



Burnham-Zube House 1636 W. National Ave

PERMANENT
HISTORIC DESIGNATION REPORT
CCF 230570
SEPTEMBER 2023

BURNHAM-ZUBE HOUSE

HISTORIC DESIGNATION REPORT

AND PRESERVATION GUIDELINES

SEPTEMBER 2023

PROPERTY NAME

Historic: Burnham-Zube House

LOCATION

Address: 1636 W. National Ave. (old 760 & 778 National Ave)

Legal Description: Lands in SE ¼ Sec 31-7-22 (Betw W Pierce St – S 16th St- W National Ave & 363' W of S 16th St) E 50' of W 100' EXC N 185' Approx.

Classification: Site

NOMINATION DETAILS

Owner: Clarke Square Neighborhood Initiative Inc.

Nominator: Patricia T. Najera

Alderperson: Ald. Jose Perez, 12th District

BUILDING DATA

YEAR BUILT Unknown

ARCHITECTS Unknown

STYLE Italianate

DESCRIPTION

The Burnham-Zube House is a 1-1/2 story, cream brick, cross-gable roofed, L-shaped Italianate cottage located along the northern side of West National Avenue, approximately 280 feet west of S. Cesar E. Chavez Drive in the Clarke Square neighborhood. The house sits on a raised cream brick foundation with two-course brick water table. The property is approximately 50 feet wide by 200 feet long, or 0.23 acres in size, and located approximately one and a half miles from the Central Business District. The house is located in the southeast portion of the property, with a large wooded rear yard. The house is setback 18 feet from the W. National Ave. right of way, with a stone retaining wall located a few feet behind the sidewalk. A paver stone driveway is located along the west property line. The house is located between a 1970 three-story apartment complex to the east and a 1966 three-story hotel property to the west.

The asymmetrical front façade of the Burnham-Zube House faces south towards National Avenue. The façade has three bays in the front gable and two in the recessed ell. The primary entrance is located on the easternmost bay and features a four-panel door with rounded two-light transom. Two two-over-four windows make up the other two bays on the first story of the front gabled portion of the façade. A rounded two-over-four double-hung sash with a shorter profile is located in the center of the second story gable. The door and windows on this façade all feature prominent brick hoods. Decorative scroll-cut filigrees are installed above each of the windows on the front gable. A wooden plaque with the name “The Sanctuary” and crossed arms in front of a large letter T is attached to the west side of the façade. The recessed front ell section has a secondary entrance with a four-panel wood door and two-over-four double-hung sash window with two two-panel shutters. Both the door and window in the ell have segmental arches. All windows on this façade have a narrow stone sill. The roofline has a wide unadorned cornice. The roof is sheathed with red architectural shingles and a chimney with corbelled cream brick cap protrudes slightly to the west of the front gabled.

The west façade consists of a primary gabled block and a one-story cream brick addition to the south. The gabled portion of the west elevation of the house continues the fenestration of the south façade, with three bays on the first level and one centered window bay in the second level. There is a four-panel wood door with two-light rounded transom windows in the southernmost bay of the gabled block with two rounded two-over-four double-hung windows. The first floor windows have two-panel shutters and the upper window has a louvered shutter. The southern addition has a centered rounded window bay with a one-over-one double-hung window. Decorative scroll-cut filigrees are installed above each of the windows on the gabled section. Large brick hoods are prominent over all bays on the façade. The brick foundation is partially exposed, with a brick water table and segmental arch basement windows covered with plywood. The entrance is on a raised wood platform on brick piers with a simple wood railing.

The east façade is a more utilitarian, with two segmental arch window openings with two one-over-one double-hung sash windows. Because of foliage and the proximity to the apartment building to the east, this façade is not visible from the right of way.

The north (rear) façade is composed of the protruding one-story addition west of a recessed entry porch with a shed roof. The porch is slightly raised with a 2x4 floor on a concrete block footing. The shed roof is held by paired 4x4 posts with wood lattice in the openings. There are two segmental arch windows facing north in the gabled portion and one segmental arch window facing east in the addition. A four-panel wood door is in the far easternmost bay with a simple rectangular three-light transom and three-light sidelight. The door also has a segmental arch. A segmental arched two-over-four window is centered in the gable of the upper story. The dates 1876 and 1995 are carved into two bricks located to the right of the back door.

A stone chapel constructed in 1983 is located behind the house. The chapel is a modest, front-gabled structure with unadorned wood doors. Two Corinthian capitals taken from an unidentified demolished Milwaukee building flank the entry doors. A large stone lintel is above the entry. Wood rafter ends protrude from the roofline above the capitals. The south and east façades each feature two narrow stained glass windows. The south façade has two narrow stained glass

windows and a larger, boarded opening on the east. The roofline has a simple wood cornice and moderate overhang. The roof is sheathed with weathered asbestos shingles. A circa 1901 Wells Street bridge tender's house was relocated to the rear of the Burnham-Zube House in 1985 but has recently been razed. The stone foundation piers remain behind the house.

HISTORY

The Burnham-Zube House is located in the northeastern portion of the Clarke Square neighborhood, roughly bounded by Pierce Street to the north, Cesar Chavez Drive to the east, Layton Boulevard to the west, and Greenfield Avenue to the south, in what had historically been the city's Eighth Ward. The property is located on W. National Avenue, a primary east-west route on the city's South Side. The areas east of Muskego Road (now S. 16th Street/S. Cesar E. Chavez Dr.) in Walker's Point developed first as one of the city's three original settlements. Large, more rural tracks of land west of Muskego Road developed much later, with Clarke's Addition being the first platted section west of Walker's Point in 1858.¹ Prior to the Civil War, the area primarily consisted of farms, speculative land, and workers cottages for Menomonee Valley laborers.

The Burnham-Zube House property is on West National Avenue. The street, formerly known as Mukwonago Plank Road and Elizabeth Street, is located on top of a large bluff that leads down to the Menomonee River and Menomonee River Valley. The deep bands of glacial clay located along the south bluff of the river valley provided ample and high-quality material for the production of Milwaukee's Cream City Brick.

The property containing the Burnham-Zube House had changed hands numerous times between when it was first purchased by Calvin Harmon in 1835 and when George Burnham purchased the property and adjacent lands in 1848. Evidence suggests that there was a homestead on the property when Burnham purchased the land, though the exact date of construction of the first section of the house has not been determined. Architectural historian Richard W. E. Perrin examined the Burnham-Zube House in the mid-1980s and found evidence that the earliest portion of the house consisted of a one-room building with a sleeping loft likely dating to the 1830s.² Evidence suggests George Burnham enlarged the one-room structure following his purchase of the property and constructed a larger upper level with new roof. The Burnham additions to the cottage created a modified Georgian floor plan with T-shaped back staircase. Exterior and interior detailing was done in the Gothic Revival style.³ As Architectural Historian Gail Klein notes in the *Determination of Eligibility Form* for the Burnham-Zube House:

¹ Milwaukee Department of City Development, *Built In Milwaukee: An Architectural View of the City* (Milwaukee: City of Milwaukee, Department of City Development, 1983), 178.

² Frederick Zube House, property site file, Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office, Madison, WI (accessed August 2023).

³ Ibid.

“The approximate date of the building’s expansion, as identified by Perrin, coincided with the period in which Burnham acquired the parcel. Evidence of board and batten siding found beneath the existing brick veneer and fragments of interior wall and ceiling treatment suggests that this early addition may have been Gothic Revival in style – a popular cottage aesthetic of the time. Evidence of Burnham’s association with the property consists of land sale records and historic maps; this information, along with the age of the building’s structural framing and Burnham’s listed address (“north side of Elizabeth Road [National Avenue], west of Muskego Road [16th Street]”) in city directories prior to 1869 indicates that the house was the early residence of George Burnham.”⁴

By 1869, Burnham’s wealth afforded him the ability to construct a much larger Italianate house (no longer extant) at 832 Elizabeth Street (later renumbered 793 National Avenue, now approximately 1717 W. National Avenue) just south and west of the cottage. Around the time Burnham moved to his new residence, he “modernized” the cottage by applying a cream brick veneer in the then-popular Italianate style. The rounded windows and door openings were added at this time, as was a full-length porch. The exterior ornamentation applied during this time, with the exception of the front porch, are still present on the house today. It is likely that the orientation of the house was changed at this time. Previously, the front of the house was oriented north towards Burnham’s brickyards. However, following the remodeling, the front of the house was oriented south towards Elizabeth Street (National Avenue). Burnham subsequently used the cottage as a rental property for a number of years.

