-of-way. Avoid making changes to the roof shape that would alter the building height, roofline, pitch, or gable orientation.
- B. Retain the original roofing materials wherever possible. Avoid using new roofing materials that are inappropriate to the style and period of the building and neighborhood.
- C. Replace deteriorated roof coverings with new materials that match the old in size, shape, color and texture. Avoid replacing deteriorated roof covering with new materials that differ to such an extent from the old in size, shape, color and texture so that the appearance of the building is altered.

II. Exterior Finishes

A. Masonry

- (i) Unpainted brick or stone should not be painted or covered. Avoid painting or covering natural stone and unpainted brick. This is likely to be historically incorrect and could cause irreversible damage if it was decided to remove the paint at a later date. Painting unpainted masonry also introduces a new maintenance issue.
- (ii) Repoint defective mortar by duplicating the original in color, style, texture and strength. Avoid using mortar colors and pointing styles that were unavailable or not used when the building was constructed.
- (iii) Clean masonry only when necessary to halt deterioration and with the gentlest method possible. Sandblasting brick or stone 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 or marble.
- (iv) 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, such as artificial cast stone or fake brick veneer.

B. Stucco

Repair stucco with stucco mixture duplicating the original as closely as possible in appearance and texture.

C. Wood

- (i) Retain original material whenever possible. Avoid removing architectural features such as clapboards, shingles, cornices, brackets, half-timbering, window architraves and doorway pediments. These are in most cases an essential part of a building's character and appearance that should be retained.
- (ii) Repair or replace deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the appearance of the old as closely as possible. When feasible, avoid covering architectural features with new materials that are inappropriate or were unavailable when

the building was constructed such as artificial stone, brick veneer, asbestos or asphalt shingles, vinyl or aluminum siding.

III. Windows and Doors

- A. Retain existing window and door openings that are visible from the public right-of-way. Retain the original configurations of panes, sash, lintels, keystones, sills, architraves, pediments, hoods, doors, shutters and hardware. Avoid making additional openings or changes in the principal elevations by enlarging or reducing window or door openings to fit new stock window sash or new stock door panes or sash. Avoid discarding original doors and door hardware when they can be repaired or reused. Secondary elevations that are not visible from the public right-of-way may offer greater flexibility.
- B. Respect the stylistic period or periods a building represents. If replacement of window sash or doors is necessary, the replacement should complement the appearance and design of the original window sash or door. Avoid using inappropriate sash and door replacements such as unpainted galvanized aluminum storm and screen window combinations. Avoid the filling in or covering of openings with materials like glass-block or the installation of plastic or metal strip awnings or fake shutters that are not in proportion to the openings or that are historically out of the character with the building. Avoid using modern style window units such as horizontal sliding sash in place of double-hung sash or the substitution of units with glazing configurations not appropriate to the style of the building.

IV. Porches, Trim and Ornamentation

- A. Retain porches and steps visible from the public right-of-way that are historically and architecturally appropriate to the building. Avoid altering porches and steps by enclosing open porches or replacing wooden steps with cast concrete steps or by removing original architecturally appropriate to the building. Avoid altering porches and steps by enclosing open porches or replacing wooden steps with cast concrete steps or by removing original architectural features, such as handrails, balusters, columns or brackets.
- B. Retain trim and decorative ornamentation including copper downspouts and guttering, copings, cornices, cresting, finials, railings, balconies, oriels, pilasters, columns, chimneys, bargeboards or decorative panels. Avoid the removal of trim and decorative ornamentation that is

essential to the maintenance of the building's historic character and appearance.

- C. Repair or replace, where necessary, deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible. Avoid using replacement materials that do not accurately reproduce the appearance of the original material.

V. Additions

Make additions that harmonize with the existing building architecturally and are located so as not visible from the public right-of-way, if at all possible. Avoid making additions that are unsympathetic to the original structure and visually intrude upon the principal elevations.

VI. Guidelines for Streetscapes

The streetscapes in 31st and Wisconsin are visually cohesive because of the intact building stock and the retention of landscaping features. There are few prominent inappropriate additions to historic structures. The traditional landscape treatment of the building lots and the period streetlights contribute to the maintenance of the district's traditional residential character.

- A. Maintain the height, scale, mass and materials established by the buildings in the district and the traditional setback and density of the block faces. Avoid introducing elements that are incompatible in terms of siting, materials, height or scale.
- B. Use traditional landscaping, fencing, signage and street lighting that is compatible with the character and period of the district. Avoid introducing landscape features, fencing, street lighting or signage that are inappropriate to the character of the district.
- C. Note that what is compatible and appropriate throughout the district generally may vary somewhat based on the character of the particular subject building.

VII. Signs/Exterior Lighting

Should there be an application for signage, plastic internally illuminated box signs with a completely acrylic face are not permitted. Approval will be based on the sign's compatibility with the architectural character of the historic building.

VIII. Guidelines for New Construction

There has been no new construction in the 31st & Wisconsin Historic District since 1925. It is important that additional new construction be designed so as to harmonize with the character of the district.

