

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

HPC Meeting Date: 10-12-2020
Ald. Robert Bauman
Staff Reviewer: Carlen Hatala

PROPERTY

Milwaukee Journal Complex
333 West State Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202

OWNER/APPLICANT

State-Kilbourn Holdings LLC
7950 Jones Branch Drive
McLean, Virginia 22107
Tax Key # 3610559111
(per the city Assessor Records)

LaGuardia Myer, Senior Vice-President of Real Estate
Gannett Co., Inc.
7950 Jones Branch Drive
McLean, Virginia 22107
(per the National Register Nomination)

PROPOSAL

Certified Local Government Review of the National
Register Nomination for the Milwaukee Journal
Complex

STAFF COMMENTS

This property was reviewed for local historic designation by the Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission in March 2019 and locally designated by Milwaukee's Common Council in April, 2019. The Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission last reviewed a COA application for the building's conversion into housing and retail on May 4, 2020.

The developer is seeking National Register listing in order to make use of Historic Tax Credits. The nomination includes the original Journal building from 1924, designed by Frank D. Chase, with additions in 1962 by Eschweiler & Eschweiler. The listing will also include the adjacent building, originally known as the Republic Building, but later used as the Journal Annex. It was constructed in two parts 1918 (architect Alfred C. Clas) with a fourth story added in 1923 (architect Clas,

Shepherd, Clas the successor firm to Alfred C. Clas). A four story addition to the south was constructed in 1928. It was used as the Journal Annex after its acquisition by the paper in 1954. It was, as well, the last home of the Milwaukee Sentinel.

The Milwaukee Journal Complex is being nominated under Criterion A for its significance in Communications as the preeminent newspaper in the city of Milwaukee. It likewise had significant statewide and national importance for the quality of its reporting and its innovations over the decades.

The paper was established in 1882 and occupied a variety of buildings before constructing its own purpose built structure in 1924. It was an English language paper from the beginning and made a name for itself thorough investigative reporting. The paper was also known for its innovations that included establishing a radio station and television station, WTMJ, pioneering color newspaper printing, and instituting employee ownership in the 1930s. The Journal acquired the Sentinel, Milwaukee's oldest continually printed paper, in 1968 and the Sentinel moved into the Journal Annex. The Sentinel continued as a separate paper until the two papers consolidate in 1995 as the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. The paper was merged with E. W. Scripps Co. of Cincinnati in 2015 then was acquired by Gannett in 2016. The Journal Sentinel is still in operation at a different location, having moved in 2019. The building is currently undergoing efforts at adaptive use.

The State Street building retains sufficient integrity to convey its importance as a publishing center. The exterior has remained mostly intact with the exception of its windows and the recent removal of the distinctive frieze. Interior spaces still convey its use for newspaper publishing with specialized spaces devoted to printing, offices for advertising and administration and reporters, lounges, conference rooms, spaces for layout work and the suites for President and Vice President.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Recommend that HPC support the nomination.