Sometime between 1874-1876 the cottage was moved approximately 100’ to the east onto property owned by Frederick Zube. Zube was born in Germany and came to America around 1860. By 1870, he was living in Milwaukee and working as a laborer and foreman at the George Burnham and Jonathan L. Burnham brickyards. City directories list Zube intermittently in the 1870s but identify him as living on Pierce Street east of Burnham’s brickyard and at J.L. Burnham’s brickyard. In 1873, he purchased an unimproved quarter acre of property east of the Burnham property along National Avenue. As Architectural Historian Gail Klein describes, research suggests Burnham gifted his previous house to Zube:

“At the time, Zube was employed as the teamster foreman at Burnham’s prosperous brickyard; historic maps and tax rolls suggest that the first Burnham house (the subject property) was moved approximately 100 feet to its current location on Zube’s lot between 1874 and 1876 (at about the same time, George Burnham’s brother Jonathan, who owned his own brickyard, constructed a home for his foreman as a means of quelling potential labor unrest; George Burnham may have provided this home to his own foreman for similar reasons).”⁵

⁴ Gail Klein, “*Determination of Eligibility Form: Burnham-Zube House.*”

⁵ Ibid.

Zube had the house set on a Cream City Brick foundation and had a basement partially dug following the relocation. Zube sold the property to real estate investor Patrick H. Archer in 1889 and the property was subsequently used as a rooming house for laborers and employees of the nearby brickyards. Archer sold the property in 1892 to Charles M. Kropp.

Charles Moritz Kropp was born in Westfalia, Germany in 1850 and arrived in the United States in 1880. He married Caroline Mussmann in Milwaukee in 1887 and subsequently had four children – Alma (1888-1958), Charlotte (1891-1985), Charles Jr. (1899-1969), and Louise (1902-1973). Charles Sr. worked as a flour salesman and later as a right of way agent for the telephone company. In approximately 1901, Kropp had the rear (norch) porch enclosed and a kitchen with indoor plumbing added. A 20'x20' garage was constructed behind the house in 1922. In 1923, Kropp added a framed, stucco-clad addition to the north of the house, adding four rooms and a bathroom. Following Charles' death in 1923, Caroline continued to live in the house and began to let rooms to boarders. City directories list her at the address with furnished rooms.

Alma Kropp Habermeyer (wid. Albert) briefly lived in the property and operating a boarding house following her mother Caroline's death in 1940. By the mid-1940s, Alma's sister Charlotte (Lottie) and her husband Theodore Alwin Boese (1888-1946) and son Theodore Jr. (1918-1955) lived in the house. Charlotte continued living in the house following the deaths of her husband and son. In 1956, she had the stucco addition resided with asphalt siding. City directories indicate she ran a boarding house at the property through the late-1970s.

The property was sold to John Paul Ranieri (also known as Jean Paul Ranieri aka Brother John Paul) and his partner Jeff Hicks (1940-2022) in fall 1977. Ranieri was born to a wealthy family on Long Island in 1949. He became addicted to drugs as a teenager and worked as a prostitute to support his drug habit. In 1973, he met Hicks in New York and Hicks helped Ranieri through drug withdrawal and the two years to recovery.⁶ Ranieri followed Hicks, who worked at the Milwaukee Repertory Theater, back to Milwaukee where he experienced a religious awakening. Following their purchase of the property, which they renamed "The Sanctuary," they opened their home to the city's homeless and/or LGBTQ population.⁷ At "The Sanctuary," the pair not only "provided shelter to men, women, and children, they have provided food and clothing; coordinated efforts with various shelters, including Guest House, Hope House, Salvation Army and Open Gate."⁸

⁶ "An Unlikely Saint in a Sinner's Garb," *Milwaukee Journal*, March 20, 1983.

⁷ Gail Klein, "Determination of Eligibility Form: Burnham-Zube House."

⁸ "Sharing a World of Difference: PrideFest 1997," PrideFest Council & Havlicek & Associates, 1997, https://wislgbthistory.com/organiz/act_pol/pride/97-prideguide.pdf (accessed August 30, 2023).

The pair undertook extensive renovations to the house, including raising the 1920s rear addition, cleaning the masonry, removing the front porch, rebuilding the central chimney to its 1870s appearance, adding scroll-cut filigrees above the windows, and replacing the one-over-one windows with period-correct two-over-four double-hung sash windows. The stone chapel was constructed in the back yard beginning in 1983 using material salvaged from the demolition of historic Milwaukee buildings. The former Wells Street bridge keeper's house was relocated behind the house in 1985 for use as an art studio.⁹

Ranieri and Hicks pursued local historic designation of the house in 1985 but the item was held by the Historic Preservation Commission and no other action was taken at that time. They also inquired with the State Historical Society about listing the house on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992 but it does not appear a registration form was ever completed. The pair also applied for local designation of a historic district encompassing the original Calvin Harmon farmstead in 2000 but that request did not move forward because of an incomplete application. Ranieri and Hicks continued "The Sanctuary" until Ranieri's death in 2000. Hicks continued to live at the property until 2021, when it was sold to the Clarke Square Neighborhood Initiative for future use as their office.¹⁰

George Burnham

George Burnham (1816-1889) was born to parents Andrus and Phebe *Roberts* Burnham on his father's farm in Plattsburgh, Clinton County, New York on July 18, 1816. His brother and future business partner, Jonathan, was born there in 1818. George learned the brickmaking trade from his father and at age 15 took his craft to Buffalo, New York. He married Barbara Grider there in 1843 before departing for Milwaukee with his brother Jonathan in July of that year. Following their arrival in Milwaukee, George and Phebe had four children: Phoebe (1844-1914), Charles T. (1847-1908), John Q. (1849-1911), and Daniel G. (1854-1890).

Once in Milwaukee, George and John L. partnered in the manufacturing of brick as the Burnham Brothers Brick Company. They first rented a tract of land from brick maker, James H. Rogers, at the foot of 13th Street in the Menomonee Valley in spring 1844 before later renting land at Grand Avenue for three years and on Spring Street for one season in 1847. In 1847, they moved south of the Menomonee River, with the purchase of a vast 150-acre tract at Park Street (now W. Bruce Street), west of Muskego Avenue.

The Burnham Brothers' brick manufacturing business quickly excelled at their new South Side location. Aided by their employee and local master carpenter, Stoddard Martin, the Burnhams created the first practical steam-powered machine that ground and tempered

⁹ "Old Bridge House Finds a New Home," *Milwaukee Journal*, March 31, 1985.