- A. Siting. New construction must reflect the traditional siting of buildings in the 31st & Wisconsin Historic District. This includes setback, spacing between buildings, the orientation of openings to the street and neighboring structures, and the relationship between the main building and accessory buildings.
- B. Scale. Overall building height and bulk; the expression of major building divisions including foundation, body and roof; and, individual building components such as porches, overhangs and fenestration must be compatible with the surrounding structures.
- C. Form. The massing of new construction must be compatible with the surrounding buildings. The profiles of roofs and building elements that project and recede from the main block must express the same continuity established by the historic structures.
- D. Materials. The building materials that are visible from the public right-of-way should be consistent with the colors, textures, proportions, and combinations of cladding materials traditionally used in the 31st & Wisconsin Historic District. The physical composition of the materials may be different from that of the historic materials, but the same appearance should be maintained.

IX. Guidelines for Demolition

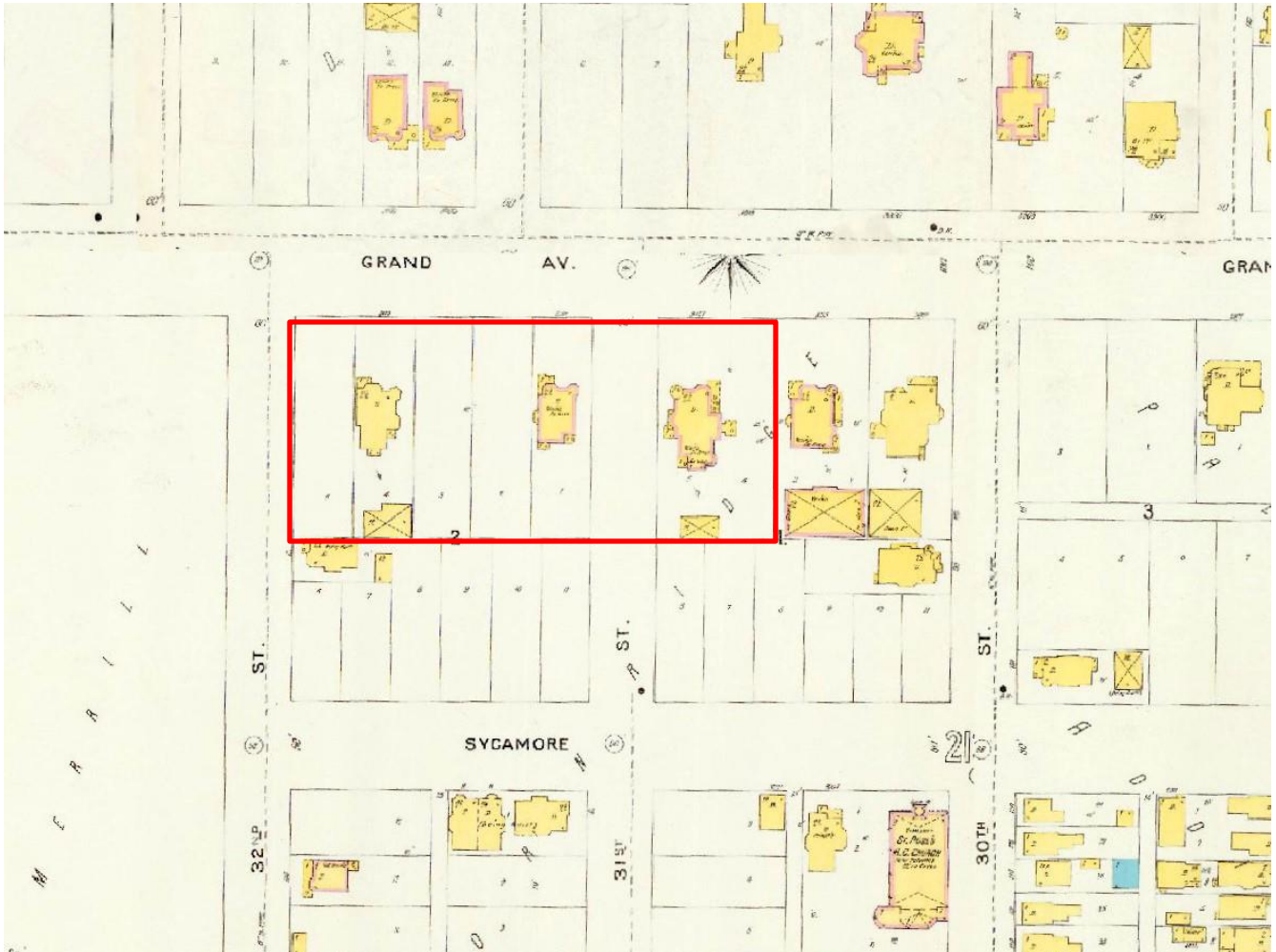
Although demolition is not encouraged and is generally not permissible, there may be instances when demolition may be acceptable, if approved by the Historic Preservation Commission. The Commission shall take the following guidelines, with those found in subsection 11(h) of the ordinance, into consideration when reviewing demolition requests.

