

MILWAUKEE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION APPLICATION

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

1. Name

Historic: Geuder, Paeschke & Frey Company

and/or Common: N/A

2. Location

Street & number 324 North 15th Street

Aldersperson(s): Robert Bauman

District Number(s): 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: Readco c/o Rick Read

Address: 1200 Greenway Terrace

city: Elm Grove State WI zip 53122

5. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory: NRHP #100002198

Date: 3/12/2018 ☒ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

Depository for survey records:

Organization: WHS and NPS

Street & number _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Previous historic designation:

☒ **National Register** Date 3/12/2018 Historic Name West St Paul Industrial Historic District
☐ **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 4.5

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)

The Geuder, Paeschke & Frey building is a four story, cream brick, industrial loft building with raised basement. It was constructed featuring an L-shaped plan and has a flat roof. Modest decorative brickwork adorns the building cornice, as well as forming a belt course above the second level on the North and West elevations. Otherwise, the building is utilitarian in form. Numerous segmental-arched window openings with rowlock brick lintels and limestone sills create the building's character-defining exterior feature. Fenestration is modern consisting of aluminum windows which were installed after a fire in about 2000. The primary entrance is located on the building's northwest corner. Formerly composed of round-arched entrance openings, these openings have been infilled with cement block.

Each level of the interior of the building features an open floor plan with exposed structure in the form of brick walls and wooden post-and-beam construction with exposed ceiling joists. Flooring predominantly consists of wooden subfloor boards, although areas of wooden finish flooring also are evident. Additionally, areas of plywood flooring are found on the third and fourth floors along with TJI joists in areas where the 2000 fire destroyed the framing. Wood paneling and wainscoting are found on the first floor inside the building's northwest corner entrance. Most of this was probably due to renovations made in 1941, which blocked up the outside corner of the building. The building is vacant and a significant amount of graffiti is found on the interior. Most of the windows that were installed after the 2000 fire have been broken, and the basement and first floor windows are all boarded over at this time.

The building largely retains the same appearance as it did when listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2018.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Areas of significance:

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> economics | <input type="checkbox"/> law | <input type="checkbox"/> science |
| <input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify): |
| <input type="checkbox"/> community planning | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | Click here to enter text. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion | |

Date built or altered: 1895, 1941, 2000+/- after major fire

Builder/architect:

Architect: Ferry & Clas

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

The Geuder, Paeschke & Frey building was granted a Part I Evaluation of Significance on 12-11-2023 by the National Park Service.

The Geuder, Paeschke & Frey Company building is a contributing property in the National Register listed West St. Paul Avenue Industrial Historic District (NRHP #100002198, listed 3/12/2018)

The West St Paul Industrial Historic District is reflective of the period of industrial growth and prominence of the Menomonee River Valley as an integral part of the City of Milwaukee's industrial history from the 1880's to the 1950's. The historic district is locally significant under Criterion C: Architecture possessing an intact variety of industrial building forms spanning the district's period of significance from 1888 to 1951. In addition, the vacant part of the site is the location of the Cream City Brick Co, founded in 1836, just one year after the ceding of the territory by the Menominee Indians to the United States. The kilns for the Cream City Brick Company were still in existence in 1895 when the Geuder & Paeschke Company erected this building. The company name changed to Geuder, Paeschke & Frey Company (GPF) in 1908. Numerous buildings added to the complex eventually replaced the brick kilns before 1910 per the Sanborn maps. By 1920 GPF was recognized as the largest producer of kitchen utensils in the United States. In 1935 GPF produced the first licensed character lunchbox, starring Mickey Mouse. The Smithsonian has a GPF Mickey Mouse lunchbox in its collection. By 1950 GPF had 500 employees at locations in Milwaukee, Sheboygan and Lebanon Indiana. Production in later years included stampings for military goods and automobile parts, computer cabinets for IBM, pails and drums, convection oven cabinets, and fishing gear and buckets. After an extended labor strike in 1980, GPF filed for bankruptcy in 1982. The buildings were foreclosed upon by their lender. Six of the production buildings used for japanning and galvanizing metal which were to the East of the remaining building were demolished soon afterwards. The current owner purchased the building in 1984 and the vacant land to the east in 1996. The building has sat mostly vacant since GPF closed in 1982. A substantial fire in about 2000 resulted in about 10,000 square feet of the building at the south end being demolished.

The Geuder, Paeschke & Frey Company building is an important structure within the historic district. Specializing in the production of consumer tinware products sold under the brand name "Cream City Ware", the firm became the largest manufacturer of its kind in the country. Company expansion resulted in their manufacturing complex covering 17 acres and about 10 buildings, half of which remain. 324 N 15th Street was GPF's headquarters and a fabrication area. Shipping and receiving was from St Paul Avenue and the railroad tracks with several spurs and docks on the south side of the complex.

As an example of the industrial loft form, the Geuder, Paeschke & Frey Company building contributes to the architectural significance of the West St Paul Avenue Industrial Historic District. Four and one-half stories in height and featuring heavy timber structural framing with the brick exterior walls, the building is specifically an excellent example of the nineteenth-century industrial loft form with its open interior floor plans and large number of regularly spaced window openings to provide light and ventilation for workers engaged in manufacturing production.

8. Major Bibliographical References

Part I Historic Preservation Certification Application, approved by NPS on 12/11/2023

National Register listed West St. Paul Avenue Industrial Historic District (NRHP #100002198, listed 3/12/2018)

Cream City Fishing Tackle Blog from 12-5-2015

Sanborn Insurance Maps dated 1894, 1910 and 1951

Milwaukee Sentinel 3-24-1980 "GPF moves long way from tinware in 100 years"

Milwaukee Sentinel 12-31-1982 "GPF files to reorganize"

Knight Barry Title history search of titles.

9. Property Description

Acreage: 2.1268

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

Legal property description:

See attached legal description from survey.

The property is two separate parcels. The building at 324 N 15th Street has a boundary around it very close to the size of the building. The vacant land to the east is 1357 W St Paul Ave. The nomination is for both lots. The historic significance of the vacant lot is it's history as the location of the Cream City Brick Co, one of the first brick factories in Milwaukee's Menomonee Valley.

10. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Claude Krawczyk

Organization: Milwaukee Preservation Alliance

Street: 730 North Plankinton #9D

City: Milwaukee **State:** WI **Zip:** 53203

Telephone (days) 414-276-5000 Ext 4730 **(evenings)** 414-688-4241 **Date:** 8/13/2024

Email claud.krawczyk@wilaw.com



Signature _____

Return to: Historic Preservation
Common Council/City Clerk
200 East Wells Street Room B-4
Milwaukee, WI 53202
(414-286-5722)
HPC@milwaukee.gov