



**Interim Historic  
Designation Study Report**

**B.B. Freye Duplex  
2560-62 North Stowell  
Avenue**

City of Milwaukee  
Department of City Development  
Fall, 2001

**INTERIM HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT**

**BENJAMIN B. FREYE DUPLEX  
2560-62 NORTH STOWELL AVENUE**

**I. NAME**

Historic: Benjamin B. Freye Duplex

Common: 2560-62 North Stowell Avenue

**II. LOCATION: 2560-62 North Stowell Avenue**

3<sup>rd</sup> Aldermanic District, **Alderman Michael D'Amato**

Legal Description: Burke's Subd (E) In SW ¼ Sec 15-7-22 Block 4 S 30' Lot  
5

**III. CLASSIFICATION Structure**

**IV. OWNERS:** Daniel J. Katz, John B. Crichton, Thomas A. Hauck

**V. DESIGNATION REQUESTED BY:** Mary A. Wasielewski

**VI. YEAR BUILT:** 1902<sup>1</sup>

**ARCHITECT:** unknown

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<sup>1</sup> Milwaukee Permit #4085 dated August 18, 1902. Filed at the Development Center, 809 N. Broadway  
chatal/word/  
2560-62 North Stowell Avenue

## VII. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Freye duplex is a large, 2-1/2 story, front gabled structure designed in the Colonial Revival style of architecture. The house retains its two original Colonial Revival style wooden front doors that are handsomely embellished with carved wooden wreaths. This substantial frame building is a pivotal structure in a row of four prominent houses and duplexes that share pleasing urban qualities which include a uniform setback and scale, meticulous detailing and time-honored architectural proportioning. The visual interest of the house is further enhanced by its location at the top of a bermed front lawn.

The area surrounding the duplex and its immediate neighbors is an eclectic mix of late nineteenth and early twentieth century houses, duplexes and brick apartment buildings. The North Downer Avenue commercial strip, a thriving two-block long hub of East Side commerce, is located 1/2 block to the east of the subject property.

The Freye Duplex is a 2-1/2 story, front gabled structure that rests on a raised, cream city brick basement. The main elevation, which faces North Stowell Avenue, is symmetrically composed of a large flat-roofed front porch on the first story, two windows and porch door on the second story and a pair of deeply recessed double hung window centered in the very steeply pitched gable of the attic story.

The front porch retains its original impressive, Doric-style, fluted wooden columns. The second story features a central door for the walkout second story porch. Flanking the door to the south is a large original Victorian landscape sash window. To the north of the door is small rectangular Colonial Revival Style ornamental sash window that features diamond-shaped wooden muntins.

The front gable is finished with a very thin fascia (also called a raking cornice) which is a hallmark of the Colonial Revival style and a contrast to neighboring houses designed in other architectural styles that typically feature extraordinarily wide bargeboards. The attic story has been covered with hex-pattern asphalt shingles but typically would have been finished with wooden shingles that probably are still intact beneath the substitute siding. The bottom of the attic story is delineated by a thin gable return that is another hall mark of Colonial Revival style buildings from the late nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries in Milwaukee.

The side elevations facing north and south are simple in character featuring double hung windows that are randomly placed to respond to the needs of the interior. The rear elevation faces east and overlooks a small featureless rear yard that borders a brick-paved alley. The elevation features a rear exit door and randomly placed double hung windows.

The exterior of the house was covered with asphalt siding in 1947, but the original wooden siding and sidewall shingling are believed to have been preserved underneath and likely in repairable condition.<sup>2</sup> Later the building was converted to a three family dwelling in 1945 at

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<sup>2</sup> Milwaukee Building permit dated November 13, 1947 and filed under the building address at the Development Center, 809 N. Broadway

the end of World War II and then remodeled again in 1946 to accommodate four dwelling units.<sup>3</sup>

## VIII. History

### *Architecture*

#### Milwaukee Duplexes

The Milwaukee Duplex is a residential form of architecture that enjoyed a rather high degree of development in the city during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This style of residential architecture, perhaps more than any other, defines the historic character of the city.

The Milwaukee Duplex was built as a two family dwelling with the flats stacked one on top of another. Duplex construction began in the 1880s and became the city's most popular housing type in the 1890s. Many of the structures are typically very large, 2-1/2 story structures with big front gables and steeply pitched roofs. Most were built of frame construction and embellished with extensive millwork that reflected the city's proximity to the great pine forests of northern Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota. Typically the duplexes were designed in the popular architectural styles of their day which included, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Arts and Crafts, Tudor and Jacobean Revival and Craftsman styles of architecture. The duplex form was employed until about 1930 when the Great Depression brought much of the city's building construction to a halt.

#### Colonial Revival style

The Freye Duplex is designed in the Colonial Revival style, a catchall term for the revival of the Federal, Georgian and American Colonial styles of architecture. The Colonial Revival style enjoyed an initial resurgence in popularity during the late nineteenth century when it was combined with more purely Victorian and Queen Anne styles of architecture. Many historians regard the Colonial Revival as a reaction to the picturesque and often heavy handed styles associated with Victorian era architecture of the late nineteenth century.