¹⁰ Bobby Tanzilo, "Clarke Square Neighborhood Initiative buys cream city brickmaker's historic home," *OnMilwaukee*, August 18, 2021, <https://onmilwaukee.com/articles/burnham-house> (accessed August 31, 2023).

the clay used to make brick, and simultaneously molded the bricks. Prior to their invention, clay was mixed using a horse-powered tempering wheel before being molded by hand. With use of their invention, the Burnham brothers were able to manufacture brick much more cheaply and quickly than their competitors. The machine also “brought them a revenue of one thousand dollars for each machine sold, netting them a large sum.”¹¹

The Burnham Brothers had by far the largest brick manufacturing facility in Milwaukee by 1853, with six million bricks produced annually by that year. Their product was used in abundance in Milwaukee and its environs but also found a successful market outside of Southeastern Wisconsin. Two million bricks were exported between Chicago and Michigan in 1853, with another 300,000 that year going to New York City for use in a “Deaf and Dumb Asylum.”¹²

George and Jonathan L. dissolved their partnership through “mutual consent” in 1856 but continued to operate adjacent to each other on the south side of the Menomonee River Valley. In 1867, George Burnham and employee Gaylord Martin patented an “improved” machine that again revolutionized the brick manufacturing business by grounding, tempering, and molding the clay by steam power. An 1867 *Milwaukee Sentinel* article described the machine:

The clay is thrown into the machine, and all stones prevented from intermixing with it by a guard. Each revolution of the shaft moulds eighteen bricks, half a dozen being stamped by each mould. The bricks, which are taken from the machine by a self-acting moving carriage, are conveyed to the yard on trucks. One machine will make from 3,000 to 4,000 bricks an hour – the greatest capacity ever attained by any machine ever put in successful operation. ... It is noteworthy that no brick maker who has examined this machine has left the foundry without ordering one or more.¹³

Burnham brought his sons Charles T. and John Q. into the firm in 1870 and 1871 respectively and operated as George Burnham & Sons. By 1881, the firm had become the largest in the world, producing 15 million bricks per year and employing over 200 men.¹⁴

Outside of the brick manufacturing business, George Burnham was active in municipal projects and civil service. Burnham was instrumental in constructing the Mukwonago Plank Road (now W. National Ave.) in the 1850s, providing a route for goods and services

¹¹ Howard Louis Conard, *History of Milwaukee County From Its First Settlement to the Year 1895*, vol. 2 (Chicago: American Biographical Publishing Company, 1895), 324.

¹² “Milwaukee Industrial Establishments,” *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, 28 September 1853.

¹³ “Milwaukee Brick Machine,” *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, 18 April 1867.

¹⁴ “George Burnham: 1816-1889,” Wisconsin Historical Society, <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Article/CS5945> (accessed August 23, 2023).

from Mukwonago and Big Bend to Milwaukee.¹⁵ He later helped construct a portion of the Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad through the Menomonee Valley and promoted a number of other civic improvement projects, including constructing canals, including one that bears his name, in the Menomonee Valley. Additionally, he served as a trustee and director of the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company and served as a member of the Milwaukee school and water commission.¹⁶ Burnham had extensive real estate holdings, including timber lands in Michigan and Wisconsin, coal mines and railroads in Iowa, iron lands in Texas, and silver mines in Utah. In 1871, he invested in a subdivision south of Mitchell Street, naming one of the streets for himself.¹⁷

George Burnham died on March 2, 1889 after a protracted bout of pneumonia. At the time of his death, his estate was valued at over two million dollars. The family business continued following George's death, with sons Charles T. and John Q. once again bringing back the Burnham Brothers business name. The branched out into hardwood lumber and added additional brick yards at the corner of S. Howell Ave. and E. Potter Ave. in Bay View and near N. 50th and Watertown Plank Road (now W. State St.) in Wauwatosa. Charles T. rebranded the business as the Milwaukee Building Supply Company and continued on with that business into the 1920s. Charles T.'s children, Charles L. and George E. joined their uncle John Q. to once again incorporate the Burnham Brothers Brick Company in 1909.¹⁸ The business handled the manufacturing, wholesaling, buying, and selling of brick, and also handled personal property, real estate, bonds and securities. The supply of clay in Milwaukee had been depleted by the 1920s and the company produced a common red brick from their brickyards in Carrollville, Wisconsin (now part of Oak Creek). Following the death of George E. in 1929, the 85-year old business ceased operations and three generations of Burnham-family brick manufacturing in Milwaukee ended.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Burnham-Zube House, 1636 W. National Avenue, and its attached land be given historic designation as a City of Milwaukee Historic Site as a result of its fulfillment of criteria f-3 and f-5 of Section 320-21(3) of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances.

¹⁵ Carl Baehr, "How Elizabeth St. Became National Ave.," *Urban Milwaukee*, January 29, 2016, <https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2016/01/29/city-streets-how-elizabeth-st-became-national-ave/> (accessed August 23, 2023).

¹⁶ George Burnham: 1816-1889," Wisconsin Historical Society, <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Article/CS5945> (accessed August 23, 2023).

¹⁷ Carl Baehr, "The Man Who Made This Cream City.," *Urban Milwaukee*, January 29, 2016, <https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2016/01/29/city-streets-how-elizabeth-st-became-national-ave/> (accessed August 23, 2023).

¹⁸ Vollmert, Les, Carlen Hatala, and Robin Wenger. *South Side Neighborhood Historic Resources Survey*. Milwaukee: City of Milwaukee Department of City Development, 1987.

- f-3. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city.

RATIONALE: George Burnham and his brother Jonathan L. were the most significant brick makers in Milwaukee. George Burnham, and later with his children, operated the largest and one of the longest lasting brick manufactures in Milwaukee. Burnham learned the brickmaking trade from his father in upstate New York. He took his craft to Buffalo in 1834 before settling in Milwaukee in 1843. Within a decade, the Burnham brothers had established the largest brickyard in Milwaukee, producing millions of cream-colored bricks from their yards on the south side of the Menomonee Valley. These bricks were used to construct countless Milwaukee residential, commercial, religious, and municipal structures and are found as foundations and/or chimneys in countless others. While it is not possible to identify which brickyards produced brick for specific buildings, the Burnham yards were by far the largest in Milwaukee and it is likely their yards produced brick found in the majority of Cream City brick structures. It is also difficult to document which buildings outside of Milwaukee the George Burnham yards produced brick for, though there is documentation of millions of Burnham's brick being exported to Michigan and Chicago and as far as New York.¹⁹

Burnham was also significant for his civic activities and real estate development. He was instrumental in the development of Mukwonago Plank Road, the construction of the Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad (later known as Milwaukee Road), and the construction of the canal in the Menomonee Valley bearing his name. He also provided his name to a south side street associated with a residential development he undertook along with partners Daniel Rogers and John Becher.²⁰

No other residential structure associated with George Burnham remains in Milwaukee. There are no known residential structures associated with Burnham prior to his purchase of 80 acres on the south side of the Menomonee Valley in 1848. Burnham is first listed in the 1851 city directory as residing at "Mequanago Rd. near Muskego Rd.," the location along Mukwonago Plank Road (aka Elizabeth Street aka National Avenue) near his vast brickyards. Evidence suggests his transformed the modest one-room structure into a roomy Gothic Revival cottage. He and his family resided at this cottage until their wealth allowed them to build a much grander Italianate house across the street from the cottage. It was around this time that Burnham updated the cottage with cream brick veneer and

¹⁹ Vollmert, Les, Carlen Hatala, and Robin Wenger. *South Side Neighborhood Historic Resources Survey*. Milwaukee: City of Milwaukee Department of City Development, 1987.

²⁰ Carl Baehr, "The Man Who Made This Cream City.," *Urban Milwaukee*, January 29, 2016, <https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2016/01/29/city-streets-how-elizabeth-st-became-national-ave/> (accessed August 23, 2023).

Italianate finishes in the style of his new house. Burnham's time residing in the cottage coincided with the rise of his business from a modest affair to the largest brick manufacturing yard in the city by 1853.²¹ The development and patenting of two revolutionary steam-powered brick manufacturing machines also occurred while Burnham resided in the cottage.

The Italianate house on the south side of National Avenue that Burnham lived at from c. 1869 until his death in 1889 was demolished sometime after 1910. The Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory identifies another George Burnham House located at 1402 S. 2nd Street (no longer extant) constructed in 1868. There is no documentation that Burnham lived at that location and the property may have been developed as an investment property. None of the production facilities or offices associated with the Burnham brickyards remain and the Menomonee Valley locations associated with the brick production have been subsequently redeveloped primarily as industrial uses. One investment property Burnham erected in 1873 remains at 170 S. 2nd Street in Walker's Point. The building was leased to the John Nazro & Company hardware business. At over one million cubic foot, the building was said to be "the largest hardware building in America."²² This building is contributing to the National Register of Historic Places listed South First and Second Street Historic District.

