

**TEMPORARY HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT  
FOREST HOME LIBRARY**

**NOVEMBER, 2020**

**I. NAME**

Historic: Forest Home Library

Common Name: Same

**II. LOCATION**

1432 West Forest Home Avenue

**Legal Description**

Tax Key No. 4690488110  
Burnham, Rogers & Becher's Subd NO 2 of NE ¼ SEC 6-6-22  
BLOCK 14 LOTS 8 TO 17 INCL

**III. CLASSIFICATION**

Site

**IV. OWNER**

City of Milwaukee Library  
% City Real Estate  
809 North Broadway  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

**ALDERMAN**

Ald. Jose Perez, 12<sup>th</sup> Aldermanic District

**NOMINATOR**

Kelsey Kuehn and Eric Vogel

**V. YEAR BUILT**

1966 (Dedication Milwaukee Journal December 12, 1966)

**ARCHITECT:**

Von Grossman Burroughs & Van Lanen, (later Architecture 360 Inc.) (Milwaukee Journal 1967 February 16) (Permit March 23, 1966)

Please Note: As Finney Library was put up for sale, interested parties inquired in 2018 as to the property's eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The property was determined potentially eligible by the State Historic Preservation Office which would open up access to Historic Tax Credits that could be used for rehabilitation, mechanical upgrades, etc.

**VI. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

**THE AREA**

The Forest Home Library is located in the block bounded by West Historic Mitchell Street, South 14<sup>th</sup> Street, West Forest Home Avenue and South 15<sup>th</sup> Street. The immediate area

consists of the Mitchell Street commercial corridor as well as a number of recent era strip malls, big box stores/pharmacies and fast food establishments. Forest Home Avenue is an important traffic arterial and was laid out in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to access Forest Home Cemetery. A few of the smaller scale commercial buildings remain, as well as modest residential properties built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some apartment buildings have been constructed in the vicinity in recent decades. The lack of consistent setbacks, lot sizes and large areas of surface parking contrast with the consistent street wall of the commercial development along Mitchell Street. Directly across South 15<sup>th</sup> Street from the library is the Forest Home Avenue Elementary School, addressed at 1516 West Forest Home Avenue and built 1909-1910 which replaced an earlier school on the site.

## BUILDING DESCRIPTION

The Forest Home Library is located on a trapezoidal/pie shaped lot at the point created by the intersection of South Forest Home Avenue and South 15<sup>th</sup> Street. It contains approximately 0.963 acres. The 14,500 square foot library proper is sited at the southernmost tip behind raised triangular-shaped planter beds and a small grassy lawn. Large trees are located in each of the raised beds. The beds are bordered by low concrete walls. A free-standing sign identifies the building as the Forest Home Library. There is minimal setback from the sidewalk along South 15<sup>th</sup> Street and minimal setback from the alley at the northeast. At the north is an asphalt-paved parking lot. The parking lot is separated from the library itself by a raised bed of grass bordered by a low concrete wall. This area forms almost a courtyard effect without the use of traditional fencing. In the manner of many modern structures and due to the visibility of this site, there is no main façade and minor rear façade. All elevations are treated in the same manner with the same materials.

The building itself is a flat roofed, one story structure that is rectangular in shape, with a notch cut out at its southeast corner to accommodate the angle of Forest Home Avenue. Although there is one roof when viewed from above, in plan the building is set up as two rectangles side by side, one smaller than the other, with a hallway connector in between. An important feature is the projecting monitor-like structure at the west side of the roof that illuminates the interior. The roof extends out from the walls, supported by steel beams that project out slightly from the roof itself, much in the way of traditional rafter tails. Originally the ends of rafters had can lights but they have been removed. High intensity lights are installed at the parking lot side of the building and other lighting is located at the soffits.

The walls are clad in textured, thick pre-cast concrete panels that are separated by vertical glazing and/or steel beams. In this manner the panels provide a dynamic rhythm to the façade and almost appear to be pushing through the body of the building.

Horizontal fixed clear glazing is located just below the projecting roof around most of the building much like a clerestory. This arrangement makes the building's roof appear to float above the body of the structure. Glazing surrounds the main entry, located at the "notch" along Forest Home. It is currently boarded up. The original doors appear to have been full light double doors. A window wall of vertical sash is located at the southwest corner facing the south "point" It is shaded by a pergola of steel beams extending from the roof and supported by vertical steel beams. A window wall of vertical sash is also located along the South 15<sup>th</sup> Street façade. Horizontal louvered panels hang down from the roof in front of the window wall at this location.

At the north facade of the building is another large window wall with metal beam pergola matching the one along Forest Home Avenue. The small raised landscaped area below the pergola creates something of an informal courtyard. Toward the east end of this elevation there are boarded up windows and a service area with fencing. Horizontal louvered panels extend from the roof at this area and wrap around to the alley side of the building.

The alley elevation of the building continues the concrete panels and clerestory windows but has three service doors flush with the walls.

## INTEGRITY

There does not appear to be any exterior alteration to the library with the exception of removing the original can lights. On the interior, Uihlein-Wilson-Ramlow-Stein did some updating in 2000 that included technology upgrades, improved circulation patterns and more efficiencies in book handling. But the interior retains most of its original character. It is rare to have a building from this period in such original condition as most mid-century structures, not much appreciated in Milwaukee, have undergone major renovations or demolition.

## VII. SIGNIFICANCE

The Forest Home Library is significant for its architecture and social history.

The architectural firm of Von Grossman, Burroughs & Van Lanen was among the foremost practitioners in Milwaukee of what is termed today as Mid Century Modern. Milwaukee, as many US cities, came through the Great Depression and World War II with a sense of anticipation that the future would function differently and look different from what had been traditional before. Given Milwaukee's known conservatism, the decades of the 1950s and 1960s were remarkable in the number of forward looking projects that were undertaken, especially in the civic realm, where long standing institutions sought new buildings to express their optimism for a better community.

Architects who cut their teeth during the Great Depression and war years were emerging as major designers and forming partnerships to handle the growing number of public and private commissions. Although most firms could and did design dwellings for middle class and upper middle class and wealthy clients, house design became the realm of design-build firms. Architectural firms were mostly busy designing new churches, office buildings, performing arts centers, museums, libraries, sports arenas/stadiums and public parks buildings, among others. It became more and more common for out-of-state architects to receive commissions in Milwaukee just as Milwaukee architects were designing outside Milwaukee and Wisconsin.

The design of Forest Home Library came from the firm of Von Grossmann, Burroughs and Van Lanen. They were highly regarded in their time and the office moved from house design to major civic and commercial projects. Von Grossmann's interest in the use of concrete, very evident here at the library, began with his early residential work and continued through his career. He was much attuned to the new developments in architectural design and found inspiration in the work of internationally acclaimed Eero Saarinen. Like Saarinen, Von Grossmann's work cannot be easily pigeonholed into stylistic categories. Von Grossmann was very active in the civic realm and would have known about or perhaps been peripherally involved in the War Memorial saga and the Saarinen design. Saarinen's work was also well-published. Forest Home Library is a nod to Saarinen's Miller House in Columbus, Ohio and the John Deere headquarters in Moline, Illinois.

The Forest Home Library is a striking example of post war modernism and a departure from what had been the ideal in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. No longer based on classical models of monumentality, Forest Home Library is a low scale, approachable structure with an inviting interior and easily accessible books and materials. Modernism is not a style but a way to approach design and integrate use with form. Functionality was foremost and combined with innovation in materials for an appearance that could be stark yet visually interesting at the same time. Forest Home Library made use of concrete as a cladding material and a new form of steel, Cor-Ten steel. The project won two design awards for the architects. One was the 1967 Architectural Award of Excellence from the American Institute of Steel Construction (one of 12 recipients that year). The other was from the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Institute of

Architects where it won an honor award (one of only three out of 56 entries) for 1967. (American Institute of Steel Construction, Modern Steel Construction, Vol. VII, Number 3, Third Quarter 1967, page 7; Milwaukee Sentinel, February 18, 1967, Part 3 page 3,

See section on architects below.

Like many units of government both federal, state and local, Milwaukee emerged in the post war era with many unmet needs in terms of physical space to house the growing bureaucracy required to serve its populace. Departments that were spread out downtown were mostly consolidated in the new Municipal Building of 1960 right across Market Street from City Hall. The city also had a hand in building, partnering or facilitating other revitalization efforts that would become symbols of this wave of progressive modernization. Such projects as the Arena, the War Memorial Performing Arts Center, the lakefront War Memorial, County Stadium, Mitchell Park Domes, and new terminal at Mitchell Field showed the city and county's commitment to serving the arts, recreation and transportation needs of the community. Educational needs were met with new public school buildings. The public library system was part of this new vision. The Forest Home Library was a significant component of the long range plan prepared in 1957 and modified in 1961 by the Milwaukee Public Library to develop the neighborhood library system by providing libraries that were more modern, more user friendly, serve more residents and would also function as social centers for community meetings and other civic purposes. The plan called for up to ten new buildings to be strategically located throughout the city to meet Milwaukee's growing population. Some extant stand-alone branches were scheduled to receive additions and alterations as did the flagship Central Library. These were no longer "branches" but referred to as neighborhood libraries to illustrate their connection to residents.

The proposed libraries were to be of contemporary design and each different in design. The buildings were all one story. The reading rooms were large. There were typically rooms for community meetings, for book processing and staff. Architects looked on these commissions as a way to incorporate new forms and materials. Providing ample parking lots was considered essential in this post-war car culture but care was also given to siting along public transportation routes. Although the overall number of branch libraries was reduced, each would be larger and accommodate larger collections and staff.

Aside from the Finney Library at 4243 West North Avenue (1952, Grassold and Johnson architects), located in the Sherman Boulevard Historic District, no other neighborhood libraries from the 1950s-1960s have local historic designation. Currently, no other known modernist neighborhood/branch libraries in Wisconsin are listed in the National Register.

#### HISTORIC OVERVIEW OF MILWAUKEE'S PUBLIC LIBRARY

Prior to the days of the public lending library, residents had to rely on their own collection of reading materials which was usually confined to the bible, the family almanac, newspapers and magazines. The concept of the lending library, however, began early in Milwaukee chiefly as one of many services offered by area booksellers. In October, 1837 the first such library was advertised by Henry Williams and Company and subscribers were actively solicited. Similar lending services were offered by Philetus C. Hale on West Wisconsin Avenue in 1842 and by James Yallop at Third and Juneau and by H. H. Angers on Water Street in the mid-1850s. (Harry W. Schwartz, "Early Bookselling in Milwaukee." Historical Messenger, XXXIII, Summer, 1977, pages 58,60, 63; Milwaukee City Directory 1857-1858 p. 315; Lillian Krueger, "Social Life in Wisconsin. Pre-Territorial Through the Mid-Sixties." Wisconsin Magazine of History, June, 1939, page 421)

A municipal or at least a publicly sponsored library came up for consideration for the first time in January, 1838 when a meeting was called to discuss the matter. The proposed establishment would have been under the patronage of the Methodist Church but never materialized. The subject was dormant for nearly a decade when the press began to actively campaign for a public

reading room or library. In December, 1847 a correspondent of the Wisconsin proposed a Young Men's' Association patterned after one in Albany whereby yearly fees of two or three dollars per member would enable the rental of space, purchase of books and sponsorship of a lecture series. Several days later a public meeting was held at the US Hotel (corner of Water and Clybourn, no longer extant) and Milwaukee's Young Men's Literary Association was established. (Lillian Krueger, June 1939, p. 421; History of Milwaukee 1881, p.560)

The Association and its library grew rapidly. From 1848 to 1857 membership increased from 121 to 404 and the number of volumes grew from 810 to 4,000. The library and reading room were generally open from 9:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. daily except for Sundays and holidays; no book was to be out more than two weeks; fines were imposed on late books and smoking, spitting, loud conversations and sitting on tables and railings prohibited. Lecture series were sponsored as well bringing Horace Mann, Horace Greeley, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Ward Beecher and Carl Schurz to Milwaukee. In the early years fires and overcrowding necessitated periodic relocation. Early quarters were found in Martin's Block at the southwest corner of Water and Wisconsin, then the northeast corner of Water and Wisconsin, and in Young's Block at the northeast corner of Wisconsin and Broadway. In 1872 rooms were taken at the Academy of Music Building on Milwaukee Street. (Lillian Krueger, June, 1939 p. 423, History of Milwaukee 1881 p. 562-565)

In 1878 the Young Men's Association was in debt and found the administration of the library too cumbersome. A proposal was made to transfer the program to the city and the state legislature granted the action on February 7, 1878 specifying that the library should function as a branch of Milwaukee's educational department. The city retained the library's old quarters until May, 1880 when an elegant building erected for the library was occupied at the northwest corner of Fourth and Wisconsin. This building was designed in the Second Empire Style by prominent architect E.T. Mix and the library was given the second floor for its 17,000 volumes. (History of Milwaukee 1881 p. 542)

The Library Block, as it was called, remained the institution's headquarters until completion of a new [and still current] structure at today's 814 West Wisconsin Avenue in 1898. The building was the result of a drive to unite the Public Museum and Public Library under one roof and the new Beaux Arts style structure was the work of local architects George B. Ferry and Alfred C. Clas who were chosen in a nation-wide competition sponsored by the institution's trustees in 1893.