- A. 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.
- B. Importance. Consideration will be given to whether or not the building is of historical or architectural significance. Buildings lacking historical or architectural significance are more permissible to demolish than significant buildings. The relative modesty or grandeur of a building is not the only factor that influences these aspects of significance. Indeed,

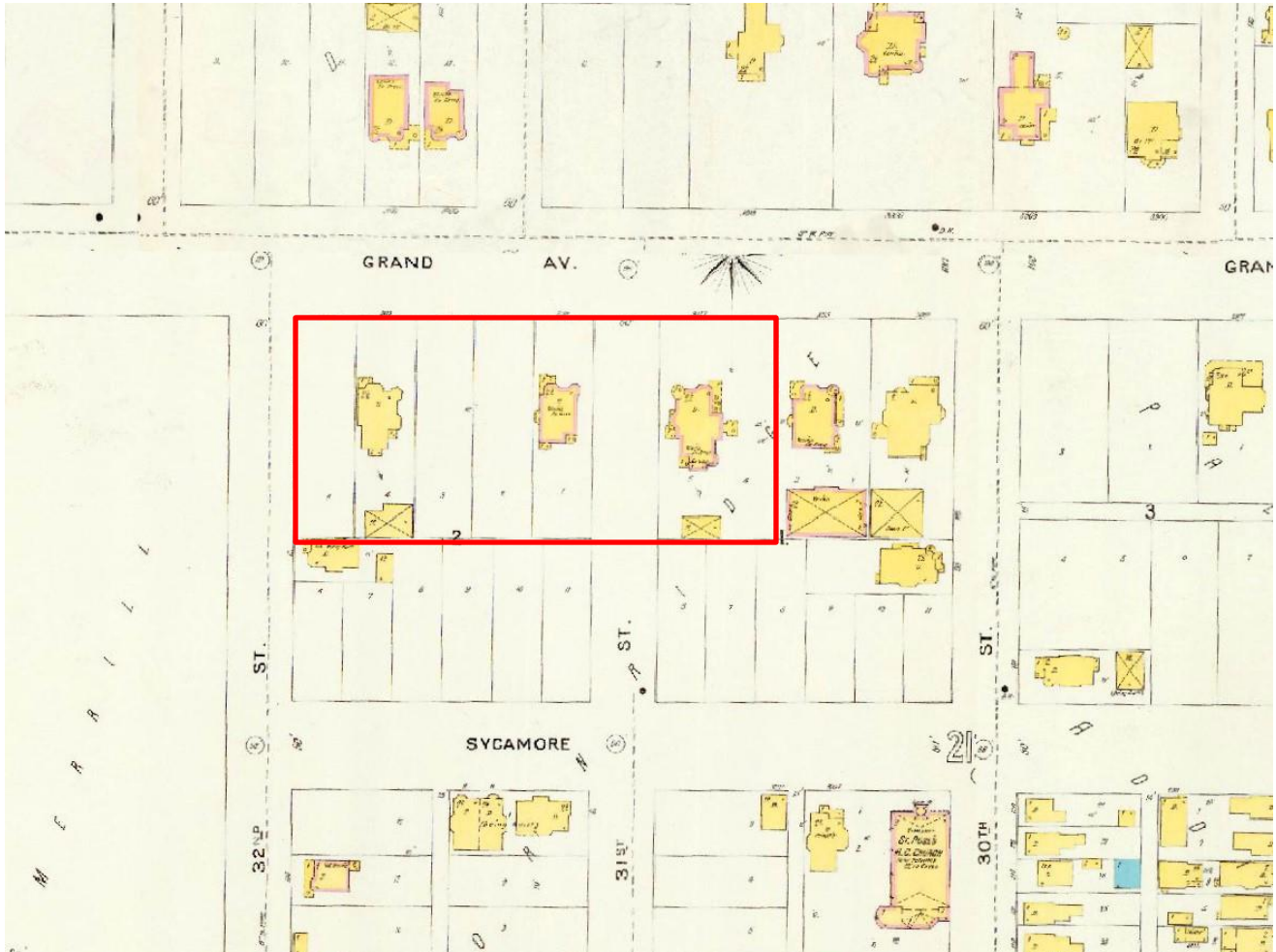
the architecture of the less grand buildings in the district may be significant examples of how and where people of different socioeconomic classes lived.

- C. Potential for Restoration. Consideration will be given to whether or not the building is beyond economically feasible repair. This will be weighed against the reason for the present disrepair, in order to avoid demolition by neglect.
- D. 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 or historical pattern of development.
- E. Replacement. Consideration will be given to whether or not the building is to be replaced by a compatible building of similar age, architectural style and scale (see New Construction Guidelines).

