



October 30, 2017

Ms. Daina Penkiunas
State Historic Preservation Officer
735 E. Michigan Ave., P.O. Box 30044
Lansing, MI 48909

Re: Federal Building & U.S. Courthouse, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (NRHP listed)
517 E Wisconsin Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53202
Project Name – Masonry Facade Rehabilitation and Repair

Dear Mr. Penkiunas:

The U.S. General Services Administration is undertaking a project at the subject property to address which proposes to restore and/or stabilize the historic granite façade. The original portion of the Milwaukee Federal Building & U.S. Courthouse was constructed from 1892 to 1899, is Romanesque Revival in style and was designed by architect Willoughby J. Edbrooke. This portion of the building resides at the north half of the site bounded by Wisconsin Avenue, Jefferson, Michigan and Jackson Streets in downtown Milwaukee. A five-story addition was constructed on the south half of the site between 1929 and 1932 extending the structure to Michigan Street. This 1932 addition received an additional two stories in the matching Rockville Beige granite in 1940.

The property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 under evaluation Criterion C for its architectural significance. The project (an undertaking as defined in § 800.16(y) of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) regulations 36 CFR Part 800) has the potential to affect historic properties and therefore, GSA seeks to initiate consultation with your office as identified in NHPA Subpart B-The section 106 Process § 800.3.

Undertaking

GSA's proposed undertaking seeks to restore and/or stabilize the historic granite façade; primarily the stone cornices, gutters at the turrets, damaged granite corners and the balcony above the north entrance. The project also includes correction of failing gutters, repointing, sealant repairs, and the treatment and preservation of the exterior stone, the brick masonry, and the supporting steel structure for these elements. The building will remain occupied during this project. Construction will be phased to allow the building to remain fully functional and minimize disruption to the operations of the building and the agencies within it. The scope of the project includes but is not limited to:

- Potential threats to life safety from deteriorating stones temporarily stabilized with netting. These conditions will be remediated;
- The masonry facade will be repaired;
- The work will minimize the cost of future repairs by taking a proactive approach to preservation;
- The historic integrity of this National Register listed property will be maintained and all work will comply with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties*;

- The work will avoid adversely affecting intact original materials and the original design in the building's restoration and preservation zones identified in the Building Preservation Plan (enclosed for reference);
- The impact of the work on the tenants will be minimized, and existing building operations will be maintained; and
- An updated Building Preservation Plan will be provided at project closeout, incorporating the modifications and addressing the building as a whole.

The project architecture and engineering team consists of a partnership between Mills + Schnoering Architects, LLC of Princeton, NJ and Wiss Janney Elstner Associates, Inc. of Northbrook, Illinois. This AE team was selected by GSA under the guidance of our Design Excellence Program. This AE team's experience and expertise in masonry restoration of historic buildings of this scale and within similar urban contexts stood out among their competition and instilled confidence among GSA's selection committee that they were our best choice for this project.

Identification of Historic Properties

As stated earlier, the Milwaukee Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It fills the full city block bounded by Wisconsin Avenue on the north, Jackson Street on the east, Michigan Street on the south and Jefferson Street on the west. The project area is limited to these property boundaries.

There are neighboring historic properties that are either individually eligible or listed, or identified as contributing properties within the National Register listed East Side Commercial Historic District, which is adjacent to the courthouse property. The following are some of the notable historic properties immediately adjacent to the courthouse:

- Northwestern National Insurance Company Building at 526 E. Wisconsin Avenue
- Johnson Service Company Building at 507 E. Michigan Street.
- Curry and Pierce's Buildings at 400-408 E. Wisconsin Avenue
- Pfister Hotel at 424 E. Wisconsin Avenue
- The Milwaukee Club at 706 N. Jefferson Street

Applying the Criteria of Effect and Defining the Area of Potential Effect (APE)

GSA has applied the criteria of adverse effect and finds that the undertaking will affect the historic Federal courthouse directly. We have identified the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the undertaking to be limited to the boundaries of the Milwaukee U.S. Courthouse and Federal Building, in regard to these direct effects.

Since the scope of the undertaking is focused on the restoration and rehabilitation of the courthouse masonry, it is unlikely the historic integrity of the neighboring historic properties' will be affected at all directly or indirectly. As a result, our APE is limited to the potential for direct effects on historic properties.

Documentation of the Undertaking

The following itemizes the documentation GSA is providing to outline the undertaking and provide you the information to assess GSA's Determination of Effect on Historic Properties.

1. A description of the undertaking is described above and in greater detail in the attached reports, design documents.
2. A map outlining the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the Undertaking.
3. An assessment of the undertaking's effect on the identified historic properties. This is addressed above in the section: *Applying the Criteria of Effect and Defining the Area of Potential Effect (APE)*
4. A copy of *GSA's Building Preservation Plan Update for the Milwaukee Federal Building & U.S. Courthouse (WI0044ZZ)*, by Joel Sanders Architects and Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLC, dated 2009.
5. A copy of the *Milwaukee Federal Building & U.S. Courthouse Façade Restoration – Final Concept Submission*, (A Narrative Report, spiral bound and a Drawing Set, stapled) by Mills + Schnoering Architects, dated 5/3/17.
6. A copy of the *Milwaukee Federal Building & U.S. Courthouse Façade Restoration – 100% Design Development Final Submission*, (a Drawing Set, stapled) by Mills + Schnoering Architects LLC and Wiss Janey Elstner Associates Inc., dated 10-4-17.

Determination of Effect

GSA has identified the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the undertaking, applied the Criteria of Adverse Effect, and has determined that the project is designed in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. Therefore, pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800, GSA submits the enclosed documentation for your review and concurrence with GSA's determination that the subject undertaking poses *No Adverse Effect* to the character-defining features that qualify the Milwaukee Federal Building & U.S. Courthouse for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If you have any questions or comments please contact me at regina.nally@gsa.gov or at (312) 848.0266.

Sincerely,


Regina A. Nally
Historic Preservation Officer
GSA, Great Lakes Region

cc: Beth L. Savage, GSA Federal Preservation Officer
Carly Thompson, GSA Project Manager

Enclosures:

- **Map of the Area of Potential Effects (APE)** for the Masonry Façade Rehabilitation & Repair Project, by GSA, 1 page.
- **GSA's Building Preservation Plan Update - Milwaukee Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse** by Joel Sanders Architects and Beyer Blinder Bell Architects & Planners LLC, dated July 2009, 108 pages.
- **Milwaukee Federal Building & U.S. Courthouse Façade Restoration – Final Concept Submission** (Narrative, spiral bound) by Mill + Schnoering Architects, dated 5-3-17, 29 pages.
- **Milwaukee Federal Building & U.S. Courthouse Façade Restoration – Final Concept Submission** (Drawing Set, stapled) by Mill + Schnoering Architects, dated 5-3-17, 36 sheets.
- **Milwaukee Federal Building & U.S. Courthouse Façade Restoration – 100% Design Development Final Submission**, (Drawing Set, stapled) by Mills + Schnoering Architects LLC and Wiss Janey Elstner Associates Inc., dated 10-4-17, 86 pages.