



Office of the City Clerk

**Jim Owczarski**  
City Clerk

**Rebecca N. Grill**  
Deputy City Clerk

April 18, 2013

RE: Residence in the Concordia Historic District  
832 N. 29<sup>th</sup> Street  
Milwaukee, WI

Dear City Attorney Langley:

As chair of Milwaukee's Historic Preservation commission I, and my fellow commissioners, have become very concerned about the immediate future of the house on the property listed above. It is located in the Concordia Local Register Historic District, and, as you know construction that affects the exterior appearance of properties in these districts come before the Commission for review. From minor changes to significant requests such as demolition, our task is to evaluate requests and decide if they are in conformity with the preservation guidelines for the district.

The house listed above recently sustained minor fire damage, the fire occurred on October 9, 2012. Inspectors from the City's Department of Neighborhood Services went through the house on October 15, 2012, wrote up a description of the damage, and took photographs that are now on file and available for observation. By all accounts, the damage is minor. The Commission reviewed the photos, spoke with the inspectors, and have concluded that the damage does not justify demolition. It is of great importance to this historic district that this house be preserved and repaired. As a commission we are uniform in our interpretation of the preservation guidelines that state a structure in this condition should be preserved and repaired.

At our April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting, the owner, Ms. Barbara Holzmann, requested a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for demolition. However, the condition of the house and the damage caused by the fire does not meet the criteria for demolition or condemnation used by both the Historic Preservation Commission and the Department of Neighborhood Services. The Commission denied the request for demolition. Ms. Holzmann indicated, at the meeting and for the public record, that she does not intend to repair the building.

The house is three years in arrears in taxes and is currently scheduled for taking *in rem*. The owner stated publicly at our April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting that there is the possibility she will enter bankruptcy. Considering the protracted and time-consuming nature of bankruptcy proceedings, the uncertainty of future ownership, and the continued deterioration of the house if left unrepaired, I respectfully request that your office seek a relief from automatic stay incurred by any bankruptcy proceedings. In the event that the owner does enter bankruptcy the *in rem* taking of the property would continue and our chances of saving this 1893 building would be increased by using the City rehabilitation programs. Those programs have been of great assistance in the past with many other distressed properties in the city



Ultimately, the removal of this house would create a void on a block which otherwise has houses that are in good condition. Removing it or having it deteriorate over a long period of time would not be in the best interest of the City of Milwaukee. Our commission believes that the potential for rehabilitation is excellent, provided that the *in rem* process continues without interruption. Using the City's tools of rehabilitation, we believe that the property can again be an integral part of this important historic neighborhood and an addition to the city's tax base.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Jarosz', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matthew Thomas Jarosz  
Chair, Historic Preservation Commission