Historic Maps



1894 Sanborn map of Grand Avenue. Subject properties located along the south side of Grand Ave., outlined in red. From Digital Sanborn Maps of Milwaukee, 1894 and 1910. New York : Sanborn-Perris Map Co. Limited, 1894. American Geographical Society Library, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries. <https://uwm.edu/lib-collections/sanborn/>



1910 Sanborn map of Grand Avenue. Subject properties located along the south side of Grand Ave., outlined in red. From Digital Sanborn Maps of Milwaukee, 1894 and 1910. New York : Sanborn-Perris Map Co. Limited, 1894. American Geographical Society Library, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries. <https://uwm.edu/lib-collections/sanborn/>

Millerand Apartment Building
 3035 W. Wisconsin Ave. (3027 Grand Avenue, old)



**Journal Buys Site
 for New Garage**

Purchase by The Journal Co. of a piece of land at the northwest corner of Sixth and Poplar-ats was announced Saturday. The site was formerly owned by Ignatz and Fanny Henesch, and was bought through the office of Nathanael Greene.

It has a frontage of 150 feet on each street. The building was bought to serve as the site for a garage, which will house the fleet of Journal trucks at some future date. No definite plans have been made as to the type of building which will be erected.

**Want Buildings Razed
 on Big Wells-st Tract**

A resolution directing that all buildings existing on this apartment

Apartment to Open

The Millerand apartments, Thirty-first and Grand-av, the largest apartment building to receive a permit last year, according to records at the office of the building inspector, will be completed and ready for formal opening within the next two weeks. It was announced Saturday. The estimated cost of the complete structure, which is shown in the picture above, is \$650,000. It contains 72 apartments. These are four and five-room suites. A feature of the building is the recreation room for all tenants, which is located in a tower. Among the plans for developing the site are the installation of an illuminated fountain and a sunken garden in the front. The backers of the building are the Miller Investment Co., of which Morris Miller is president and Lawrence M. Goodall, secretary.

**99-Year Leases
 Change Hands**

**Three Down Town Sites
 Secured by Realty
 Company**

Purchase of three 99-year leases on down town property was announced this week by the recently organized Northwestern Realty Co. The total annual rental of the three pieces runs close to \$1,000,000 for the whole period of the leases.

Two new buildings, each to cost in excess of \$50,000, are to be erected under the terms of the leases, within the next 10 years. One of these

January 31, 1926 Milwaukee Journal article on the Millerand opening.

A COZY PLACE TO DINE



Rapidly gaining popularity because of its cozy atmosphere and

excellent service, the Millerand Tea Room at 3027 Wisconsin ave-

nue is one of Milwaukee's newest and finest luncheon places. The photo above shows a portion of the tea room, which is ideally located and easily accessible from any section of the city. Under the personal direction of Ruth Burgardt and Lorraine Bringe, the Millerand caters to special parties and luncheon groups. Reservations may be made by phoning West 2500.



"The Wise Man Knows"
AUTOMATIC GRIND SHOP
 Expert Grind Shop
 428 GRAND AVE.
 Grand 6688.



QUALITY ENVELOPE CO.

119 Brown St.,
 Formerly
 Harmon St.
MILWAUKEE

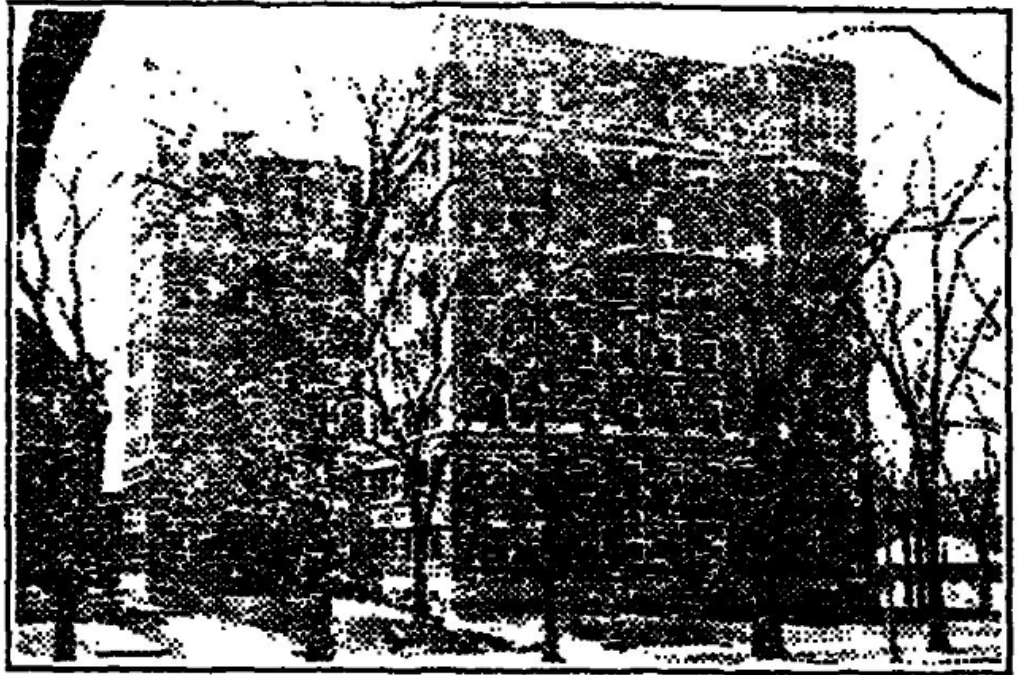
Lincoln 660

Milwaukee Sentinel, June 6, 1927.