The library occupied the east wing and the museum the west wing. Need for expansion led the Public Museum to vacate its quarters and move into a new facility in 1963, located across Wells Street from the library. Government offices (City of Milwaukee Department of City Development) subsequently rented space in the west wing until April, 1984. Since that time, the Central Library, as it is now called, has expanded into the west wing. Public reading rooms, a children's library, an art & music room, local history collection and rare book room are also offered at the Central Library.

NOTE: The above history was taken from the Central Business District Historic Resources Survey Report, chapter on Educational Services, March 1986, written by Carlen Hatala.

BRANCH / NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARIES
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NOTE: Milwaukee Public Library will be abbreviated to MPL in portions of this report.

While branch libraries are today considered a common feature in Milwaukee, and mostly taken for granted, locating libraries within neighborhoods was a new concept in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Elsewhere throughout Wisconsin smaller communities would often have a single library to serve their populace.

The idea of branch libraries in Milwaukee may have been considered for some time but it was not until Central Library was fully functioning in its grand downtown quarters that attention was paid to the neighborhoods. South Branch was the city's first library branch. It had the distinction of being the first established in an immigrant neighborhood and one of the earliest branch libraries in the country. Its establishment was the direct result of the efforts by a youthful library employee, Sam McKillop.

As a newly hired librarian, although he was still a high school freshman, McKillop coaxed the administration into allowing him to set up a small research library in one of the hallways of the old South Side High School at South Seventh and Madison Streets (razed). Supplied with books from the Central Library, the small facility was opened to the general public and became a regular circulating facility. As the small library expanded beyond the confines of its original hallway location, it was given a room in the school and remained there until 1910 even after the high school classes were relocated to the new South Division High School (razed) and the building was converted into an elementary school. McKillop was eventually to see his dream of a library building for the South Side realized. (Milwaukee County Historical Society clipping collection, unidentified article)

Local architects Charles L. Lesser, Betts and Hosmer, and Brust and Philipp were among those who submitted plans for the proposed building and the latter's Neo-Classical design was chosen. The new library was built in 1910 at the southeast corner of Madison and South Tenth Streets, at the site of the old Doerfler Homestead which had been occupied by that family since the 1840s. The library was dedicated on June 16, 1910. (Milwaukee County Historical Society clipping collection, unidentified article; Milwaukee Sentinel 1910 June 17)

The brick building was designed to provide a monumental accent for the neighborhood with its single story on a raised basement. Its cruciform shape and its four sets of paired columns formed a classical portico on the north façade and was approached by a broad flight of steps. It seems the grand design was a nod to the imposing Central Library as well as a concession to south siders who repeatedly vied for important public commissions during this time period only to be by-passed in favor of Juneautown and Kilbourntown locations.

The \$43,000 library had an auditorium with a capacity of 700 and two clubrooms in the basement with the library proper on the main level. In the monumental lobby, two life size sculptures patterned on Roman models added dignity to the space while elaborate electroliers graced the main exterior staircase. (Free Press 1916 January 29; Milwaukee Sentinel 1910 June 5)

Some 20,000 books were circulating each month. Due to the large number of foreign born residents in the neighborhood, most books checked out in the early years were printed in either German or Polish. The auditorium served as a social center for the neighborhood and was much used for the showing of motion pictures, public lectures, especially for school children and for meetings of the South Division Civic Association. (Milwaukee County Historical Society clipping collection, unidentified article)

Sam McKillop went on to become the Director of Extensions for the city's library system by 1916 and it is his efforts that can be credited with numerous library branches that were established as a result of his lifetime crusade to make the library system more accessible to the people. ((Milwaukee County Historical Society clipping collection, unidentified article)

By the 1960s the South Side Library, also known by then as the South Division or South Library, was considered to be out of date and poorly located since the center of population had shifted south and west. When the new Forest Home Library was opened in December, 1966, South library was closed. (Milwaukee Journal 1966 December 11)

After a year of vacancy, later occupants of the building included the City Building Inspection and Safety Office, Inner City Development Project, and St. Vincent DePaul Society meal program.

Social service programs were offered at the building and included counseling, emergency food and clothing, tutoring, community programs and an outpost of the Community Librarian Program-South which served Latino residents. (Note: The above was taken from the section on Educational Services in the South Side Neighborhood Study Report, July 1987, chapter written by Carlen Hatala)

As a result of the South Side Library's significance in history and architecture, it was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on February 11, 1988.

Branch libraries were soon expanded throughout the city. None were to be as monumental as Central Library or South Branch Library with one exception, the Llewellyn Library in the Bay View neighborhood at 907 East Russell. Public effort at establishing the library in Bay View had its roots in its days as a village before annexation by the City of Milwaukee. There had been a library at 2658 South Kinnickinnic Avenue starting in 1908, but the community and its alderman pushed for more than a rented storefront. With the city providing \$30,000 and community members donating the lot, the Llewellyn Library was designed by Van Ryn and DeGelleke and built in 1913. The Classical Revival style library was not large but impressively sited atop a tall berm.

Such efforts were not repeated in other parts of the city. Branches were sited in existing commercial or mixed-use buildings and occupied ground floor former retail space. In one instance, the Lincoln branch, the library even occupied a former pool hall. Efforts were made to provide books tailored to the immigrant population in which they were located. Some small branches were located in schools. One "sub-branch" was even located in the clubrooms of the Urban League, an organization for African Americans. A small collection was installed at the central police station for the education of policemen. Sam McKillop was proud that every person in the city and county was within walking distance of a library and stated "[a]s missionary workers, our duty is not to await the coming of those who desire to read books. We attempt to find them and provide them with suitable reading materials." ("All Milwaukee Close to Books," Milwaukee Journal 1923 November 19, page 11)

In 1921 the number of branches had grown to thirteen. By 1930 there were nineteen locations, including Central Library, Llewellyn Library, South Side Branch and the Municipal Reference Library in city hall. Sites included Center Street, Clybourn, St. Paul, East Side, Green Bay, Lapham Park, Layton Park, Lincoln Avenue, Lisbon Avenue, North Avenue, North Milwaukee, Third Street, East Wells, West Division, and the Vocational School (MATC). By 1961 there were seventeen branches, still mostly in rented quarters but considered inadequate and not strategically placed.

#### POST WORLD WAR II NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARIES

In 1957 the library board developed a long range master plan for new neighborhood libraries to meet present day and future needs of the community. It called for site acquisition, the construction of at least ten new buildings strategically located throughout the city and the remodeling of some existing libraries such as Central Library, Finney and Llewellyn.

The estimated \$5,500,000 plan was soon revised in 1961. Site identification and acquisition began in earnest, and the newly-built Atkinson neighborhood library, not part of the plan, was opened at 1960 West Atkinson in 1961. The city's Capital Improvements Committee gave priority to the following locations in order of importance: 35<sup>th</sup> and W. Oklahoma, S. 14<sup>th</sup> and W. Mitchell Street, N. Third and Burleigh Streets, N. Seventy-fifth Street and W. Capitol Drive and S. Seventy-second Street and W. Oklahoma. Although the above committee set the order of building, much press was devoted to the wrangling over sites and which branches would be built first since neighborhoods were competing for the new buildings and pressured their alderpersons.

By 1964 two new libraries were up and running, one on Capitol Drive (3969 North 74<sup>th</sup> Street changed from 7413 West Capitol) and the other at Oklahoma (Zablocki, 3501 West Oklahoma).

BUILDING HISTORY of Forest Home Library

There does not appear to have been major issues with the construction of the Forest Home Library. The progress of its construction was regularly documented in the local press.

In June, 1964 the Common Council approved the negotiations to buy a site at S. Fourteenth Street and Forest Home Avenue for a new neighborhood library. The purchase cost was estimated at \$150,000 to \$160,000. Bordered by busy arterial W. Forest Home Avenue and S. 15<sup>th</sup> Street, the parcel was originally the site of various commercial and residential properties dating to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. See attached site research prepared by the Department of City Development. Any existing buildings were demolished to make way for the new building.

The pie shaped site was somewhat of a challenge to develop since a parking lot was one of the requisite features of the new building. Rather than locate on the building at the north end of the property where there was more room, the building was positioned at the south end or "point" thus giving better access for vehicles to enter and exit the site. In February 1965 the "schematic design" for the building was approved by the library board and consisted of two rectangles joined by an entrance corridor with the entrance off Forest Home. As bids came in higher than anticipated, City Librarian Richard E. Krug petitioned the Common Council's Joint Buildings-Grounds-Harbors and Finance Committee in September 1965 for additional funding of \$65,000. The following month, the Milwaukee Journal reported that Mayor Maier signed off on \$62,000 toward the library, in addition to the \$308,000 already appropriated [note a different figure from the prior reporting] and recommended that perhaps some of the cost could be financed through the new federal housing act. It is unknown if any federal funding was obtained for Forest Home Library.

On November 10, 1965 the Milwaukee Journal reported that ground was broken for the \$375,000 library [yet another figure]. Some 100 spectators watched Mayor Maier shovel the first chunk of earth, assisted by Ald. Robert L. Sulkowski, Irvin W. Unger president of the Mitchell Street Advancement Association, E. C. DeBriac president of the library board of trustees, and Richard Krug city librarian. The 14,500 square foot facility would eventually house 60,000 books and would replace South Branch and Lincoln libraries. It was anticipated that the library would serve about 60,000 persons. (Milwaukee Journal 1964 June 17 part 1 page 28; 1965 February 26 page 1; 1965 September 15 page 1; 1965 October 5 part 2 page 16; 1965 November 10 page 1)

The firm of Von Grossmann, Burroughs and Van Lanen, designers of the Forest Home Library, were prominent architects in the city and along with such firms as Grassold and Johnson did much to bring a new vision to the architectural projects of the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s. Robert Van Lanen's name appeared in the press representing the firm but it is not known if he were the principal designer or if the design came from the entire firm including Von Grossmann. Von Grossmann had sold his share in the practice in 1965 but he stayed on at the firm as staff architect, likely finishing up projects on which he had worked, including the Forest Home Library.

The Forest Home Library exhibits all the "classic" features of what in general has been termed Mid-Century Modern. It is not a style so much as a way to approach building design that utilizes new and sometimes experimental materials in new ways, looks for cost effective ways to meet functional needs and has structure become the focus of design. The Forest Home Library features a flat roof, exposed steel frame, lack of applied ornament, a block-like structure with overhanging roof that "floats" above clerestory windows, fenestration applied in a new way, and concrete panels that appear to burst through the main block of the building. It is distinct among the new generation of libraries built by MPL in the 1960s.