The chapel located behind the house is significant for its association with the outreach and services provided by John Paul Ranieri and Jeff Hicks during the over twenty years they operated "The Sanctuary" from their property. The chapel was constructed in 1983 using materials from demolished historic Milwaukee buildings. The stone lintel above the door was obtained from St. Peter's Basilica in Rome after Ranieri met Pope John Paul II in 1983.²³ The chapel, which they named Our Lady of Poor, was kept open for the city's homeless residents use was also used by Ranieri for special services. Ranieri held a hunger strike in the chapel in 1985 to protest for better treatment of the city's homeless population.²⁴ He also lead a special mass of thanksgiving in the chapel in 1989 to celebrate his departure from the Catholic Church and joining the Episcopal Church.²⁵

f-5 Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristic of an architectural type or specimen

²¹ Ibid.

²² Jeff Beutner, "The Largest Hardware Store in America." Urban Milwaukee, July 19, 2016, <https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2016/07/19/yesterdays-milwaukee-the-largest-hardware-store-in-america/> (accessed August 30, 2023).

²³ Bobby Tanzilo, "Urban spelunking: Wells St. Bridge house & a backyard chapel," *OnMilwaukee*, December 14, 2015, <https://onmilwaukee.com/articles/wellsstreetbridgehouse> (accessed August 31, 2023).

²⁴ "He'll fast for the city's homeless," *Milwaukee Journal*, July 31, 1985.

²⁵ "Shelter founder joins Episcopal Church," *Milwaukee Journal*, December 9, 1989.

RATIONALE: The Burnham-Zube House is a good example of a cream brick vernacular Italianate cottage. Evidence suggests the earliest portion of the house may date to the 1830s. The one-room house was enlarged and given Gothic Revival treatment following Burnham's purchase of the property in 1848. The Gothic Revival elements were removed around the time Burnham constructed his larger Italianate house across National Avenue. The house was "modernized" in the Italianate style around the shortly after Burnham moved to his new house.

The Italianate style was a popular style of residential construction in Milwaukee from approximately 1850 through 1870. The Burnham-Zube House features characteristics found in Italianate residential construction from this time. The asymmetrical house has a simple, cross-gabled plan with rounded window and door openings typical of details found in Italianate architecture. The inverted-U shaped brick crowns that prominently surround the openings are another characteristic found in the Italianate style. Stone lintels and a noticeable brick water table are also features found in vernacular Italianate construction.

While the exterior has undergone numerous alterations in the buildings nearly 185 year history, the house retains a great deal of integrity to the Italianate style it was remodeled to in the 1870s. While the Italianate style was once common in vernacular cottages, most of those constructed in Milwaukee were executed with wood framing and cladding. Italianate houses constructed with cream brick construction were often more high-style, grand examples than the more modest cottage.²⁶ The Burnham-Zube House is one of the few brick Italianate cottages on Milwaukee's south side and represents a superb example of a cream brick, vernacular Italianate cottage.

²⁶ Gail Klein, "Determination of Eligibility Form: Burnham-Zube House."

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PRESERVATION GUIDELINES FOR THE BURNHAM-ZUBE HOUSE

The following preservation guidelines represent the principal concerns of the Historic Preservation Commission regarding this historic designation. However, the Commission reserves the right to make final decisions based upon design submissions. Building maintenance and restoration must follow accepted preservation practices as outlined below. The intent of the guidelines are to preserve the buildings as closely as possible to their original form and details. Nothing in these guidelines shall be construed to prevent ordinary maintenance or restoration and/or replacement of documented original elements.

Any exterior alteration, exclusive of painting of non-masonry surfaces, will require a Certificate of Appropriateness. Any existing exterior features can remain for their lifespan. The historic designation does not mean that owners are required to restore their buildings to original condition, but that changes are subject to review so that they are compatible with the historic character of the building.

These guidelines are based upon those contained in MCO 320-21-11 & 12 of the historic preservation ordinance. These guidelines serve as a guide for making changes that will be sensitive to the architectural integrity of the structure and appropriate to the overall character of the building.

I. Roofs

A. Retain the original roof shape. Dormers, skylights, satellite dishes and solar collector panels may be added to roof surfaces if they are not visible from the street or per established policy. Avoid making changes to the roof shape that would alter the building height, roofline, or pitch. This includes parapets, pediments and cornices. For rooftop additions see Additions.

II. Masonry, Stone, & Terra Cotta

A. Unpainted brick or stone or terra cotta 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.

B. Re-point defective mortar by duplicating the original in color, hardness, texture, joint finish and joint width. See the masonry chapter in the book *Good for Business* for explanations on why the use of a proper mortar mix is crucial to making lasting repairs that will not contribute to new deterioration of the masonry. Using much harder, contemporary Portland cement mortar will not make a lasting repair and can damage the historic brick and stone and terra cotta. Replaced mortar joints should be tooled to match the style of the original. Do not use mortar colors and pointing styles that were unavailable or were not used when

the building was constructed. Consultation with historic preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness is required before starting any re-pointing.

C. In the future should masonry cleaning be necessary 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, terra cotta, pressed brick or cream brick surfaces 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.

D. 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. Neither is fake brick veneer. Consultation with historic preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness is required before attempting work on the masonry.

III. Wood/Metal

A. Retain original material, whenever possible. Avoid the indiscriminate removal of architectural features that are in most cases an essential part of the building's character and appearance.

B. Retain or replace deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the appearance of the old as closely as possible. Covering wood or metal with aluminum, artificial stone, brick veneer, asbestos or asphalt shingles, or vinyl, aluminum or other substitute material is not permitted. Spot replacement or spot repair of any deteriorated elements is encouraged rather than complete removal and replication. Structural wood epoxies are suggested for the lasting repair of damaged or decayed areas of wood trim. Any new elements must replicate the pattern, dimension, spacing and material of the originals.

IV. Windows and Doors

A. Retain existing window and door openings. Retain the present configuration of panes, sash, lintels, keystones, sills, architraves, pediments, hoods, doors, shutters, and hardware except for the restoration to the original condition.

B. Do not make additional openings or changes in the fenestration by enlarging or reducing window or door sizes to fit new stock window sash or new stock door sizes. Avoid changing the size or configuration of windowpanes or sash.

C. Avoid discarding original doors and door hardware when they can be repaired or reused. Use storm windows or protective glazing which have glazing

configurations similar to the prime windows and which obscure the prime windows as little as possible.

D. The use of structural wood epoxies is strongly encouraged to repair and minor damage or decay to windows.

E. Respect the stylistic period or periods the building represents. If replacement of window sash or doors is necessary, the replacement should duplicate the appearance and design of the original window sash or door.

F. Avoid using inappropriate sash and door replacements such as unpainted galvanized aluminum storm and screen window combinations. Avoid the filling in or covering of openings with materials like glass-block or the installation of plastic or metal strip awnings or fake shutters that are not in proportion to the openings or that are historically out of the character with the building.

G. Avoid using modern style window units such as horizontal sliding sash in place of double-hung sash or the substitution of units with glazing configurations not appropriate to the style of the building. In the event windows need to be replaced, however, consultation with Historic preservation is required to determine appropriate glazing patterns.

H. Tinted low-e glass is not acceptable unless meeting NPS standards, at the time of this writing that standard is .72VLT.

I. Vinyl and vinyl clad prime window units are not permitted. Other non-wood materials may be considered based on their ability to match the historic window details with the most accuracy.

J. Steel security doors and windows guards are generally not allowed where they are visible from the street. If permitted, the doors or grates must be of the simplest design and installed to be as unobtrusive as possible.

V. Trim and Ornamentation

There shall be no changes to the existing trim or ornamentation except as necessary to restore the building to its original condition. The historic architectural fabric includes all terra cotta ornament; all pressed metal elements including cornices, pediments and oriels; and all carved and cast stonework. Replacement features shall match the original member in scale, design, color and material.

VI. Additions

No additions will be permitted on the south (front) or west elevations of the Burnham-Zube House, as this would destroy the character of the building. Accordingly, only rear additions are feasible. Any other addition requires the approval of the Commission. Ideally an addition should either compliment or have a neutral effect upon the historic character of the building. The commission will review the compatibility of the addition with the historic house and consider the following details: window size and placement, scale, design, materials, roof configuration, height and the degree to which the addition impacts the principal elevations of the house.