Millerand

Apartment Homes

West side's only exclusive duplex type apartments. Concrete construction. elevator. Furnished by appointment or unfurnished. Grill and roof garden. \$70 up.



3027 Wisconsin Avenue, Corner 31st St.
MILLERAND COMPANY, Owners
MILLER & MILLER, INC., Management

Milwaukee Journal, April 27, 1930.



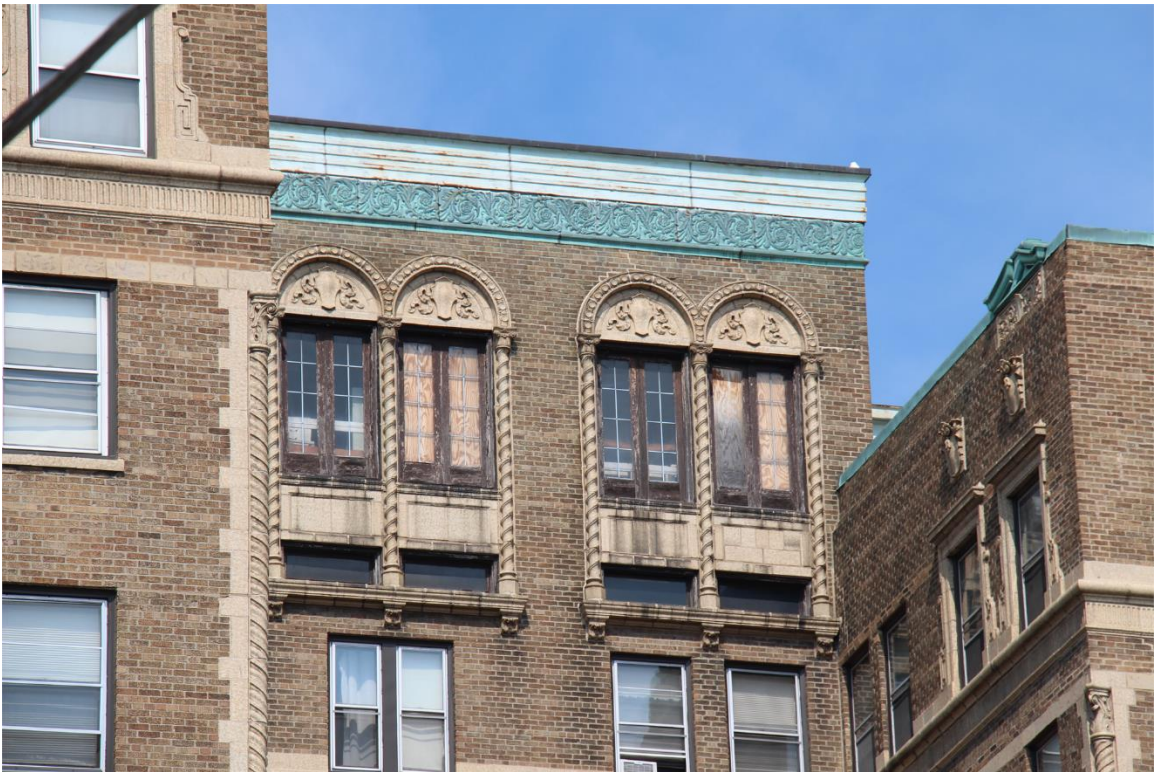
Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, Record #113449. Photo taken 2015. View looking southwest from W. Wisconsin Ave.