There is much in the library's design that speaks to the work of modernist icon Eero Saarinen. Von Grossmann would have been familiar the architect through publications as well as the long saga surrounding the design and construction of Milwaukee's War Memorial at the lakefront, a building which Saarinen designed. There is much in the basic form of Forest Home that acknowledges Saarinen's J. Irwin Miller House in Columbus, Ohio (1957) . To quote nominator Eric Vogel "the rhythm of its exposed structure and large stone panels beneath the steel eave is all very reminiscent of FHL [Forest Home Library] from my perspective." Also, Saarinen designed the John Deere Headquarters in Moline, Illinois in 1964 utilizing the product Cor-Ten steel, its first architectural application. The louver-like grilles on the John Deere building are echoed in the Forest Home Library to screen some of the clerestory windows.

The use of the Cor-Ten steel was such a new product (in architectural applications) that it required the city to request a variance from the Wisconsin Industrial Commission to exempt the product from the shop painting and finish painting required of code 53.24. (Milwaukee City Permit Records Letter dated November 10, 1966) The Milwaukee Journal on May 1, 1966 photographed a construction worker at Forest Home removing the surface coating on the exposed steel frame. "The steel, a new, low alloy type, will "weather" over the next few years, its color gradually changing to a rich, earthy hue." The Journal subsequently ran a photo of the library on November 9<sup>th</sup> with the caption "Angular steel beams are one of the striking features of the new Forest Home public library at 1432 W. Forest Home av." The Journal did yet another story on the building titled "Steel Yourself to Library's Hues". "There may be something of a shock in store for some Milwaukeeans later this year when they first see the completed library building now under construction at S. 15<sup>th</sup> st. and Forest Home av." The orange-red color was predicted to turn an earthy hue over about a three year period. It was estimated that this type of steel cost approximately \$2500 more than conventional steel but cost savings would occur in the elimination of painting and repainting. The project was also designed for minimal lawn cutting and care with, instead, just trees, bushes and ground cover and pebbles. The landscaping would be located at the window walls while the concrete walls provided privacy from the side street and alley. The clerestory windows provided natural light as does the monitor-skylight above the reading area. The building plans divide the library into a service area from the book area. It references the use of Cor-Ten steel at the John Deere headquarters and at the new civic center in Chicago. (Milwaukee Journal 1966 January 16 page 105)

The Journal ran another group of photos showing the books being transferred to the new building on December 9, 1966.

The new library was dedicated on Sunday December 11, 1966 with Ald. Robert Sulkowski representing Mayor Maier at the program. A crowd estimated at 2,500 persons attended the dedication ceremony and open house. At that time the interior was not quite finished but the remainder of the book shelves were to be installed.

In honor of the well-integrated interior and exterior as well as the innovative use of a new material, Cor-Ten steel, , the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Institute of Architects presented the building with its coveted Honor Award in 1967. It also received a 1967 Architectural Award of Excellence from the American Institute of Steel Construction. The library was an important enough building using modern materials in a new way to be featured in an ad by the United States Steel Corporation, that stated "The exposed structural shapes express an honesty of function that invites users in, unlike the forbidding monumentality of much library design." (American Institute of Steel Construction, Modern Steel Construction, 1967 Architectural Awards of Excellence, page 7; Milwaukee Sentinel 1967 February 16 part 2 page 9; Milwaukee Sentinel 1967 February 18

Much as MPL planned for the future in the 1950s, its recent facilities planning is centered on closing stand-alone neighborhood libraries and erecting mixed use buildings that combine residential apartments with the library at the ground floor as the primary commercial tenant. Already closed and demolished is the old East Library formerly at 2022 East North Avenue (1968) and now in a new mixed use building at the same location but addressed at 2320 North Cramer Street. The 1970 Mill Road Library closed and relocated to 7715 West Good Hope Road. The 1968 Villard Avenue Library, once at 3310 West Villard likewise moved to a new development called Villard Square in 2011. The 1966 Forest Home Library closed in 2017 relocating to the Hills Building at 906 West Historic Mitchell Street.

December 2, 2014 a public hearing was held before the library board at the Forest Home Library to determine the future of this building. MPL felt the building was nearing its functional end as a library but the building was in good shape and could be adaptively re-used. The new model for libraries would be to incorporate them into residential facilities as indicated above, so that they could generate tax revenue, something not possible with stand-alone buildings. Two proposals were under consideration at the December 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting: to relocate to the Hills Building on Historic Mitchell Street or to move to a building to be constructed on South Cesar Chavez Drive between West Scott and West Washington streets. Neighborhood residents appeared to favor the Cesar Chavez location/proposal as did Ald. Perez. Ultimately, the Mitchell Street location was selected and endorsed by the alderman. (Michael Horne "New Forest Home Library Coming", Plenty of Horne, [Urban Milwaukee](#), December 5, 2014)

Forest Home Library relocated to new quarters in the Hills Building on Historic Mitchell Street in 2017 recalling the practice in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In preparation for its sale, the City of Milwaukee Department of City Development had an appraisal done on the building in 2018 by Lauenstein & Associates. It determined the former library had a remaining economic life of 35 years and the "value of improvements is greater than the value of the site, so therefore the existing improvements contribute value to the subject and should not be razed...It is noted that the remaining economic life of the subject could be extended with a combination of building updates, repairs and/or renovations over its physical life." (Lauenstein & Associates, Commercial Real Estate Appraisers, [Appraisal Report of the Library Building Located at 1432 West Forest Home Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53204-3228](#), page 33, 39,42)

As a consequence, the city Real Estate section put out a Commercial Property Listing with its typical Buyer Development Obligations, Potential Commercial Uses and Potential Resources. One condition was "Restore building in timely manner. Preserve existing building and structural elements. Maintain clear glazing along street frontages."

In October 2018 it was announced that Voces de la Frontera proposed to purchase the property and after renovations would occupy a portion while leasing space to the Christopher & DeLeon Law Office and Aurora Walker's Point Community Clinic. (Bobby Tanzilo, "Voces de la Frontera to Purchase former Forest Home Library", [OnMilwaukee.com](#), October 2, 2018)

That proposal fell through. At present ICAP Development of Milwaukee through a limited liability company has put in an offer on the building. While originally planning to re-use the existing building for a clinic associated with Children's Hospital, the developer has determined the existing former library will not work for their purposes due its construction and size and proposes to demolish the building and replace it with a \$5.4 million one-story clinic. (Rich Kirchen, "Developer proposes Children's Wisconsin clinic in \$5.4M project on Milwaukee's south side", [The Business Journal](#), October 21, 2020.

Since the City's real estate listing called for the building's preservation, preservationists interested in mid-century modern design were unaware of the proposed demolition until recent stories broke in the news. That resulted in the applications for Temporary and Permanent Historic Designation being submitted and today's public hearing by Eric Vogel and Kelsey Kuehn.

## VIII. THE ARCHITECT

The following summary of Fritz Von Grossmann and the firm of Von Grossmann, Burroughs and Van Lanen was researched and written by Kelsey Kuehn, Director of Research, Vogel Design Group LLC

Von Grossmann, Burroughs and Van Lanen Architects designed the Forest Home Library. Frederic "Fritz" R Von Grossmann, Charles Burroughs, and Robert J Van Lanen were the principal architects of the firm at the time.

Fritz Von Grossmann was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota on March 3, 1904. Von Grossmann earned a Bachelor's Degree in Architecture from the University of Minnesota in 1928. After graduation, Fritz's aunt encouraged him to excel and paid for him to attend the Harvard Graduate School of Design. While at Harvard, Fritz explored his interest in materiality and engineering by attending and student teaching across the river at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 1932 Fritz received a Master's Degree in Architecture from Harvard and was awarded First Medal by the Beaux Arts Institute of Design in New York. Graduating at a tough time during the depression, Fritz went on to work as State Architect for the Civil Works Administration in Pierre, South Dakota. While there, Von Grossmann met and married his wife Leanore (*nee* Dutch) Von Grossmann in 1935. The couple moved to Lincoln, Nebraska where Fritz accepted the position as Regional Architect of the US Department of Agriculture Resettlement Administration. The Von Grossmann's settled in Milwaukee in the late 1930's where Fritz took work first with AO Smith Corporation and later in the offices of Herbst & Kuenzli. Fritz opened his own architectural practice, Frederic Von Grossman, Architect, in 1939.

Robert J Van Lanen was born in Milwaukee, WI on May 4, 1914. Van Lanen attended South Division High School and studied design at the Layton School of Art and the UW-Milwaukee Beaux Arts Institute of Design. Van Lanen worked as a draftsman in the offices of Fitzhugh Scott and William G Herbst and later served in the US Army Corps of Engineering from 1941 until 1945. He joined Von Grossmann's firm in 1949.

Charles Burroughs was born in Milwaukee, WI on April 1, 1910. Burroughs earned a Bachelor's Degree in Architecture from the University of Michigan in 1936. While in school at the University of Michigan, Burroughs was awarded the Albert Kahn Award in 1933. Burroughs returned to Milwaukee after receiving his degree and continued to study design in evening classes at the UW-Milwaukee Beaux Arts Institute of Design. From 1936 until 1941 Burroughs ran his own firm. When the United States joined World War II in 1941, Burroughs dissolved his firm and performed office and field work for Badger Ordnance Works, or the Badger Army Ammunition Plant. After the war, Burroughs joined Von Grossmann's firm in 1946.

In the early years of the firm, before Burroughs and Van Lanen joined as draftsmen, Von Grossmann started out small and designed homes throughout Milwaukee and surrounding suburbs. The family lived in a West Milwaukee home and Von Grossmann began his architectural design office nearby in the upper level of an Arthur Read owned movie theater, the Sherman Theater, at 4632 West Burleigh in 1939. At the time, the first Kohl's grocery was located directly across the street and through this proximity, Herb Kohl and Fritz Von Grossmann started a long friendship. In the early 1950's, Von Grossmann would debut his innovative and iconic design for Kohl's grocery and department store that would be reproduced throughout Milwaukee and Wisconsin at large. The design featured the "use of laminated wood arched trusses" which eliminated the need for columns, created a flexible and

open space, and “represented a considerable saving in steel.” (“New Market Features Told: Hugh Arched Roof.” *The Milwaukee Journal*, July 22, 1951.) But before Von Grossmann’s firm designed iconic retail, educational, and office buildings in and around Milwaukee, the architect had humble beginnings.



1961 - Exterior View of Kohl's Grocery Store and Parking Lot  
Historic Photo Collection, Milwaukee Public Library

Many of Von Grossmann’s early residential projects utilized new techniques in concrete masonry construction, such as the Dar Vriesman House in Whitefish Bay and the Earl Karski house in Mequon. For example, the Vriesman home has “several features never before used in a new home in the Milwaukee area.” Von Grossmann was retained as architect by Vriesman for his “considerable experience in the design and construction of concrete structures.” After the home’s construction, Vriesman allowed his home to be used as a “demonstration house in order to acquaint contractors and the public with the modern use of concrete in home construction.” (“New Concrete Ideas In Home.” *The Milwaukee Journal*, April 7, 1940.) Early on, everything was tight and as the firm grew, Von Grossmann hired Burroughs in 1946 and Van Lanen in 1949. From its inception, Leanore Von Grossmann worked as secretary until the operation grew large enough to warrant hiring separate staff in the late 1950’s. When, in 1947, the Von Grossmann’s finally built their contemporary home at 6464 N Lake Dr, Leanore’s secretary desk was located in the closet, adorned with sheets of carbon paper contracts and projects in progress.

Leanore and Fritz were extremely dedicated to each other, their growing family, and their faith. The Von Grossmann’s highly respected the minister of a Congregational church in Madison, WI and were inspired to start their own in the Milwaukee area. On April 27, 1949 the Von Grossmann’s invited two dozen friends into their home to sign the Charter Membership Role of the North Shore Congregational Church. The church humbly began in the lower assembly room of the Milwaukee Country Day School. In 1955 the church moved into its new home at Bell Road and Santa Monica Boulevard in Fox Point. In 1986, Charles Burroughs, architect, church member, and Von Grossmann family friend, designed and built the stained glass window called “Freedom” in the church balcony. Von Grossmann’s firm designed a number of iconic religious buildings in and around Milwaukee, including the office headquarters of the South Wisconsin district of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod at 8100 W Capitol Dr. The LMS headquarters building was awarded an AIA Honor Award by the Wisconsin chapter in 1963.