VII. Site Features

New plant materials, paving, or fencing shall be compatible with the historic architectural character of the building. Should a fence be considered in the future, examples of appropriate fencing can be found in *As Good As New* and *Living with History*. Should the existing retaining wall fail, the front yard shall be returned to a berm and no new retaining wall is permitted along the property. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required before starting any work that would involve the landscape features, parking, walkways, or driveway. Victorian front yard landscaping was traditionally very simple and the raised limestone foundation was allowed to be seen rather than covered by shrubs.

VIII. Guidelines for New Construction

It is important that new construction be designed to be as sympathetic as possible with the character of the structure. These guidelines are included, however, to be consistent with the guidelines for all locally designated historic properties. Small-scale accessory structures, like a gazebo, garage/parking pad or fountain, may be permitted depending on their size, scale and form and the property's ability to accommodate such a structure. Any request to construct a new garage/parking pad would be subject to review for code compliance and appropriate design and would require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

A. Site work. New construction must respect the historic site and location of the building. It should be accomplished so as to maintain the appearance of the building from the street as a freestanding structure.

B. Scale. 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 building. New construction is to be smaller in size and shorter in height than the historic building.

C. 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.

D. Materials. The building materials which are visible from the public right-of-way and in close proximity to the historic building should be compatible with the colors, textures, proportions, and combinations of cladding materials used on the historic building. The physical composition of the materials may be different from that of the historic materials, but the same appearance should be maintained and materials not available when the building was constructed should be avoided.

IX. Guidelines for Demolition

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 9(h) of the ordinance, shall be taken into consideration by the Commission when reviewing demolition requests.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. Location. Consideration will be given to whether the building contributes to the neighborhood and the general street appearance and has a positive effect on other buildings in the area.

D. Potential For Restoration. Consideration will be given to whether 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.

E. 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.

X. Signs

The installation of any permanent exterior sign other than those now in existence shall require the approval of the Commission. Approval will be based on the compatibility of the proposed sign with the historic and architectural character of the building as well as the city's sign ordinances.

1. Signs should be Type A, as defined in the MCO, except for awning and window signs.

2. Tenant signs should be primarily location in the storefront transom area, storefront windows, or on awnings.

Historic Photo Appendix



Figure 1. Milwaukee Public Library photo. Photo taken by Herman A. Wudtke in April 1961.
<https://content.mpl.org/digital/collection/HstoricPho/id/7030/rec/1>



—Journal Photo

Restoration is planned for this house at S. 17th and National that dates back to 1837

They Hope to Restore House

By Fran Bauer
of The Journal Staff

Is the house at S. 17th and National just old and ugly, or an antique that thousands of dollars should be spent to restore?

Both Paul Ranieri and Jeff Hicks, who bought the house last fall and have saved old houses before, believe it is worth preserving. Their eyes are trained on its refurbished future rather than on the crumbling gray hulk that exists today.

Ranieri spotted the more than 140 year old house several years ago and offered to buy it when the owners decided to move. At that point he only suspected the house's age.

Research since has dated the house to 1837, just two years after Calvin Harmon had bought the land from the federal government. When money grew tight, Harmon sold off 80 surrounding acres at \$3 each.

Meager Days

There were meager days ahead for the house as well as its owner. Its history includes years when it was a rooming house and restaurant, instead of a home. Odds on the

house's future sometimes ran high. During a 1901 poker game, the house changed hands five times.

A walk inside the house today reveals little of its colorful past. Ranieri predicts it will take at least five years to restore the house. He hopes to win financial help from the federal government. If a review board chooses the house as an official landmark, many of Ranieri's costs would be matched with federal dollars.

The uglier part of that work has already begun. Plaster and floor boards have already been pried away to reveal the original foundations from which Ranieri will rebuild.

Await Future

Antiques lie in disarray, awaiting the future when restored rooms will become their showcase.

Ranieri admits it is depressing to live in the clutter. But he has lived through discouraging days before, he said. What keeps him optimistic is his plan for the future.

Ranieri and Hicks hope to open their home to weekend museum tours when restora-

tion is complete. Eventually, they plan to give the house to the city, to insure its future. But for the present, the two men hope to use the project to show the value of preserving the old.

Part of Ranieri's dream extends well beyond the house. He can envision the commercial strip along S. 16th St. being restored and converted into an old world ethnic shopping area.

Pledged to Fight

He bemoans the loss of such historic landmarks as St. Jacobi Church, which was razed last year, and he has pledged to fight to save the area's charming old buildings. As part of that fight, Ranieri hopes to run for alderman on the pledge that he will fight to preserve the old South Side.

Ranieri has fought to preserve historic buildings since he was a teenager. His grandparents were wealthy Italians who had brought many of the family's treasures and traditions to America with them. The depression altered the family's fortunes, but not its dreams.

As a college student in New York City, Ranieri de-

veloped his battle techniques. A professor needed help to save old Dutch homes. Ranieri helped to physically block the doorways to wreckers until city officials could be persuaded to save the homes.

There were failures as well as successes in the years ahead. But Ranieri recalls them all as an education. From the skirmishes he learned how to find both public and official support for his projects.

Unsuccessful Fight

Shortly after his move five years ago to Milwaukee, Ranieri headed the unsuccessful fight to save a Downtown home where author Edna Ferber had lived. He battled more successfully to keep Lake Dr. homes in Shorewood from being replaced by condominiums, he said.

But not until buying the National Ave. home has Ranieri had a project he felt could really change Milwaukeeans' attitudes on restoration.

"Milwaukee is about five to 10 years behind other major cities in terms of historical restoration," he said.

His hope is that others will find restoration to be contagious.

Figure 2. Milwaukee Journal, March 7, 1978.