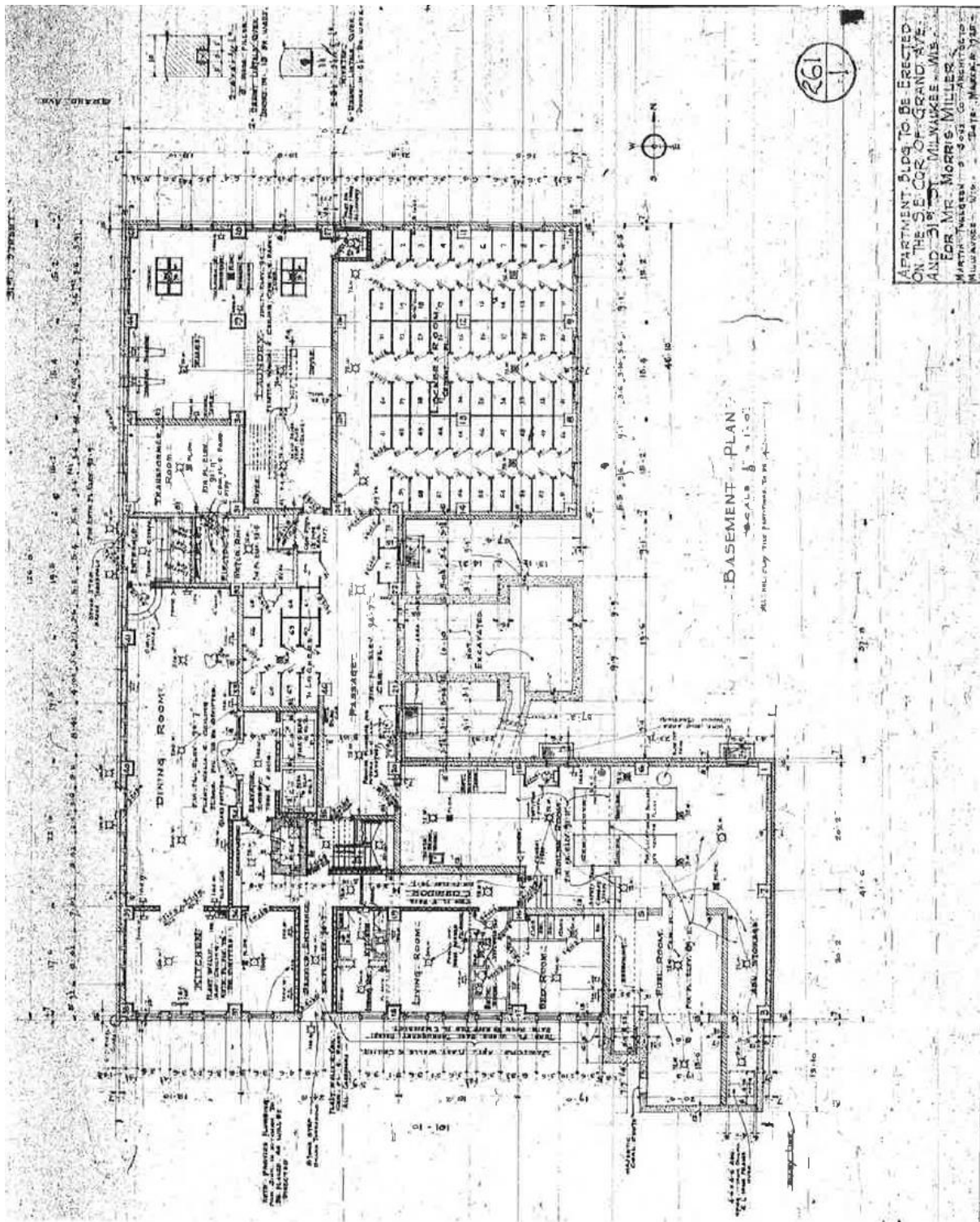
Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, Record #113449. Photo taken 2015. View looking west



Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, Record #113449. Photo taken 2015. Detail of window on inner courtyard of front elevation.

