

September 10, 2021

To the honorable Chair and Commissioners:

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The Milwaukee Preservation Alliance supports permanent historic designation of the William Spence Houses Numbers 1 and 2 at 2275 and 2279 N. Summit Ave. and believe Staff's research indicates that the buildings qualify based on the criteria. Such a designation would also protect the homes while their integration, along with other nearby homes, into the neighboring North Point South Historic District is explored.

The evidence suggests that these homes deserve to be designated and have similar historic value to those within the District. As the nominator notes, they were constructed in the same time period (1889) and as part of the same development (the Glidden and Lockwood's Addition) as many homes within the District and are of a similar style and character. Their designation would help paint a fuller picture of this important development and its significance to Milwaukee's growth in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by showing the variety of home types (not just larger homes and mansions) that were being constructed at the time.

The question of why these buildings were not included within the original district boundaries can only be speculated upon. However, it is not uncommon for buildings previously excluded from designation to be revisited and later included, both at the National Register and local levels. Such reconsiderations reflect the development of our understanding of what kinds of places are worthy of preservation in America. Buildings may have been excluded originally because they were not yet old enough for consideration, or as may be the case in this situation, because of a previous bias within preservation toward the architecturally grand. Today, we understand that such views, in excluding certain types of places, also exclude certain people. We now appreciate more fully that a preservation that only preserves the places and stories of a certain population is an incomplete story. The places that represent the breadth of the human experience are worthy of preservation and add value to the narrative of our history as a city.

As was established in conversations surrounding the Puddlers' Cottages, these "ordinary buildings" ([www.vernaculararchitectureforum.org](http://www.vernaculararchitectureforum.org)) can hold just as much cultural and architectural significance as their more high style kin and are an important component to ensuring the stories of the "ordinary people" who inhabited them are not lost.

For these reasons, we believe 2275 and 2279 N. Summit Ave. deserve permanent historic designation.

Thank you as always for your hard work on behalf of the people and places of Milwaukee.

Respectfully,

Jeremy Ebersole  
Executive Director  
Milwaukee Preservation Alliance