Around the same time that the Von Grossmann’s built their home and started their congregation, Fritz became involved with Civic Center Development planning through the city as a consultant.

Working alongside Milwaukee architect Harry Bogner and other design professionals from 1948 until 1949, the team prepared development plans and sketches for the city land commission to consider in their aim to make downtown a “better place in which to work, to live, and to shop.” At the time Milwaukee was in the middle of planning for a Memorial and Performing Arts Center. The site selection process for the Memorial Center dragged on for nearly a decade as the board of trustees eyed possibilities in the civic center and along the lakefront. Nancy Von Grossmann, daughter of Fritz and Leanore Von Grossmann, remembers her father’s involvement in circles around Eliel Saarinen and the Memorial Center development. According to Nancy, Von Grossmann felt strongly that a Milwaukee architect should have been selected for the center’s design.

Von Grossmann’s firm expanded quickly throughout the 1950’s. It was announced in 1956 that Fritz elevated Charles Burroughs and Robert Van Lanen as partners in the firm, creating Von Grossmann, Burroughs, and Van Lanen, Architects. The architects quickly left modern residential work behind and began designing office buildings, schools, religious buildings and commercial buildings both in and around Milwaukee. Significant projects include: Nicolet High School, completed in 1955 and exhibited in the 1957 convention for the American Association of School Administrators in Geneva, Switzerland; the Arthur Andersen and Co. Office Building (razed) at 759 N Van Buren St, designed in collaboration with Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill and recipient of an AIA Merit Award; the State Masonic Headquarters Temple at 1123 N Astor St, completed in 1956 and received an AIA Merit Award in 1957; 1 southside and 2 northside Gas Light Company Service Stations; the Equitable Building (razed) at 1701 W Wisconsin, completed in 1956 and praised for its modular construction and prefabricated glass and aluminum skin; and Bolton Hall for the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. [see attached timeline of firm development and list of known projects]



1955 - Frank Lloyd Wright was the Keynote speaker at Wisconsin Architects Association Dinner at the Pfister Hotel  
Fritz Von Grossmann (center) and Frank Lloyd Wright (right)  
Credit: The Milwaukee Journal

Outside of his firm, Fritz was very involved with the AIA both locally and nationally. In 1954 he was elected as Secretary-Treasurer of the Wisconsin Architect’s Association and he later served as director of the Wisconsin Architects Foundation from 1960 until 1966. Fritz was a key figure in developing an insurance plan for the AIA on a national level. As chairman for the AIA National insurance and Sureties Committee, Fritz spent months traveling between Milwaukee and AIA headquarters at The Octagon in Washington to organize healthcare plans for its members. In the

October 1964 edition of AIA Journal, Fritz authored a piece reflecting on 10 years of work: "What was a bargain in 1954, providing high quality disability income protection...has become a much more valuable program as the plan aged." Also, recognized for his work in educational facilities design, Fritz served two consecutive three-year terms, from 1958 until 1963, on the National Board of Governors of the School Facilities Council of Architecture, Education and Industry.

Beyond architecture, the Von Grossmann's greatly impacted Milwaukee's cultural development as co-founders of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. What originally began as Milwaukee Pops Orchestra in 1953 quickly grew over the course of the 1950's into the symphony we know today. Fritz was a member of the founding board of directors from 1957 until 1965 and chairman of the fund drive in its second year. Nancy Von Grossmann remembers her parent's role well in retaining Harry John Brown as conductor in 1960. In 1965, the "Von Grossmann team tackle[d] chairmanship" of the ninth annual symphony ball. Leanore and Fritz worked side by side to plan the event. In 1967, Fritz was awarded the Golden Baton Award from the Milwaukee Symphony League. Other notable public service work by Von Grossmann include: Director of Friends of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Library, Director of Friends of Milwaukee Art Museum (1968), Co-Chairman of the Model Cities Commission (1968), and Trustee of the Memorial Hospital Board (1954-1970).

In May 1965, with the Forest Home Library project underway, Fritz Von Grossmann received the highest honor from the AIA: elevation to the College of Fellows. At the time, only 4 architects from the state of Wisconsin ever received the honor. Today, only 3% of registered architects hold this title.

In August 1965, Fritz sold his part in the architecture firm that he started over 25 years prior. Charles Burroughs and Robert Van Lanen became the president and vice president, respectively. Von Grossmann remained in the firm as a staff architect, likely to finish work with ongoing projects, and the firm retained the name Von Grossmann, Burroughs and Van Lanen Architects, despite the change of ownership. This potentially makes the Forest Home Library one of the last works touched by the decorated architect, Von Grossmann.

The Forest Home Library at 1432 N Forest Home Ave was completed the following year in December 1966. At the twilight of his career in architecture, the Forest Home Library was awarded an AIA Honor Award and a Design Excellence Award in 1967. Jurors of the American Institute of Steel Construction Award cited the Forest Home Library's "elegance of detail." "The structural steel is carefully related to the other materials in the building. By exposing the steel, and not hiding it, the architect has achieved effective use of the structural material." The library was awarded by the AISC, alongside 10 other winning buildings from a field of 160 entries. The same year, the Gateway Arch of the Jefferson national expansion memorial, designed by Eero Saarinen, received a special award of excellence. The design of the Forest Home Library takes considerable inspiration from Saarinen's John Deere World Headquarters in Moline, Illinois. Completed just 2 years prior to Forest Home in 1964, the complex is the first architectural application of exposed Core-ten steel structure.

Von Grossmann transitioned from his architecture firm to a role in civic planning, though he remained affiliated with the firm until at least 1970. He opened a non-competing, planning consulting practice out of an office building at 721 W Capitol Dr. The building was designed, built and owned by Von Grossmann and his wife Leanore in 1959. Newspapers at the time praised the building's openness on the interior, citing the fact that there was only one corridor in the entire structure. (Note: The building has since been altered and reused as an Outreach Community Health Center) Von Grossmann then spent the final years of his career as a staff member of the City of Milwaukee's Planning Department. Appointed in 1967, Von Grossmann remarked "I'm a voice here. And I believe I can bring that voice, as an architect, into the overall planning thinking for the city of Milwaukee." His role was described as "new" and "somewhat experimental" in the planning office as planners didn't have the design background built into the architecture profession. A Milwaukee Sentinel article stated: "Never known for lack of temerity as an architect, Von Grossmann often spoke out on city and community projects." ("Architect's 'Voice' in City Planning." Milwaukee Sentinel and Gazette, April 29, 1967.)

Up until his full retirement, Fritz remained active in city planning, public service roles, and his church. Fritz and Leanore Von Grossmann retired to Sarasota, FL in 1977, where they lived until Fritz's passing in 1993.

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## **IX. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Forest Home Library be given temporary historic designation as a City of Milwaukee Historic Site as a result of its fulfillment of criteria e-1, e-5, e-6 and e-7 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 320-21(3) of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances.

- e-1. Its exemplification of the development of the cultural, economic, social or historic heritage of the City of Milwaukee, State of Wisconsin or of the United States.

Rationale: Forest Home Library was one of a select number of the new generation of public library buildings in Milwaukee following World War II. Moving away from rented quarters in storefronts or mixed use buildings the Milwaukee Public Library (MPL) wanted to create stand-alone library buildings to serve neighborhoods throughout the city. MPL developed a master plan in 1957, modified in 1961, to create a new system that would provide more space for readers, allow for a greater number of books at each location and allow for more staffing to assist library



patrons. The modern appearance would signal that the library was moving into an age that would supply the most up-to-date information in the most advanced manner for the time. This rebuilding of the MPL worked hand in hand with the other major developments in the civic realm taking place in the city that included art centers, a new public museum, sports facilities, a new municipal building and more.

- e-5. Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen.

Rationale: The Forest Home Library exhibits all the “classic” features of what in general has been termed Mid-Century Modern. It is not a style so much as a way to approach building design that utilizes new and sometimes experimental materials in new ways, looks for cost effective ways to meet functional needs and has structure become the focus of design. The Forest Home Library features a flat roof, lack of applied ornament, a block-like structure with overhanging roof, fenestration applied in a new way, and concrete panels that appear to burst through the main block of the building. In honor of the well-integrated interior and exterior, the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Institute of Architects presented the building with its Honor Award in 1967. An ad by the United States Steel Corporation, featuring the library, states “The exposed structural shapes express an honesty of function that invites users in, unlike the forbidding monumentality of much library design.” (American Institute of Steel Construction, Modern Steel Construction, 1967 Architectural Awards of Excellence, page 7;

- e-6 Its identification as the work of an artist, architect, craftsperson or master builder whose individual works have influenced the development of the city.

Rationale: Fritz Von Grossmann was a significant Milwaukee architect during the middle decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Studying his projects has put a lens on how his works gave Milwaukee a new character after World War II.

We are just now beginning to identify, understand, evaluate and categorize the works from this time period as more efforts have been directed at preserving 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century properties up until now. Although Milwaukee’s Historic Preservation Ordinance does not specify how old a property must be for consideration of designation, the National Register of Historic Places indicates that properties be at least fifty years old for listing although there are exceptions for outstanding historic and architectural character. This brings into review all properties through 1970. National Register nominations are now coming forward on some of these buildings as communities are surveying their post-World War inventory of properties. Sadly, in Milwaukee, no comprehensive survey of mid-century buildings has been conducted to date and many of these mid-century works have been demolished or significantly altered as their unique design solutions have not been sufficiently appreciated. A scant handful have received any form of protection or local historic designation.

The firm of Von Grossmann, Burroughs and Van Lanen is emerging as an important firm and study shows they were well respected in their day. They designed projects from schools to churches to public library buildings. They were not the size of an office like Grassold and Johnson but nevertheless produced striking examples in the modernist aesthetic using flat roofs, linear horizontal forms and experimented with materials such as Cor-Ten steel, tile, and glass window

walls. Von Grossmann explored the possibilities of concrete and enjoyed the play of solid masonry (impenetrability) against the openness of window walls (interior and exterior connection) as can be seen in Forest Home Library. He likewise gave us such “classics” as the Kohl’s super market whose large front arch and roof of laminated wood arched trusses became a readily identifiable symbol of the food chain throughout Wisconsin. The Forest Home Library is an example of his mature work, right at the time he pulled out of his partnership but continued with the firm as a practicing architect. Von Grossmann is also known for his efforts in the civic and cultural realm of Milwaukee, his furthering benefits for architects, his serving on various boards and even serving in the Planning department at the City of Milwaukee.

- e-7. Its embodiment of innovation in architectural design or engineering, pre- or post-World War II, expressed in design, details, materials, craftsmanship, construction techniques or function of one or more buildings or structures.

Mid Century Modern structures are known for their use of new materials. In the case of the Forest Home Library, the architects selected Cor-Ten steel for use on the building. Cor-Ten is a trademarked name for a product manufactured by U.S. Steel. Its name derives from Cor (corrosion resistant) and Ten (tensile strength). It was a product developed in the 1930s but first used for architectural purposes by Eero Saarinen for the John Deere Headquarters in 1964. The product has an exterior surface that weathers with a rust-like appearance and is resistant to atmospheric corrosion. Cor-Ten eliminates the need for painting and rust prevention.

The architect’s use of Cor-Ten steel in the building’s exposed steelwork was celebrated at the time of the building’s construction. In an ad by United State Steel Corporation, the Forest Home Library’s façade is featured in a large photograph with text that explains “a library whose exposed steelwork will require no paint and negligible maintenance.” The “steel is bare USS Cor-Ten High Strength Low-Alloy Steel. Bare Cor-Ten Steel “paints” itself with an attractive oxide coating as it weathers. The dense, tight coating virtually eliminates further atmospheric corrosion. If the coating is scratched or marred, it heals itself.” The product was touted for its “economical good looks” and graceful and lighter appearance “because Cor-Ten Steel is about 40% stronger than structural carbon steel. It is available in a full range of structural shapes, plates, bars, and sheets.” It is still in use due to its low maintenance factor and the aesthetics of its oxidized orange-brown rust appearance.