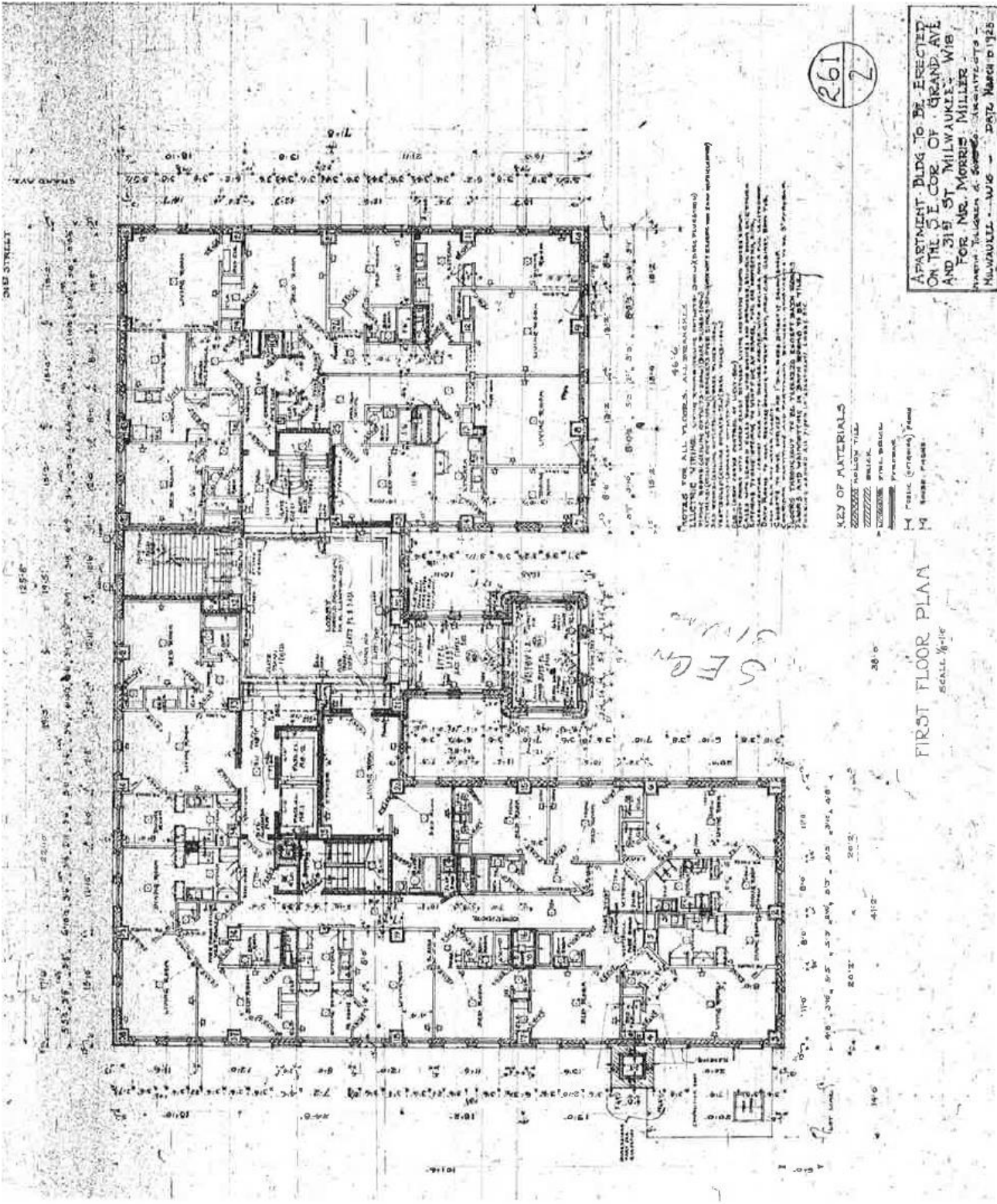


Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, Record #113449. Photo taken 2015. Detail of windows on the front elevation, view facing west



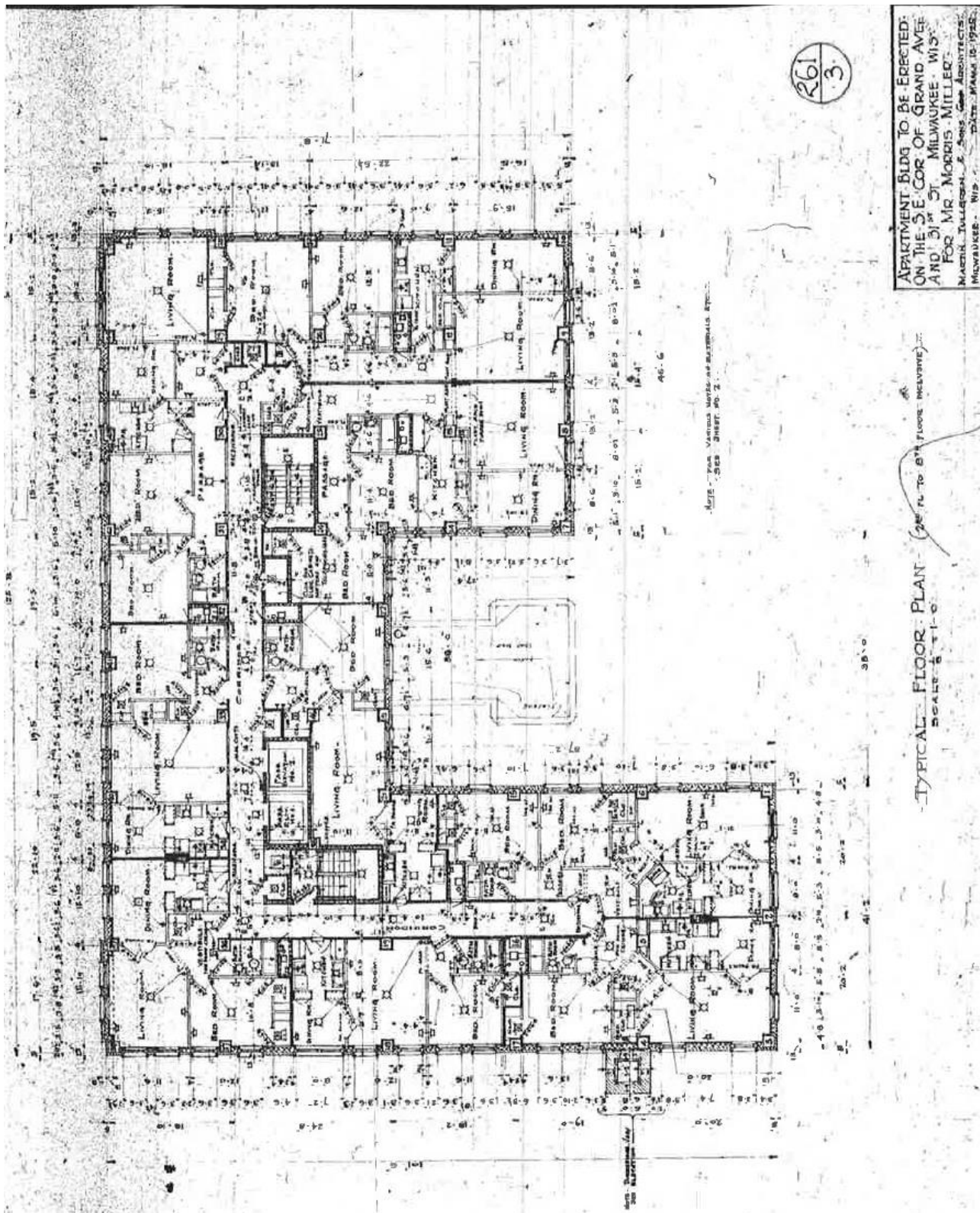
Basement Floor Plan²⁴

²⁴ Emily Pettis and Angela Hronek, "Millerand Apartment Building." Wisconsin Historical Society Determination of Eligibility Form. Division of Historic Preservation, Wisconsin Historical Society, 23.