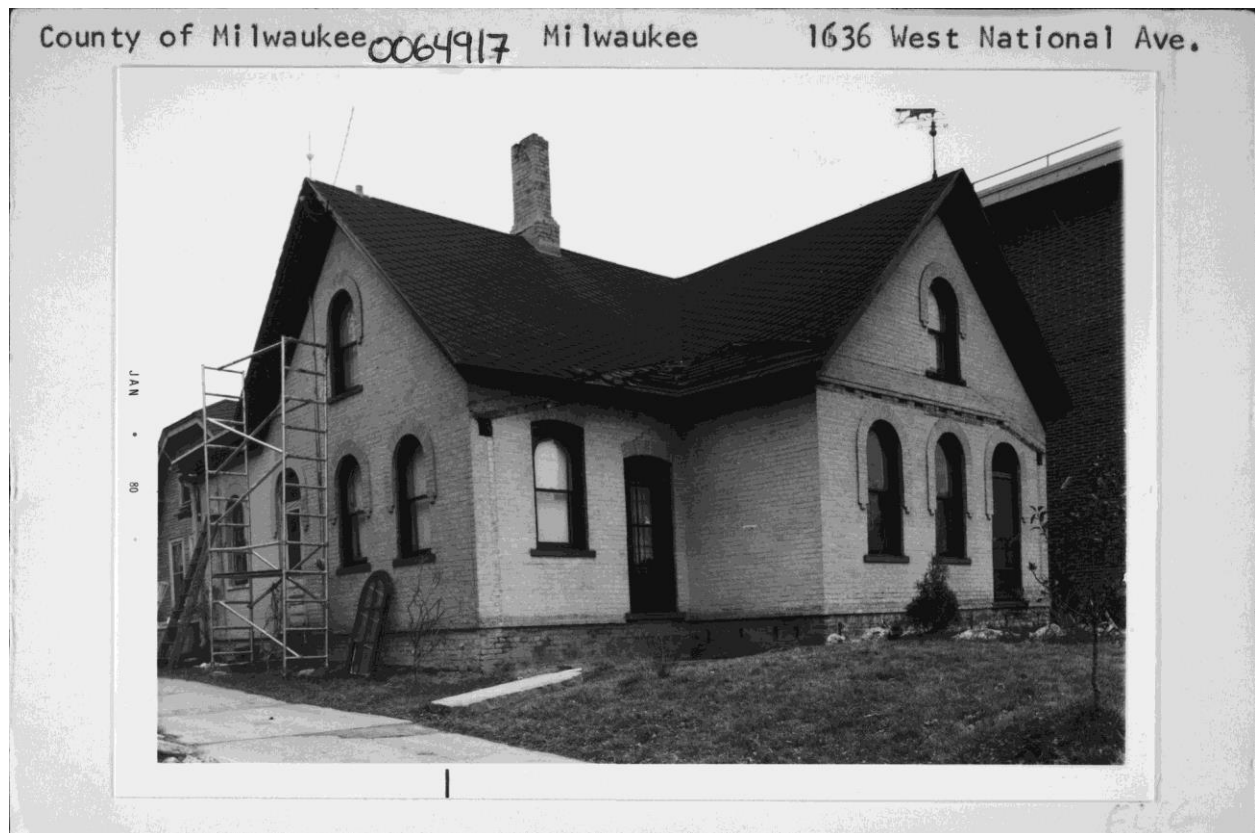
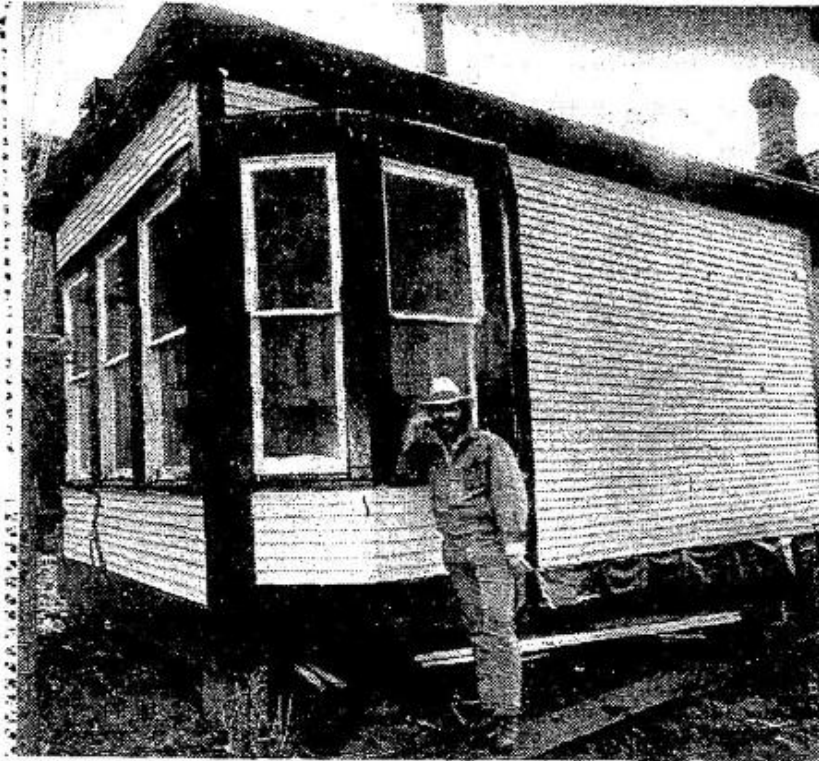


Figure 3. Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, Record #64917. Photo taken January 1980. Note, front porch has been removed since 1978 photo. Rear addition is visible at left.



Figure 4. Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, Record #64917. Photo taken in 1980.

Figure 5. Milwaukee
Journal, March 31, 1985



— Journal Photo

The old Wells St. bridge house is now a studio for artist **Jean-Paul Ranieri**. He had it moved to his yard.

Old bridge house finds a new home

The old wooden Wells St. bridge house, built in 1901, has found a new home in a South Side back yard.

The little beige-and-brown structure — it measures 10 by 20 feet — is now the National Ave. studio of artist **Jean-Paul Ranieri**.

Ranieri, who is also an architectural designer, happened to notice the bridge house on a Friday afternoon last March as he stopped to watch workers dismantle the old bridge. The bridge house had been lifted from its piers and placed on the exposed girders in the middle of Wells St.

"How much for the house?" Ranieri asked the crew and offered the wreckers \$1 for it.

The dollar turned out to be a down payment, although Ranieri wouldn't say how much more was needed to complete the deal. But he did say that one of the conditions of the sale was that the house be moved by the next Monday. Moving the house cost \$900.

That accomplished, the bridge house stood in Ranieri's driveway until June, when his house mate, Jeffrey Hicks, completed a foundation for it. In the meantime, the two checked city records and found out when the house was built and stripped the paint down to find the original colors — beige and brown — and gave the house a fresh coat of those colors.

And they bought a new bell, for the city had kept the old one for the new bridge house.

Ranieri and Hicks have made their home an unofficial haven for the homeless, they said. Their effort is not supported by any organization, but they take in anything homeless — "people, animal, plants," Ranieri said.

In a way, he said, buying the bridge house was an extension of that idea. "It was a homeless house," he said.