The firm also made use of Cor-Ten Steel in their design for the North Milwaukee/Villard Library at 3310 West Villard Avenue (1968). (Note: this building has been vacated and the library relocated to Villard Square at 5190 North 35<sup>th</sup> Street) It is not known how many other Milwaukee buildings made use of Cor-Ten steel. One other known example is the Office on the Square building, 788 North Jefferson Street designed by Jordan Miller and constructed somewhat later than the library c. 1968.

As a result of its innovative use of Cor-Ten steel, the Forest Home Library received considerable press attention and won two awards for the architects. It also featured prominently in one or more ads for the Cor-Ten product. (“Ad Round-UP: 9 Projects That Make Use Of Cor-Ten Steel”, Rory Scott, May 6, 2015 <https://www.archdaily.com/628127/ad-round-up-9-projects-that-make-creative-use-of-cor-ten-steel> ;“Frequently Asked Questions About Corten Weathering

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## **Preservation Guidelines For the Forest Home Library**

The following preservation guidelines represent the principal concerns of the Historic Preservation Commission regarding the temporary historic designation of the Forest Home Library. The intent of the commission is to preserve the historic, existing exterior features of the building and guide any changes and restorations that might be done on the exterior.

Building maintenance and restoration must follow accepted preservation practices as outlined below. Any exterior changes such as masonry repair, re-roofing, and so on but exclusive of routine painting will require a certificate of appropriateness. Most certificates are issued on a staff-approved basis and only major new construction or alteration requests typically will go before the Historic Preservation Commission. The Commission reserves the right to make final decisions based upon particular design submissions.

### **A. Roofs**

Retain the flat roof shape. No changes can be made to the roof shape which would alter the building height, the roofline or its pitch. A flat roof is one of the character defining features of mid-century modern design.

Locate mechanical systems and vents on portions of the roof not visible at all from the public right of way and paint them out to minimize impact. Re-roofing requires consultation with historic preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness to ensure appropriate materials and installation and proper construction of flashing, gutters, downspouts and valleys. Electronic devices such as satellite dishes require review with historic presentation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness. The request for the installation of solar devices will be reviewed on a case by case basis based on provisions of 66.0401, Wis. Stats. No large rooftop construction or addition is allowed, such as a full story, as this would have a negative impact on the historic character and proportions of the building. The construction of other rooftop features, such as but not exclusive to a skylight or a second monitor that would match the original, requires review by the Historic Preservation Commission and a Certificate of Appropriateness. The monitor-like feature on the roof, lined with windows, is to be retained.

### **B. Materials**

#### **1. Masonry**

- a. Unpainted brick or stone or concrete must not be painted or covered. Painting masonry is historically incorrect and could cause irreversible damage if it was decided to remove the paint at a later date. Covering masonry with other materials (wood, sheet metal, vinyl siding, etc.) is not allowed. The current cladding consist of pre-cast concrete panels between which are located vertical windows. These panels may not be removed or covered over with substitute siding or painted. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required to determine best practices for removal of graffiti or repair to damaged concrete.
- b. In the future should masonry cleaning be necessary (to remove paint,

environmental pollutants, graffiti etc.) it should be done only with the gentlest method possible. Sandblasting or high pressure water blasting or the use of other abrasive materials (baking soda, nut shells, dry ice, etc.) on limestone, brick surfaces or concrete is prohibited. This method of cleaning erodes the surface of the material and accelerates deterioration. The use of accepted chemical products to clean masonry is allowed and a test panel is required before general commencement of the work. Work should be done by experienced individuals as the chemical cleaning process can have a negative impact on the masonry. Consultation with historic preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness is required before any cleaning would begin.

- c. Repair or replace deteriorated masonry with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible. The use of EIFS (exterior insulation and finish systems) which is synthetic stucco is not permitted. The application of plywood, metal, vinyl or other substitute products is not permitted. Consultation with historic preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness is required before attempting work on the masonry.

## 2. Wood/Metal

- a. Retain original material, whenever possible. Do not remove architectural features that are essential to maintaining the building's character and appearance such as the Cor Ten steel framing members as they serve as a design element to the façade.
- b. Retain or replace deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the appearance of the old as closely as possible. Covering wood with aluminum or vinyl or other substitute material is not permitted. Spot replacement or spot repair of any deteriorated elements is encouraged rather than complete removal and replication.

## C. Windows and Doors

1. Retain existing window and door openings. Do not make changes in existing fenestration by enlarging or reducing window or door openings to fit new stock window sash or new stock door sizes. Do not change the size or configuration of original window panes or sash. The installation of additional windows is discouraged but approval will depend on the proposal submitted. Placement and style of the windows, like the use of a window wall, were character- defining feature of the mid-century modern
2. In the event any windows need to be replaced, consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required to determine appropriate replacements. New glass must match the size of the historic glass. Do not fill in or cover openings with inappropriate materials such as glass block or concrete block.

Any original windows on the building must be retained and repaired if at all possible. Vinyl, vinyl clad, metal, and metal-clad or fiberglass prime window units are not permitted. If the original windows were constructed

with metal frames then replacements should be metal frame windows. Replacement glass is to be clear not tinted.

Any original doors are to be retained if possible. Replacement doors are to match historic originals.

Any changes to doors and windows, including installation of new doors and windows, require consultation with Historic Preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness.

3. Steel bar security doors and window guards are discouraged. If permitted, the doors or grates must be of the simplest design and installed so as to be as unobtrusive as possible. A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for this type of installation.

D. Trim and Ornamentation

There is no applied ornamentation on the building in the traditional sense. The materials and structure themselves serve as the design elements of the building. Panels with horizontal louvers are located in several places on the façade and must be retained as part of the original design. If necessary, they can be replicated.

E. Additions

Given the library's location no additions are possible along the alley façade (southeast side), the front facing Forest Home Avenue, or the South 15<sup>th</sup> Street elevation. Given the generous size of the parking lot to the north or rear, an addition would be possible there and could be linked with a connector to the main building through its current service area.

Additions must be smaller than the original building, not overshadow the historic building and not obscure the historic building. They should either complement the historic building or have a neutral effect on it. Additions are to be differentiated from the historic building but are to be compatible it

F. Signs/Exterior Lighting

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.

G. Guidelines for New Construction on the Site

See also Additions above. It is important that any proposed new construction be designed to be as sympathetic as possible with the character of the historic building. The following categories are consistent with all sites that receive local historic designation.

1. Site work

New construction must respect the historic site and location of the building. The primary building on the site must maintain the appearance of a freestanding structure as it was built.

2. Scale

For new construction, overall building height and bulk, the expression of major building divisions including foundation, body and roof, and individual building components, such as overhangs and fenestration that are in close proximity to the historic building must be compatible to and sympathetic with the design of the original library. New construction is to be smaller in size and will not extend over the top of the current building.

3. Form

The massing of the new construction must be compatible with the goal of maintaining the integrity of the historic building as a freestanding structure. Arrangement of windows, doors, roof shape, and foundation openings must be compatible with the historic property.

4. Materials

The building materials which are visible from the public right-of-way and in close proximity to the original library should be compatible with the colors, textures, proportions, and combinations of cladding materials used on the historic building. Since the historic building is clad in concrete panels, concrete on new construction would be appropriate. Faux wood grained panels, wood panels, thin cementitious panels, panels constructed of pressed wood, metal panels or corrugated metal, or panels made of other materials would be inappropriate for new construction

H. Guidelines for Demolition

It is not anticipated that the Forest Home Library would be demolished if the historic designation is finalized. 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 following guidelines, with those found in subsection 11(h) of the ordinance, shall be taken into consideration by the Commission when reviewing demolition requests.

1. 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 and is beyond hope of repair. This would generally be in the case of a major fire or a natural catastrophe.

2. Importance

Consideration will be given to whether or not the building is of historical or architectural significance or displays a quality of material and craftsmanship that does not exist in other structures in the area.

3. Location

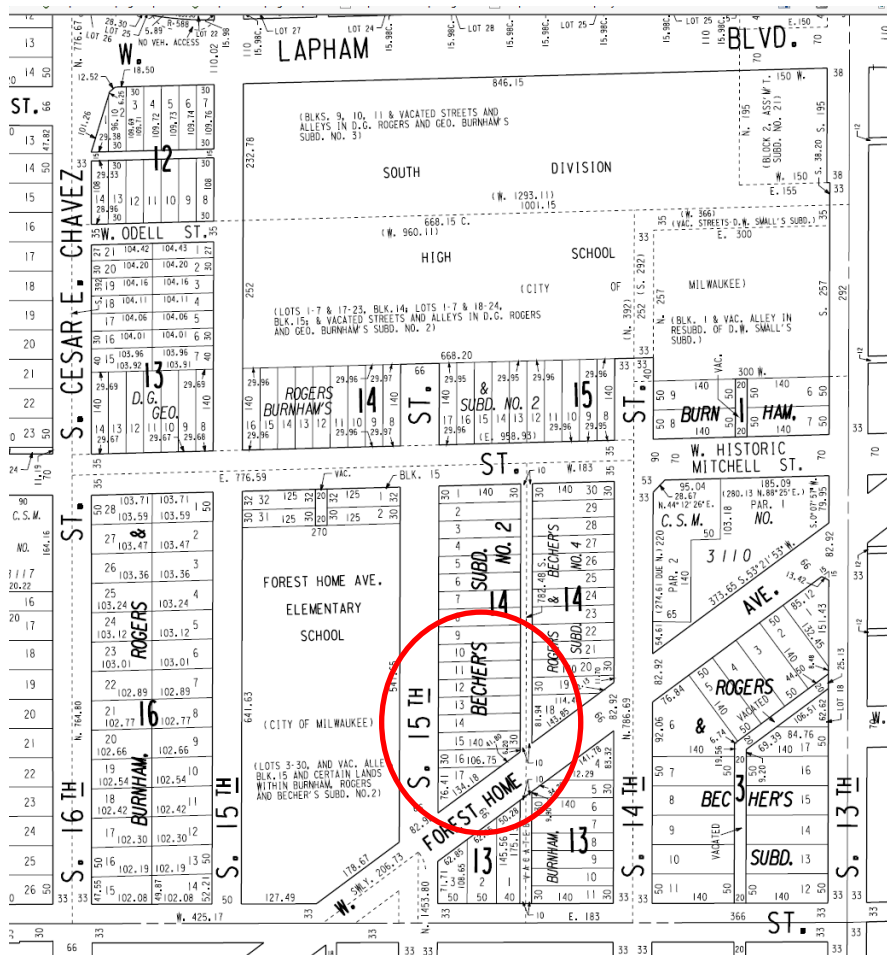
Consideration will be given to whether or not the building or portion of it contributes to the neighborhood and the general street appearance and has a positive effect on other buildings in the area.

4. Potential for Restoration

Consideration will be given to whether or not the building is beyond economically feasible repair.