First Floor Plan²⁵

²⁵ Emily Pettis and Angela Hronek, "Millerand Apartment Building." Wisconsin Historical Society Determination of Eligibility Form. Division of Historic Preservation, Wisconsin Historical Society, 24.



Typical Floor Plan²⁶

²⁶ Emily Pettis and Angela Hronek, "Millerand Apartment Building." Wisconsin Historical Society Determination of Eligibility Form. Division of Historic Preservation, Wisconsin Historical Society, 25.



View looking southeast from W. Wisconsin Ave.



View looking south from W. Wisconsin Ave.



View looking south from W. Wisconsin Ave.



View looking east from W. Wisconsin Ave.



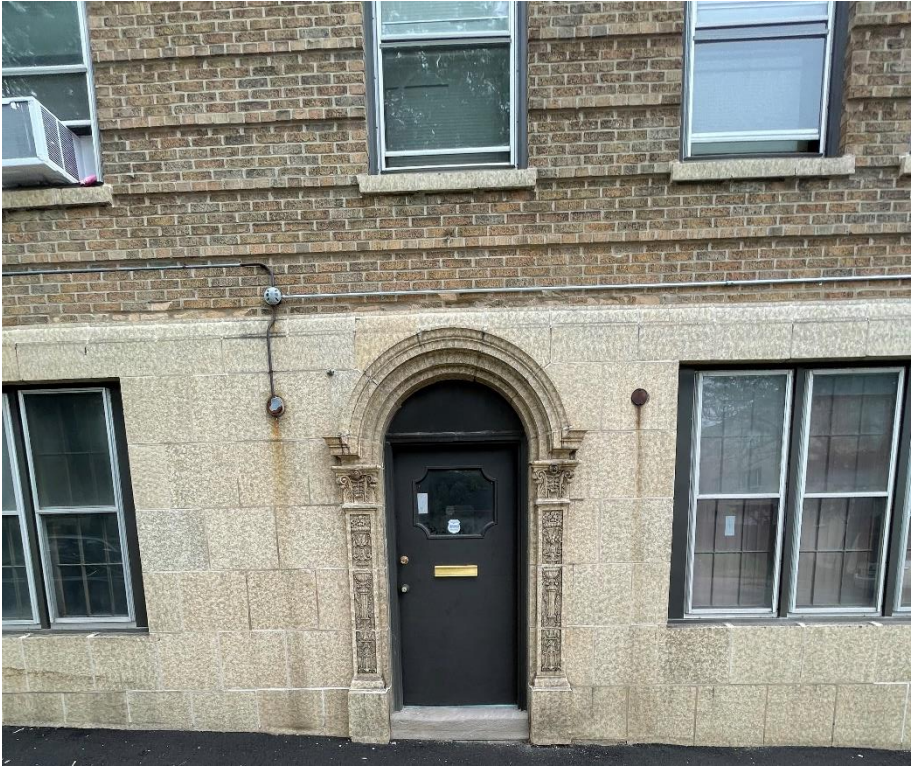
View looking northeast from N. 31st St.



Details of secondary entrance on N. 31st St.



Details of west facade



Service entrance on N. 31st St.



View looking south from W. Wisconsin Ave.



View looking east from W. Wisconsin Ave.

Rudolph Stafford House; Milwaukee Board of Realtors
3111 West Wisconsin Avenue (3101 Grand Ave., old)



The exterior of the Realtors' building, a home built in 1892, has been restored to its turn of the century appearance. The original porch was duplicated; asphalt siding was replaced by cedar shake shingles on the third floor, the Cream City brick was cleaned and a new roof was added.

—Journal Photo

Milwaukee Journal, April 4, 1976.



Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, Record #42026. Photo taken 1980.



Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, Record #42026. Photo taken 1984.



3111 W. Wisconsin Ave. Photo taken August 2023.



3111 W. Wisconsin Ave. Photo taken August 2023.

William H. Meyer House; Brokers Building
3121 West Wisconsin Avenue (3107/3113 Grand Ave., old)



Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, Record #42027. Photo taken 1980.



Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, Record #42027. Photo taken 1984.



3121 W. Wisconsin Ave. Photo taken August 2023.



3121 W. Wisconsin Ave. Photo taken August 2023.

William H. Simpson House
3127 West Wisconsin Avenue (3119 Grand Ave., old)



Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, Record #42031. Photo taken 1980.



Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, Record #42031. Photo taken 1984.



3127 W. Wisconsin Ave. Photo taken August 2023.



3127 W. Wisconsin Ave. Photo taken August 2023.

Oscar Brachman; La Lenore Apartments
3133 West Wisconsin Avenue (3125 Grand Ave., old)



Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, Record #113787. Photo taken 1984.



Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, Record #113787. Photo taken 2015.



3133 W. Wisconsin Ave. Photo taken August 2023.



3133 W. Wisconsin Ave. Photo taken August 2023.