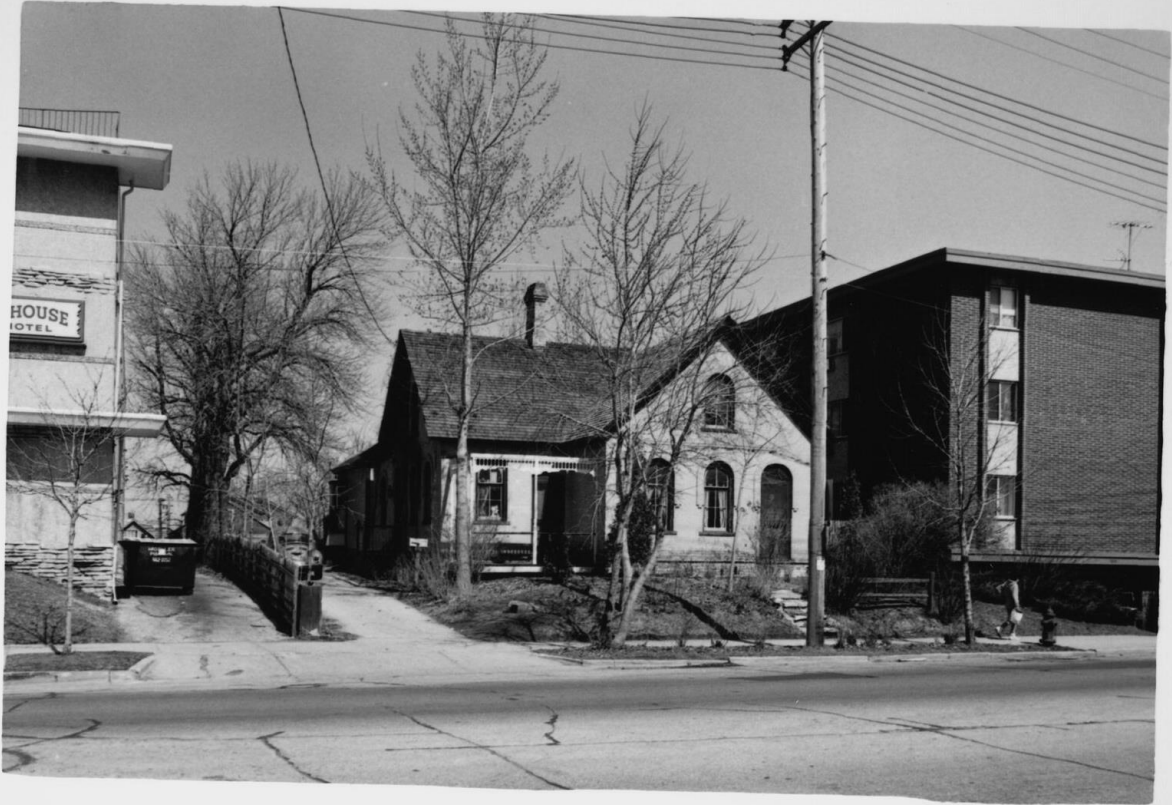
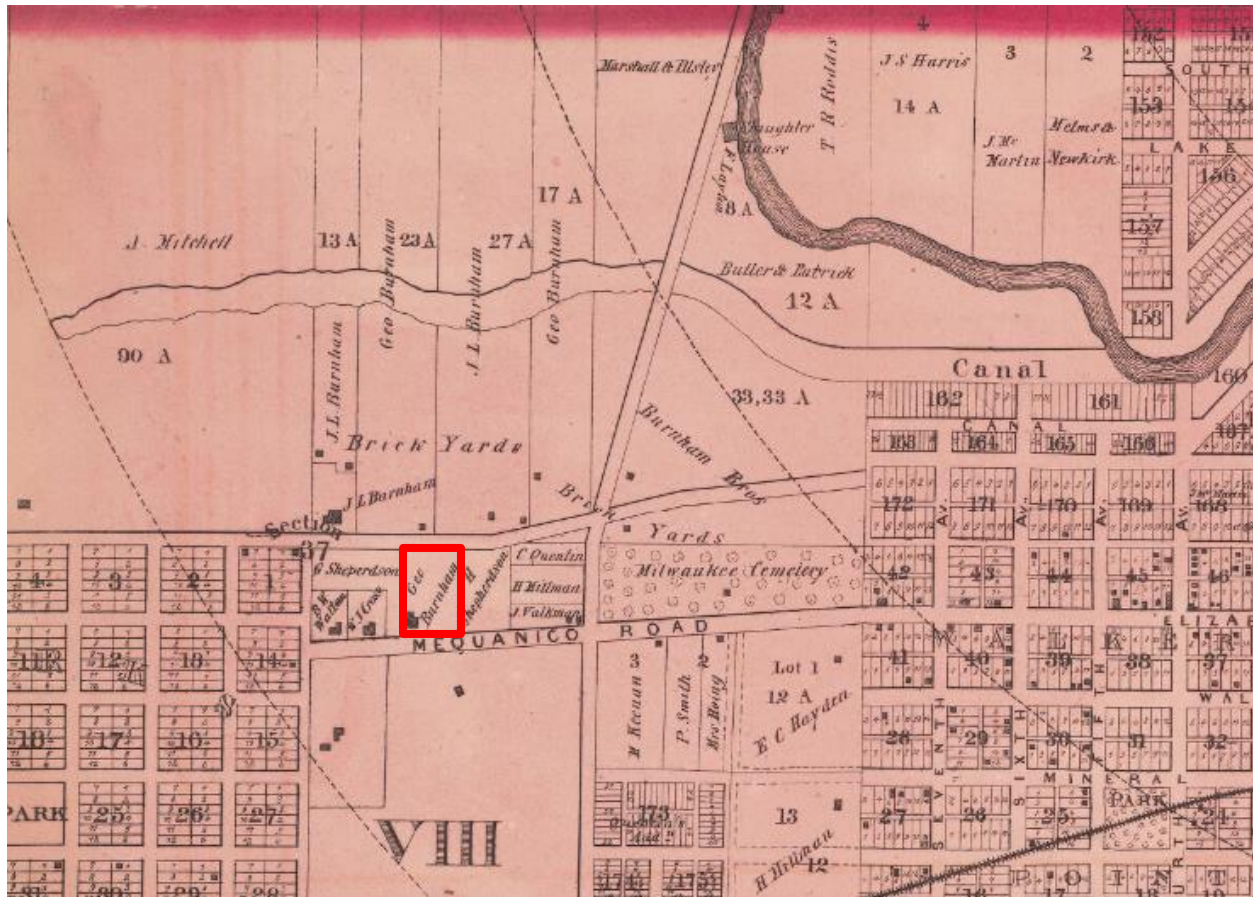
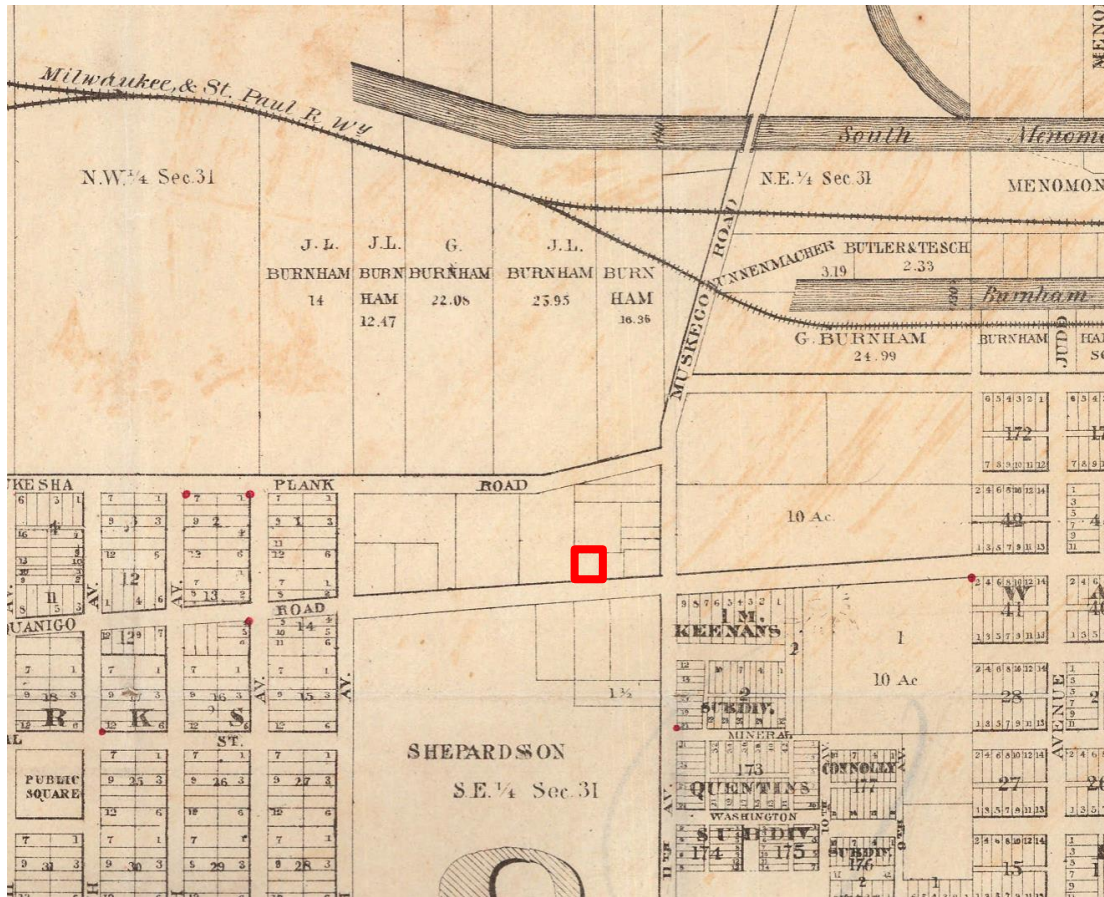


Figure 6. Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, Record #64917. Photo taken in 1986.