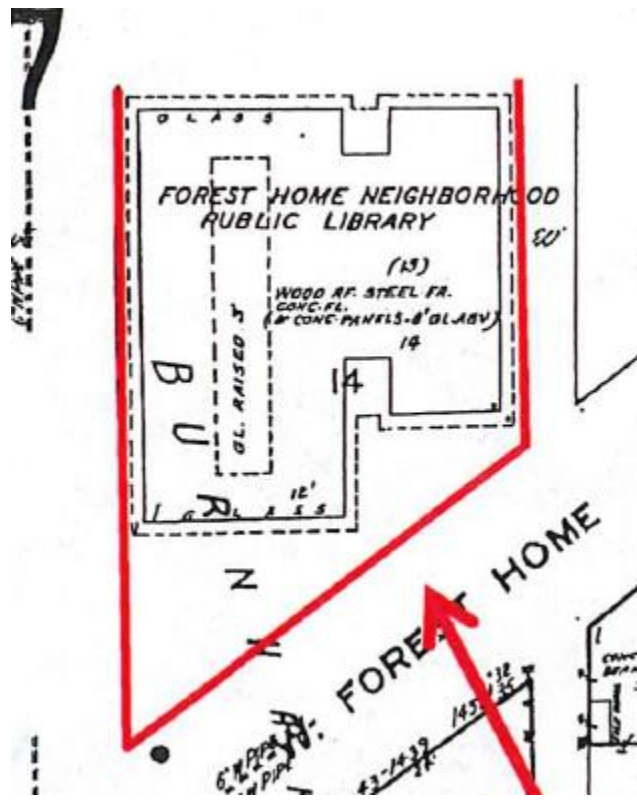
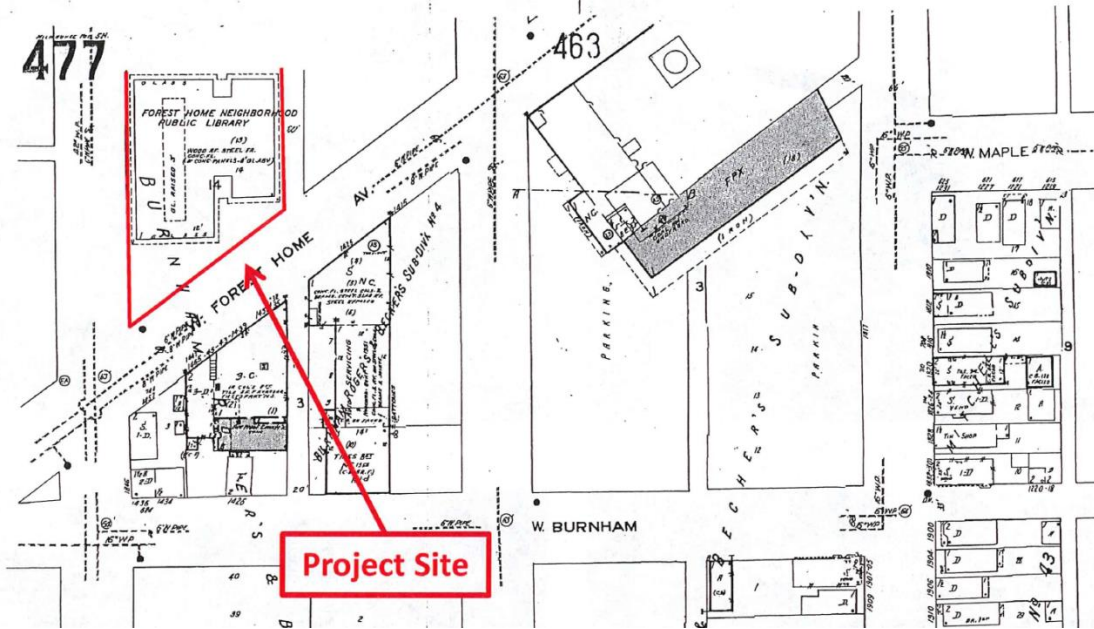
5. Additions

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.

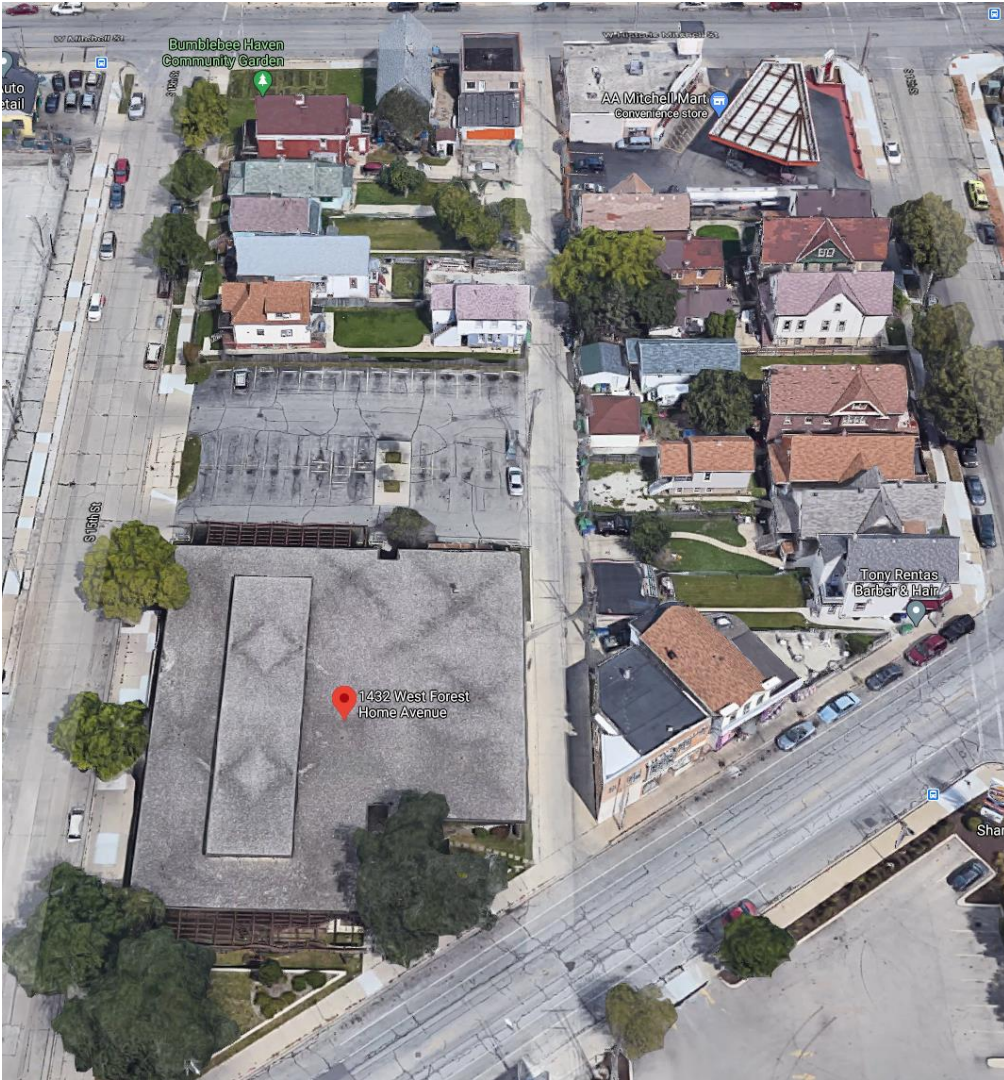




1969 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map  
1432 W. Forest Home Ave, Milwaukee, WI

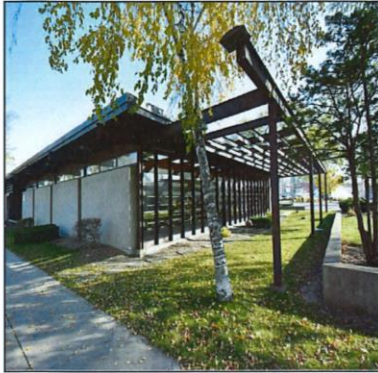






**Summaries of AIA Directory Entries:**

**Commercial Property Listing**  
**1432 West Forest Home Avenue**  
**Historic Mitchell Street Neighborhood**



**LISTING PRICE: \$650,000**

**Building:** 14,500 SF built in 1966 (former library)

**Lot Area:** 41,948 SF with on-site parking

**Zoning:** LB2, Local Business

Assessor records, photographs and environmental data on website at [www.city.milwaukee.gov/CRE](http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/CRE)

**BUYER DEVELOPMENT OBLIGATIONS**

- Restore building in a timely manner. Preserve existing building and structural elements. Maintain clear glazing along street frontages.
- Landscape parking lot (MCO Ch. 295-405). Additional landscape requirements may apply and need City approval before closing. Preserve existing trees and landscaping to the greatest degree feasible.

**POTENTIAL COMMERCIAL USES**

- Office, retail, bank, restaurant, business or personal services, recording studio, medical or dental office, catering.
  - **Note:** Property must be taxable and some uses may need BOZA approval
- Proposals will not be accepted for the following uses: Day care, principal use parking lot, pawn shop, automobile (sales, service and parts), cigarette or cigar shop, gun shop, liquor store, payday or auto-title loan store, medical service facility or other uses prohibited by zoning.

**POTENTIAL RESOURCES**

- **Facade Grants:** [www.city.milwaukee.gov/facade](http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/facade)
- **Retail Investment Fund:** [www.city.milwaukee.gov/rif](http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/rif)
- **White Box Program:** [www.milwaukee.gov/whitebox](http://www.milwaukee.gov/whitebox)
- **Focus on Energy Promotions:** [www.energystar.gov/rebate-finder](http://www.energystar.gov/rebate-finder)
- **Business Financing:** may be available through Milwaukee Economic Development Corp: [www.MEDOnline.com](http://www.MEDOnline.com)

**CITY SALE CONDITIONS:**

- Submittals evaluated on price, prospective use, impact on the business community and adjoining neighborhood, extent & quality of renovations, contribution to tax base and financial viability.
- Acceptance contingent on City Plan Commission and Common Council approval. Earnest money of 5% may be of price required within 10 days of approval. Uses requiring City licenses will have concurrent Council consideration with the sale authorization; BOZA approval will be obtained, if necessary, prior to Common Council action. Start-up businesses may submit a business plan.
- Buyer to execute City Commercial Purchase & Sale Agreement after Council approval at [www.milwaukee.gov/CommercialBuildings](http://www.milwaukee.gov/CommercialBuildings)
- Conveyance will be "as is, where is" by quit claim deed subject to restrictive covenants for performance, prohibitions for tax exemption, liquor license (except for restaurant with significant food component) and certain uses and reversion of title provision for non-compliance. A Performance Deposit may be required at closing.
- Closing contingent on firm financing and DCD approval of renovation and site plan, including any proposed building alterations.
- Buyers must not violate City Buyer Policies. See website at [www.city.milwaukee.gov/CRE](http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/CRE)
- Rehabilitation must be complete within twelve months following closing; Buyer to provide Certificate of Occupancy.

**Showings:** Contact Rhonda Szallai at (414)286-5674 or [rszall@milwaukee.gov](mailto:rszall@milwaukee.gov) for an appointment to view the property.

**Broker Commission:** If Buyer's Proposal Summary & Public Disclosure Statement was submitted to City by a Wisconsin-licensed real estate broker; City, at closing, agrees to pay Broker a commission of 5% of the purchase price. Seller shall not pay any broker commission if Buyer and Broker are same or related in any manner.

**Submittal:** 1) Completed "Proposal Summary" on the form available at [www.city.milwaukee.gov/CRE](http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/CRE)  
 2) Provide a detailed Scope of Work for renovation including a scaled rendering of the building identifying exterior building materials and site plan for construction.

Submit proposal to the Department of City Development - Real Estate Section, 809 North Broadway - 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Milwaukee, WI 53202 to the attention of Rhonda Szallai. **Proposals will be received and evaluated on a continuous basis.**

**Frederic “Fritz” von Grossmann**

B. March 3, 1904 (Minneapolis, MN)

**Education:** B. Arch from University of Minnesota 1928, M. Arch from Harvard Graduate School of Design 1932. First Medal Beaux Arts Institute of Design 1932. As of 1970, registered in Florida, Minnesota, & Wisconsin.

**Professional Experience:** Principal at Fritz Von Grossmann 1939-1955; [Von Grossmann partnered with Donald Grieb 1949-1952, when Grieb opened his own practice] Principal at Von Grossmann, Burroughs & Van Lanen 1956-67.

**Robert J Van Lanen**

B. May 14, 1914 (Milwaukee)

**Education:** South Division HS, Layton School of Art, UW-Milwaukee Beaux Arts Institute of Design

**Professional Experience:** Draftsman for Fitzhugh Scott; William G Herbst. US Army Corps of Engineering 1941-45. Joined von Grossmann’s firm in 1949, became partner in 1956.

**Charles Burroughs**

B. April 1, 1910 (Milwaukee)

**Education:** B. Arch University of Michigan 1936; UW-Milwaukee evening 1935-37. Albert Kahn Award 1933.

**Professional Experience:** Various Milwaukee firms & own practice 1936-41. Joins Von Grossmann Architects in 1946, becomes partner in 1956.

