

CITY OF MILWAUKEE
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February 1, 2002

City Clerk
City of Milwaukee
200 E. Wells St.
Milwaukee, WI 53202

RE: Appeal of Preliminary decision by Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission for Certificate of appropriateness to raze house at 2720 West Kilbourn Avenue

On January 22, 2002 the Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) met and recommended to deny a Certificate of Appropriateness which is required to raze the existing house at 2720 West Kilbourn Avenue. We disagree with this initial finding and request the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness. The following analysis of the 5 criteria used to determine appropriateness provides the basis for this request.

1. Condition The major interior and exterior deterioration is severe and poses an immediate threat to health and safety. Presently there are 66 outstanding building code violations, many of which do indeed pose a health and safety risk. These include unsafe electrical conditions, unsafe and unhealthy plumbing and unsafe bathroom and kitchen flooring. The cockroach infestation and pigeon droppings also present immediate health concerns. The damage to the porch-defective floor boards, trimboards and guardrail system poses an immediate exterior safety risk to residents and visitors.

2. Importance In the staff report dated December 22, 2002 [SIC]; the City of Milwaukee determined that "the building does not exhibit architectural significance or unique craftsmanship that cannot be found in other structures in the area." Not only does this property not contribute to the Concordia Historic District, but by comparison to the truly significant homes, its presence diminishes the overall historic impact.

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3. Location It is too late to debate whether this non contributing rooming house deserved to be included into the district. The property is immediately West of an alley that services commercial properties along 27th Street. Delivery trucks in the alley, semi's parked along Kilbourn and constant foot and vehicle (including police) traffic outside the building creates a non residential environment. An apartment building and commercial parking sit across the street (Kilbourn) from the property. To the West lies unimproved land from a building razed in 1998. Clearly, this location and conversion to rooming house use is not consistent with the residential nature of the Concordia Historic District and furthermore, its high visibility as the first house seen along Kilbourn detracts from the District.

4. Potential for Restoration This property simply has no potential for restoration. Noticing the increase of rehabilitation and owner occupancy of contributing homes several blocks away, in 1997 we advertised our rooming house for sale in the Milwaukee Journal. We mistakenly thought that a party would purchase our property for rehab utilizing available tax credits. There was very little interest. We did accept an offer in October of 1997 to sell the rooming house for \$15,000.00 (current assessment is \$29,400.00) to an owner/investor who owns properties in the District. After performing his due diligence, he rescinded his offer after determining that our property was not a candidate for restoration at any price. Last summer, I showed the house again to another gentleman who expressed interest in the property. He had purchased and remodeled his residence a few blocks away. He too did not see any benefit or potential for restoration of 2720 West Kilbourn. Today, restoration is even more impractical. In addition to any restoration, one would also be required to satisfy the current 66 outstanding building code violations at a cost of approximately \$12,000.00

5. Replacement As owners of 901-11 N. 27th Street (adjacent property to 2720 West Kilbourn) we are an active participant in the revitalization that is occurring along 27th Street. A thriving commercial retail/commercial 27th Street only enhances the neighboring Historic District. Since 2720 West Kilbourn does not contribute to the Historic District and already has a commercial quality to its location, as a parking lot, it would solve customer parking concerns for the grocery store (901 N. 27th St.) and pharmacy (911 N. 27th St.) and allow their merchants to continue to serve the community and broaden their customer base.

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In conclusion, Taxman Investment Company should be issued a Certificate of Appropriateness to raze the rooming house at 2720 West Kilbourn Avenue. Although preserving is generally preferable to razing, an objective, common sense review of our analysis will offer the basis for this exception. As a result, unlike the rooming house, the parking lot will enhance the appeal and quality of the Concordia Historic District.

Sincerely,

TAXMAN INVESTMENT COMPANY



Gary Taxman
Director of Property Management

GT/mg