Maps

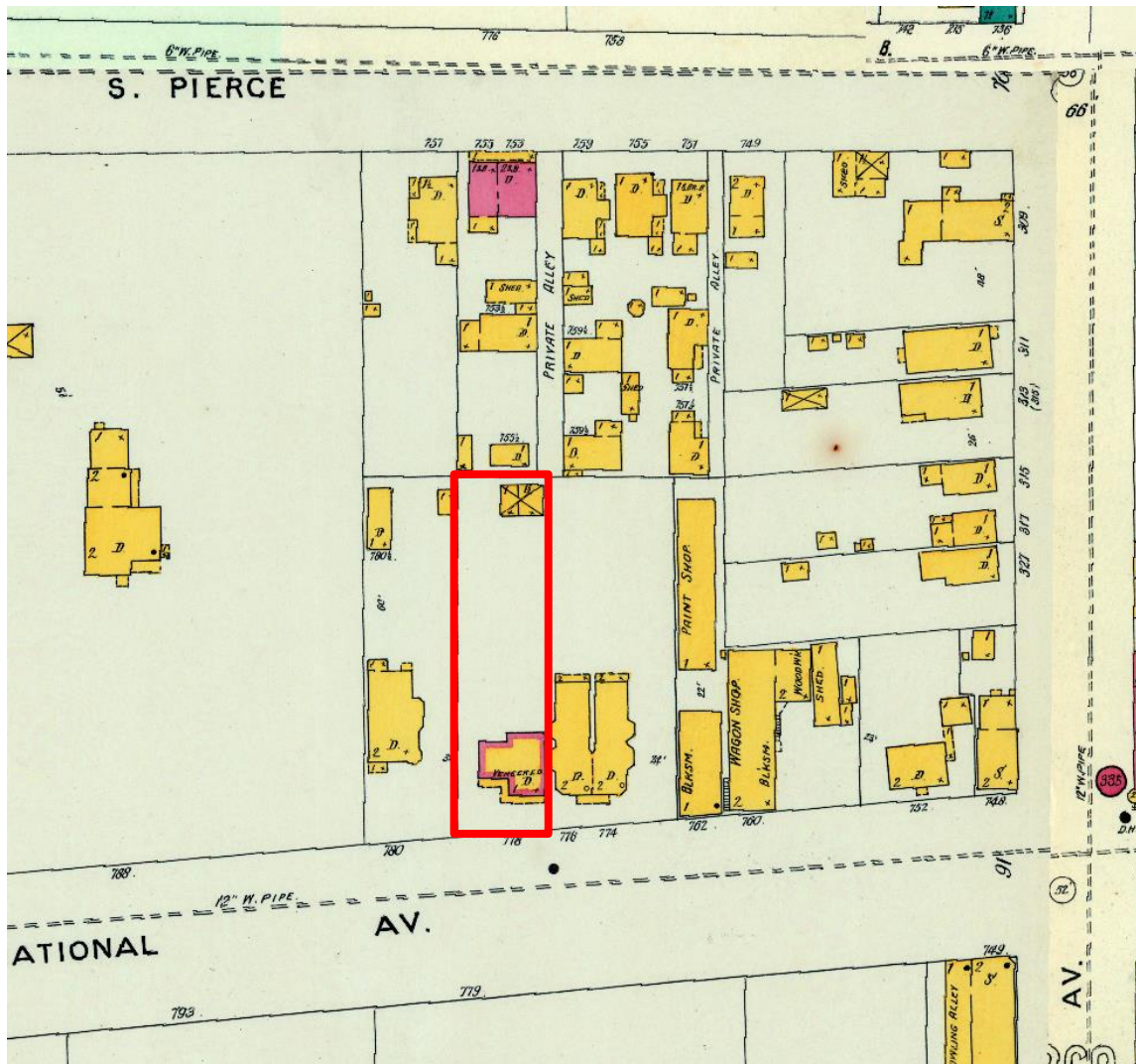


Map 1. 1858 map of the south Menomonee River Valley, Walker's Square and Clarke Square neighborhoods. The George Burnham House is outlined in red, west of Muskego Rd. (now S. 16th Street/S. Cesar E. Chavez Drive). Note the large Menomonee Valley parcels belonging to George Burnham, J.L. Burnham, and Burnham Brothers for their brick production business. From "Map of the county of Milwaukee, Wisconsin ; Walling's map of Milwaukee Co. Wis. Harvard Map Collection, Harvard University. <https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/scanned-maps/catalog/44-990114818420203941>

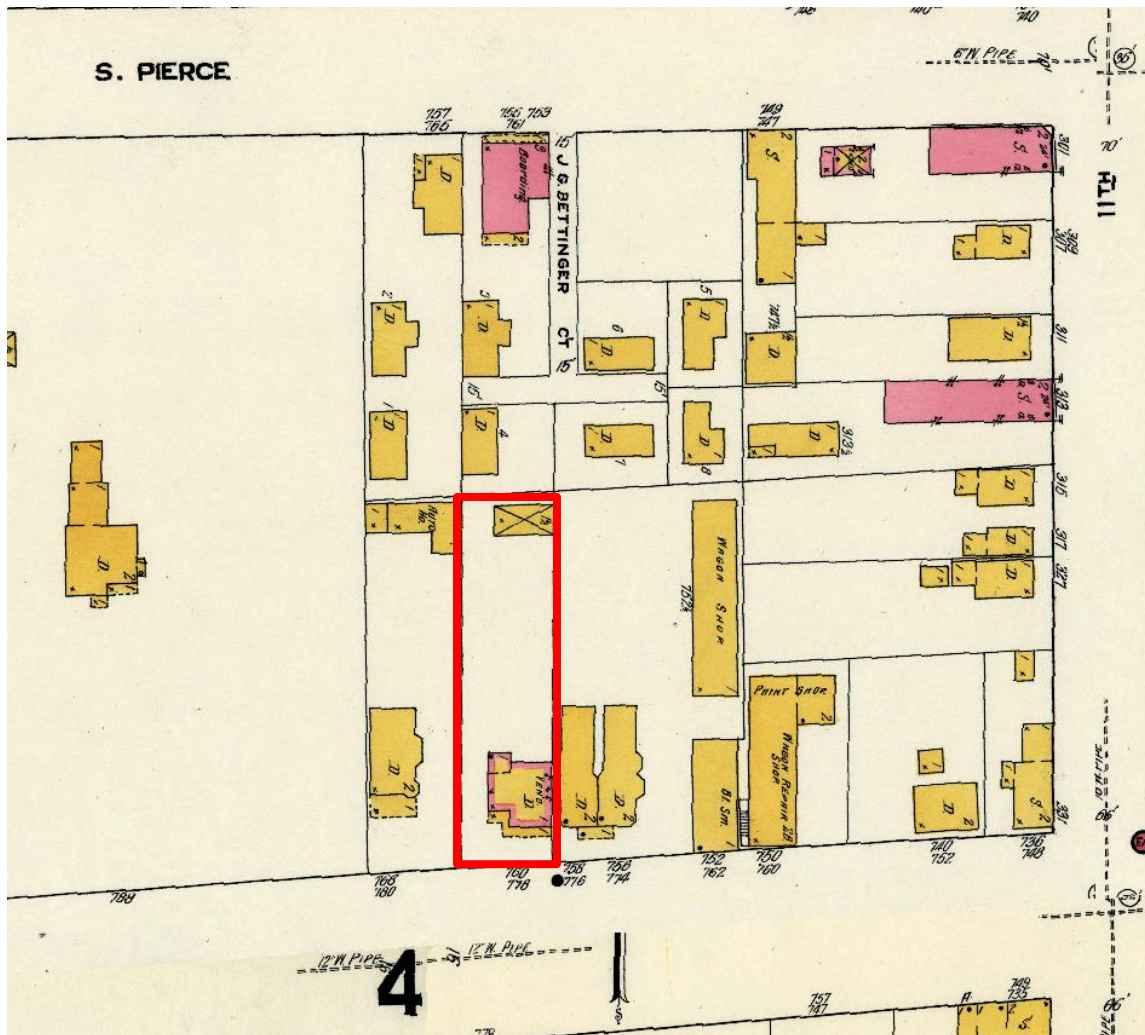


Map 3. 1878 map of the south Menomonee River Valley, Walker's Square and Clarke Square neighborhoods. The Burnham-Zube House is outlined in red. Burnham brickyards located north of the Burnham House. From "Map of the City of Milwaukee" Wisconsin Historical Society, Maps and Atlases in Our Collections.

<https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/maps/id/14003/rec/1>



Map 4. 1894 map of National Avenue west of Muskego Avenue (S. 16th/S. Cesar E. Chavez Dr.). By 1894, the property had been sold by Patrick Archer to Charles Kropp. From “Milwaukee 1894, Vol. 3, Sheet 260.” Digital Sanborn Maps of Milwaukee, 1894 and 1910. New York : Sanborn-Perris Map Co. Limited, 1894. American Geographical Society Library, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries. <https://collections.lib.uwm.edu/digital/collection/san/id/272/rec/1>



Map 4. 1910 map of National Avenue west of 11th Avenue (S. 16th/S. Cesar E. Chavez Dr.). The Charles Kropp family still resided at the property. By 1910, the rear addition is visible. From "Milwaukee 1910, Vol. 4, Sheet 397." Digital Sanborn Maps of Milwaukee, 1894 and 1910. New York : Map Company. Limited, 1910. American Geographical Society Library, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries. <https://collections.lib.uwm.edu/digital/collection/san/id/871/rec/1>