**TIMELINE of projects & firm evolution (incomplete)**

1932	Von Grossmann graduate from Harvard Graduate School of Design; Received First Medal from the Beaux Arts Institute of Design in New York
~1930’s	Von Grossmann served as State Architect for the Civil Works Administration in Pierre, SD [where he met his wife, Leanore (nee Dutch) Married in 1935]; Regional Architect of US Department of Agriculture Resettlement Administration in Lincoln, Neb.
1939	Von Grossmann starts his own practice
1940	Dar Vriesman House - Concrete Masonry Model Home in Whitefish Bay
1941	“Stone veneer and shingle siding home on N Grey Log Lane, Fox Point”
	Earl Karski House - “Modern style concrete masonry home” in Mequon
	F. W. Milke House - Colonial Revival on Riverview Rd.
1942	8 small home designs for Nodale Realty Co. [Honey Creek Dr. & Villard]
1946	Charles Burroughs joins Von Grossmann’s firm

1947-48	Von Grossmann designs & builds his own home at 6464 N Lake Dr. 1962 article: "some of the features he included...have become quite common to the residential architecture of the 1960's...the Von Grossmann home was truly ahead of its time."
1948-49	Consultant, Planning for Civic Center downtown [With Harry Bogner & Assoc.]
1949	Robert Van Lanen joins Von Grossmann's firm
	Fritz Von Grossmann is consultant / collaborator for City Civic Center Planning Project
1949-52	Von Grossman Partnership with Donald Grieb [Grieb opens his own practice in 1952]
1951	Kohl's Food Store design at 86th St and North Ave. (laminated wood arched trusses - "several innovations in both design and construction")
	95th Street School design at 95th and Metcalf
1952	Builders Department Store design at 4407 N Green Bay Rd
	Surety Savings & Loan offices at 71st and Center St
	Modern Home of WC Hermann in Elm Grove
1953	YMCA Building in Cudahy at E. Edgerton and S. Lake Dr
1954	Home Savings & Loan Office Building at 2805 W North Ave
	Smith Steel Workers Federal Labor Union Building at N 27th and Nash St
	Hopkins Savings & Loan Office Building at 7901 W Burleigh St
	Fritz Von Grossmann elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Wisconsin Architect's Association
1955	Equitable Life Assurance Office Building at N 17th and W Wisconsin (modular, reinforced concrete construction, prefabricated exterior glass and aluminum skin) completed 1956
1956	Greenfield Union High School at S 60th and W Layton Ave.
	State Masonic Headquarters at 1123 N Astor St. (Schomer Lichtner designed aluminum, stained glass, and colored plastic screen)
	December 1956 - Burroughs and Van Lanen become partners, creating Von Grossmann, Burroughs, and Van Lanen Architects

1957	Win Merit Award from Wisconsin AIA for Masonic Temple design
	Elm Grove Junior High School design (now Pilgrim Park Middle School) on N Pilgrim Parkway
1958	AO Smith Plant Addition to the firm's south automotive plant
	St. Peter's Church on Wauwatosa Ave in the Menomonee River Hills subdivision
	Allis-Chalmers Office Building on S 70th St
1958-59	Designs for unbuilt passenger-automobile pier at the lakefront near memorial center - "Milwaukee Harbor Terminal" at E Michigan and E Clybourn Sts.
1959	Office building (designed and owned by Von Grossmann & Wife Leanore) at 711 W Capitol Dr ("Building Planned to Fit Interchange")
1959-60	Gas Light Company Service Building designs (1 southside & 2 northside service centers) W Capitol & 176th St, S 35th & W Lincoln Ave, N Green Bay & W Silver Spring
1961	Arthur Andersen & Co Office Building at 795 N Van Buren (designed in consultation with Skidmore, Owings & Merrill) "Windowless Building Erected Here"
	Fritz Von Grossmann re-elected to second three-year term on the national board of governors of the School Facilities Council of Architecture, Education and industry
1962	Glendale Office Building along N Port Washington Rd - no interior columns, overlooks the Milwaukee River
1963	Von Grossmann, Burroughs & Van Lanen Architects receive TWO awards from the AIA WI: An Honor Award for Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod headquarters at 8100 W Capitol Dr. and a Merit Award for the Arthur Andersen & Co Office Building at 759 N Van Buren St
	Bolton Hall design for UW-Milwaukee
	Ripon High School - Burroughs Partner In Charge
	Masonic Temple in Wauwatosa at 4311 n 92nd St (sand colored brick and bedford stone, "style of King Solomon's Temple")
1964	North Shore Golf Course Clubhouse
	Louisa May Alcott Elementary School at 3563 S 97th St
1965	May 1965 - Fritz Von Grossmann awarded AIA Fellowship (alongside Karel

	<p>Yasko - former state architect. Yasko and Von Grossmann became the 5th and 6th architects from Wisconsin admitted to FAIA status)</p> <p>August 1965 - Von Grossmann sells his part in the firm to Burroughs (new president and treasurer &amp; Van Lanen (vice president and secretary); Von Grossmann remains as staff architect &amp; opens an architectural consultant office at his building at 711 W Capitol Dr. Firm Retained name "Von Grossmann, Burroughs, &amp; Van Lanen Architects"</p> <p>December 1965 - Von Grossmann, Burroughs &amp; Van Lanen's design for Nicolet High School selected for exhibition at Feb 1966 convention of the American Association of School Administrators; Von Grossmann invited to submit a design for International School Building Exhibit in July 1966</p>
1966	<p>Fritz Von Grossmann received Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra's Golden Baton Award "for exceptionally meritorious service to the symphony." Fritz &amp; Leanore led fund drives, member of Board of Directors</p> <p>Forest Home Library Opens at 1432 W Forest Home Ave</p>
1967	<p>Fritz Von Grossmann appointed to city staff in the Planning Department; "I think we should try to take the very expensive downtown land and put it to various uses, and we have to arrange for people to be here...closer to the downtown area."</p> <p>Forest Home Library receives Honor Award from WI AIA and Design Excellence Award from American Institute of Steel Construction</p>
1968	<p>Firm name changes from "Von Grossmann, Burroughs &amp; Van Lanen Architects" to "Burroughs &amp; Van Lanen Architects"</p>
1970	<p>Burroughs &amp; Van Lanen Architects design new Nazareth Church at 8242 N Granville Rd - relocated because Park East Freeway required demolition of former home of 75 years</p>
1972	<p>Robert Van Lanen elected to a two-year term on the Executive Board of Wisconsin AIA</p>
1977	<p>Fritz and Leanore Von Grossmann retire to Sarasota, FL</p>
1993	<p>Fritz Von Grossmann passes away</p>



**A. Purpose**

The purpose of this Historical Land Use Investigation (HLUI) of 1432 West Forest Home Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin is to identify potential environmental conditions associated with the property prior to it being listed for sale. For brevity and convenience, this property will be referred to as the “project site” unless noted otherwise.

**B. Brief Description**

The project site is located in the City of Milwaukee on a block bound by West Forest Home Avenue to the south, West Mitchell Street to the north, South 14<sup>th</sup> Street to the east, and South 15<sup>th</sup> Street to the west. The project site is developed with a one-story building and parking lot. **Figure 1** shows the general area including the project site, and **Figure 2** shows the project site dimensions. **Figure 3** shows a 2015 aerial photograph of the site.

The following table presents relevant information regarding the project site:

Address	Tax Key #	Building Size	Lot Size	Zoning*	Owner
1432 West Forest Home Avenue	4690488110	Not available	41940 ft <sup>2</sup>	LB2	City of Milwaukee Library

\*LB2 = Local Business District

**C. Historical References**

1. The Wright’s City Directories (1930-1990) and the Polk’s City Directories (1993-2015), reviewed in approximately five year increments indicate the following information for the project site:

Address	Date(s)	Occupancy
1728 S. 15 <sup>th</sup> St (680 10 <sup>th</sup> Ave)	1930-1965	Residential
	1970-2015	Not Listed
1732-34 S. 15 <sup>th</sup> St (682 10 <sup>th</sup> Ave)	1930-1965	Residential
	1970-2015	Not Listed
1736 S. 15 <sup>th</sup> St (684 10 <sup>th</sup> Ave)	1930-1965	Residential
	1970-2015	Not Listed
1740-42 S. 15 <sup>th</sup> St (686 10 <sup>th</sup> Ave)	1930-1965	Residential
	1970-2015	Not Listed
1744 S. 15 <sup>th</sup> St (688 10 <sup>th</sup> Ave)	1930	Grocer/Residential
	1935-1940	Vacant store
	1945-1965	Residential
	1970-2015	Not Listed
1804 S. 15 <sup>th</sup> St (694 10 <sup>th</sup> Ave)	1930-1965	Residential
	1970-2015	Not Listed
1808 S. 15 <sup>th</sup> St (696 10 <sup>th</sup> Ave)	1930-1965	Residential
	1970-2015	Not Listed
1428 W. Forest Home Ave (733B Forest Home Ave)	1930-1950	Residential
	1955	Home Café/Residential
	1960-1965	Helen’s Restaurant
	1970	Not Listed
1430 W. Forest Home Ave (733 ½ Forest Home Ave)	1930-1960	Residential
	1965	Vacant
	1970-2015	Not Listed

Historical Land Use Investigation  
 1432 West Forest Home Avenue, Milwaukee, WI

Address	Date(s)	Occupancy
1432 W. Forest Home Ave	1930-1965	Not Listed
	1970-2015	Milwaukee Public Library – Forest Home Branch
1434 W. Forest Home Ave (733A Forest Home Ave)	1930-1965	Groth Seed Co.
	1970-2015	Not Listed
1436 W. Forest Home Ave (735 ½ Forest Home Ave)	1930-1965	Residential
	1970-2015	Not Listed
1440 W. Forest Home Ave (735 Forest Home Ave)	1930-1935	Sporting Goods/Residential
	1940-1955	Cook School Supplies
	1960	Vacant
	1965	Barco Appliance Service, Inc.
	1970-2015	Not Listed
1442 W. Forest Home Ave (739 Forest Home Ave)	1930	Clothes cleaner/Residential
	1935	Vacant
	1940-1945	Residential/Shoe Repair
	1950-1955	Residential/Forest Home Cycle Shop
	1960-2015	Not Listed
1444 W. Forest Home Ave (741 Forest Home Ave)	1930-1935	Vacant
	1940-1965	Residential
	1970-2015	Not Listed
1446 W. Forest Home Ave (743 Forest Home Ave)	1930	Soft drink shop/Residential
	1935	Vacant
	1940-1945	Residential/Beauty Salon
	1950	Residential/The Mossler Co. (children's furniture)
	1955	Residential/A+J Sales Co. (furniture)
	1960-1965	Residential/Forest Home Furniture, Inc.
	1970-2015	Not Listed
<i>*The historical address of 1812 South 15<sup>th</sup> Street was reviewed and no listings were identified</i>		

2. Select Department of Neighborhood Services (DNS) records indicate the following information regarding the project site:

Address	Date	Comments
1728 S. 15 <sup>th</sup> St	5/17/1965	Plumbing; Use: Wrecked; Owner: B. Hillier
1732 S. 15 <sup>th</sup> St	5/12/1965	Plumbing; Use: Wrecked; Owner: B. Hillier
1736 S. 15 <sup>th</sup> St	5/12/1965	Plumbing; Use: Wrecked; Owner: B. Hillier
1740-42 S. 15 <sup>th</sup> St	5/25/1918	Addition: Garage; Owner: Fred Reimke
	4/16/1925	Addition: Garage; Owner: John Julga; Remarks: Must be 10' from any dwelling
	9/10/1948	Alterations: Repair brick siding; Owner: Edward Jablonski; Use: Dwelling
	5/17/1965	Plumbing; Use: Wrecked; Owner: B. Hillier
1744 S. 15 <sup>th</sup> St	5/17/1965	Plumbing; Use: Wrecked; Owner: B. Hillier
1804 S. 15 <sup>th</sup> St	8/11/1965	Plumbing; Use: Wrecked; Owner: D.B. Onnest
1432 W. Forest Home Ave	11/16/1961	Exc. Foundations; Owner: City of Milwaukee; Use: Library
	12/15/1965	Electrical; Owner: City of Milwaukee Public Library
	2/18/1966	Install unfired pressure vessels; Owner: Milwaukee Public Library

Historical Land Use Investigation  
 1432 West Forest Home Avenue, Milwaukee, WI

Address	Date	Comments
	3/23/1966	Build: 1-story library; Owner: City of Milwaukee
	6/14/1966	Install gas burner: 1-2,650,000 BTU gas burner
	12/12/1966	Occupancy: Neighborhood library; Owner: City of Milwaukee; Former: New construction
	5/22/1973	Electrical: Open signs to be installed inside building; Owner: Milwaukee Public Library
	6/24/1982	Alterations: Window remodeling; Owner: Milwaukee County
	10/14/1982	Electrical: Building automation system; Owner: Milwaukee Public Library
	1/24/1990	Electrical: Install energy saving ballast and camp retrofit; Owner: City of Milwaukee
	6/30/1996	Letter to building inspector: Asbestos to be removed and spray will re-apply insulating material; Asbestos abatement
	10/12/1999	Electrical; Occupant: Milwaukee Public Library; Owner: Milwaukee County
	1/8/2001	Alteration; Owner: Milwaukee Public Library
	4/16/10	Electrical; Owner: City of Milwaukee Library
	9/25/2014	Asbestos Project; Owner: City of Milwaukee Library
	8/4/2016	Service request: Graffiti near said location
1434 W. Forest Home Ave	10/16/1916	Alterations: Shed, not to be used as garage; Owner: Geo. Herbst
	2/27/1923	Alterations: Underpin; Owner: Chas. E. Groth
	11/7/1923	Alterations: Alter store; Owner: Chas. E. Groth
	11/17/1925	Additions: addition of concrete, frame and glass; Owner: Chas. E. Groth
	5/3/1956	Building inspection letter: Building unfit for any occupancy or use, tear down and remove
	3/12/1965	Wrecking: Raze building; Owner: D.P.W.
1436-1440 W. Forest Home Ave	3/12/1885	Alterations: Move present building and build another story under present timbers
	4/6/1908	Alterations: Underpin building; Owner: A. Bandemore
	5/25/1915	Alterations: Underpin building
	10/19/1921	Addition: Storage shed; Owner: W. D. Cook
	4/21/1924	Addition: Addition to rear; Owner: W. D. Cook
	7/19/1932	Alteration: Alter store front, new brick front; Owner: W. D. Cook
	5/14/1940	Alteration: Insulate brick siding; Owner: W. D. Cook
	10/1/1953	Alteration: Apply 5/8" insulated asphalt siding; Owner: Elma Cook
	8/30/1956	Occupy: A.J. Furniture Sales Co., retail furniture sales and display room; Former: Candy shop; Owner: Elma Cook
	9/12/1960	Occupy: Barco Appliance Service, appliance service and parts; Former: Alma Cook; Former: Book store
	12/21/1961	Electrical: Gas boiler and pump; Use: Dwelling; Owner: W. Cook
	8/11/1965	Plumbing: Wrecked; Owner: D. B. Onnest
1442 W. Forest Home Ave	4/19/1904	Alterations: Build addition; Owner: A. Bandemore
	9/23/1936	Alterations: Underpin rear 1-story for addition; Owner: W. D. Cook
	4/26/1937	Occupy: 1 <sup>st</sup> floor, shoe repair shop; Former: Same; Other occupancies: 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor apartment; Owner: W. D. Cook
	9/27/1946	Occupy: 1 <sup>st</sup> floor, retail sales & repairing of bicycles and tricycles; Former: Shoe repair shop; Owner: W. D. Cook
	7/23/1954	Alterations: Alter store front, change windows; Owner: Alma Cook

#### D. Sanborn Maps

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps indicate the following information regarding the project site:

1. A 1910 (*with updates through 1937*) Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the project site developed with multiple buildings. On the northern half of the project site, from lots 8 through 12, on the western side of the lots are five buildings, four dwellings and one store. The dwellings are all one-story buildings, with the dwellings on lots 9 and 11 containing basements, and the shop is two stories. The western side of the project site on the northern half contains 10 buildings, with dwellings on lots 9 and 12. All are one-story buildings except the northeastern-most building, which is a two-story stable. The buildings marked as sheds on lots 9 and 12 also have addresses attached to them. On the southern half of the project site, the western half of the project site has 12 buildings. In the northwestern corner of the southern half of the project site there are two two-story dwellings, while on the southern side of the lot facing Forest Home Avenue there are four two-story stores. The store with the 735 address has a one-story building attached to its northeastern side, and a two-story building attached to its northern side. Directly north of it, there is a one-and-a-half-story dwelling, while the two stores directly to the west of it is attached a one-story building. On the eastern side of the southern half of the project site there are three dwellings and each are one-story buildings. The area along 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue (later South 15<sup>th</sup> Street and South 14<sup>th</sup> Street, respectively) is developed mostly with residential buildings, while along Forest Home Avenue the area is developed with more commercial buildings.
2. A 1910 (*with updates through 1951*) Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the project site developed with multiple buildings. Along the western side of the northern half of the project site, lots 8 through 12, there are five buildings, each one residential. Lot 8 contains a one-and-a-half-story dwelling, lot 9 contains a two-story dwelling, lot 10 contains a one-story dwelling, lot 11 contains a two-story flat and lot 12 contains a one-story dwelling. On the eastern side of the northern half of the project site, there are seven buildings, each one a one-story garage, except for on lot 12 which is a two-story flat and lot 10 which also contains a one-story dwelling. On the southern half of the project site, on the western-most edge of the project site are two two-story dwellings and two one-story garages just south of them. Along the southern edge of the project site, on the western half are four two-story stores. As in the previous map, the eastern store has two buildings attached to it, a one-story building on its northeastern side and a two-story building on its northern side. Just north of the same building is a one-and-a-half story dwelling, and just north of the dwelling is a one-story garage. The two stores just to the west of the previously mentioned store continues to have a one-story building attached to them as well. The eastern half of the southern half of the project site now has four buildings. The two buildings on the eastern side of the project site are two dwellings. The dwelling in the northeast of the southern half is a one-story dwelling, and the dwelling in the southeast of the southern half is a one-and-a-half-story dwelling. The building in the southwestern corner of the southern half of the project site is a one-story store, while directly north of the store is a one-story garage. Similar to the previous map, the areas along South 15<sup>th</sup> Street and South 14<sup>th</sup> Street are mostly residential, though West Mitchell Street is now heavily commercial. The area along West Forest Home Avenue continues to be mostly commercial as well.

3. A 1910 (*with updates through 1969*) Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the project site developed with a one-story building labeled "Forest Home Neighborhood Public Library". The northern half of the project site is now labeled "Parking", with the southern half of the project site being developed with the glass and steel framed building. The area along West Forest Home Avenue continues to be developed with commercial buildings, though in this map there are more lots labeled "Parking". As before, the areas along South 15<sup>th</sup> Street and South 14<sup>th</sup> Street are more residential in nature, and West Mitchell Street is heavily developed with commercial buildings, with a few residential developments as well.

#### **E. Environmental Records**

1. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), Bureau of Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) does not include listings for the project site.
2. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection (DATCP) online database does not include tank listings for the project site.
3. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), the project site is not located in a floodplain.
4. According to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory, wetlands are not identified within the project site.
5. According to the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's (SEWRPC) Environmental Corridors Map, the project site is not located within an environmental corridor.

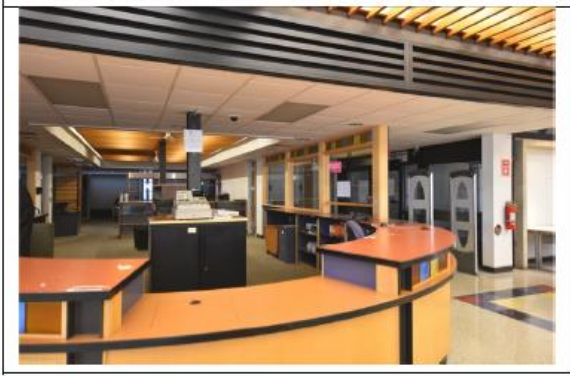
#### **F. Project Site Inspection**

City staff conducted a site inspection on November 1, 2017. The project site was observed to be developed with a one-story building previously used as a library, and a paved parking lot. The building was observed to have a partial basement in the northeastern corner of the building. The northwestern and southwestern walls of the building were made of glass, with concrete and glass material being used for the frame of the rest of the building. The pavement in the parking lot was in good condition, and there was a lamppost near the middle of the parking lot. **Attachment A** includes photographs from the site inspection.

#### **G. Findings and Conclusion**

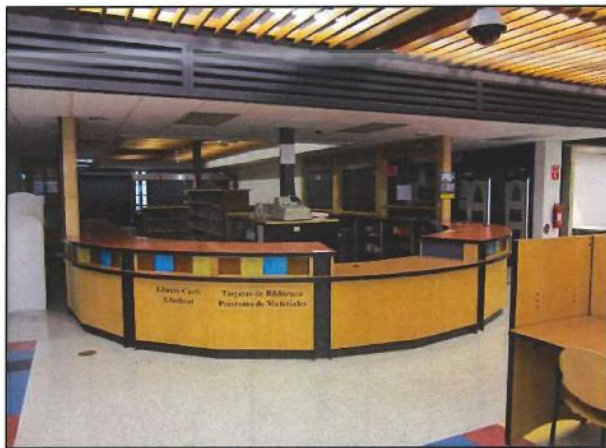
This Historical Land Use Investigation did not reveal potential environmental conditions. The available historical information does not warrant a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) of 1432 West Forest Home Avenue at this time.

MR/KK  
City of Milwaukee  
December 14, 2017

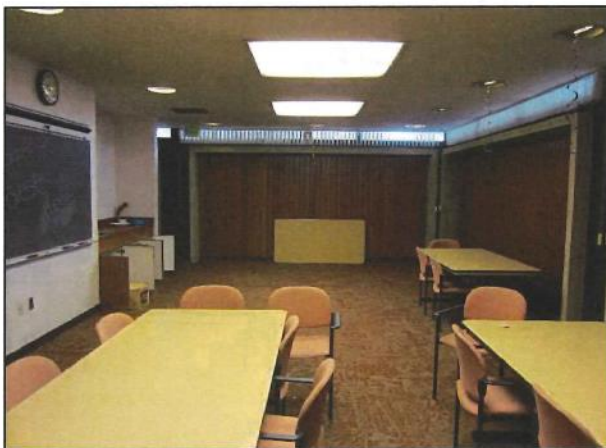




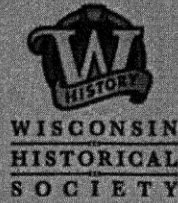
Western side of project site, looking south



Central area of building, looking east



Conference room in the south of the project site



Mr. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Milwaukee, WI 53207

August 15, 2018

Dear Mr. K [REDACTED]

We have received your recent National Register Questionnaire submittal regarding the **Forest Home Library** in the city of **Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin**. Based on the information provided we believe the property may be individually eligible for listing in the State and National Register of Historic Places. It would be eligible under Criterion C, locally significant in the area of Architecture as a very good example of Modern style architecture, designed by architect Robert Van Lanen and whose design won an A.I.A. Honor Award.

The library might also be eligible under Criterion A in the area of Education for its role as a library; however, more research is needed to make an argument for eligibility in this area.

You should realize that this is only a preliminary opinion based on the information supplied to us. The full nomination, should you decide to proceed, requires substantially more information. Nomination of a property to the State Register or National Register can be extremely demanding to those uninitiated to the process. That is why we strongly suggest that individuals secure the services of an experienced consultant before attempting to complete a nomination. I have enclosed a list of people who have expressed interest in preparing nominations and who have recently successfully completed nominations in Wisconsin.

Thank you for your interest in our program. If you have any questions, regarding the State Register or the National Register in Wisconsin, I can be reached at (608) 264-6501 or by e-mail at [peggy.veregin@wisconsinhistory.org](mailto:peggy.veregin@wisconsinhistory.org).

Sincerely,

Peggy Veregin  
National Register Coordinator

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