At the beginning of the early twentieth century when the Freye Duplex was constructed, the style was characterized in Milwaukee by an extensive use of wooden sidewall shingling, narrow clapboard siding and very thin, neat and finely articulated eaves and overhangs. Windows were usually symmetrically placed although they were often grouped in twos or threes particularly in the attic story. As the style developed during the second and third decades of the twentieth century it gradually evolved to a point where it became much more faithful to the original designs of America's indigenous Colonial architecture.

### **History of the Property**

The general development history of this property matches that of 2502 E. Webster Place and 2512 E. Webster Place. The property consists of the south 30 feet of Lot 5 and changed hands four times before Charles and Pauline Hunholz acquired the site. One of

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<sup>3</sup> Milwaukee Building permit# 12484 dated July 24, 1945; Permit #87878 dated April 25, 1946. Filed at the Development Center 809 N. Broadway

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

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J. H. GOLDSTEIN AND  
R. A. FESHBACH

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1. The first part of the document is a letter from the author to the editor of the journal, dated 1954. The letter discusses the author's interest in the subject of the article and the reasons for writing it.

2. The second part of the document is the letter from the editor to the author, dated 1954. The editor expresses his interest in the author's work and offers suggestions for improvement.

3. The third part of the document is the author's response to the editor's letter, dated 1954. The author thanks the editor for his interest and offers to make the suggested changes.

4. The fourth part of the document is the author's revised manuscript, dated 1954. The author has made the changes suggested by the editor and has added new material.

5. The fifth part of the document is the editor's final decision, dated 1954. The editor has accepted the author's revised manuscript and has agreed to publish it in the journal.

6. The sixth part of the document is the author's final letter to the editor, dated 1954. The author thanks the editor for his help and expresses his hope that the article will be of interest to the readers of the journal.

7. The seventh part of the document is the author's final manuscript, dated 1954. The author has made the final changes and has prepared the manuscript for publication.

8. The eighth part of the document is the author's final letter to the editor, dated 1954. The author thanks the editor for his help and expresses his hope that the article will be of interest to the readers of the journal.

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11. The eleventh part of the document is the author's final manuscript, dated 1954. The author has made the final changes and has prepared the manuscript for publication.

12. The twelfth part of the document is the author's final letter to the editor, dated 1954. The author thanks the editor for his help and expresses his hope that the article will be of interest to the readers of the journal.

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20. The twentieth part of the document is the author's final letter to the editor, dated 1954. The author thanks the editor for his help and expresses his hope that the article will be of interest to the readers of the journal.

21. The twenty-first part of the document is the author's final manuscript, dated 1954. The author has made the final changes and has prepared the manuscript for publication.

22. The twenty-second part of the document is the author's final letter to the editor, dated 1954. The author thanks the editor for his help and expresses his hope that the article will be of interest to the readers of the journal.



the prior owners was an investor from Manatee County, Florida. On August 18, 1902 Hunholz took out a permit to construct a duplex costing \$4,000. No architect is listed on the permit for the 24-foot by 58-foot frame building but it is known that Frank Andree provided many designs for the Hunholzes. Hunholz was a member of a family of builder/contractors who erected scores of residences and duplexes throughout the city. It was common for them to acquire sites and build on spec, selling the structure to an investor or owner occupant. Sometimes they would hold onto the properties themselves. In this instance there is a gap in the chain of title but it appears that Benjamin B. and Mildred Freye acquired the duplex not long after its construction. City Directories show them living on the premises in 1907 and 1908. They sold the duplex to the Summit Grove Improvement Company (headed up by architect William Davelaar) in September 1908. The next owners were Sadie Mann and Solomon Shevinski (later Sol Blankstein) and Isadore Shevinski (later Isadore Blankstein). The Blanksteins owned quite a number of investment properties and had their offices on North Avenue. It was during their ownership that a garage was built at the rear of the property in 1923.

Eva Neu bought the building in April 1925 and city directories show a Sydney Neu on the premises in 1926. The Neus lost the duplex in 1943 and later owners included Peter and Germaine Williams, Arthur Hightower, John and Irene Hussinger and William and Mary Dean. It was during the ownership of Arthur Hightower that the upper flat was converted to two units in 1945 and the lower flat converted to two units in 1946 for a total of four units in the building. Asphalt siding was added to the building in 1947 by the Hussingers. The Deans sold their property to Harry Scheer in 1965. Harry Scheer was involved in the acquisition of most of these properties and he transferred this building along with other parcels to Read Investment Company the following year. Daniel Katz and his partners acquired the property in 1985.

## **IX. SIGNIFICANCE**

The Benjamin Freye Duplex is a fine example of a middle class, frame, Milwaukee Duplex designed in the Colonial Revival style and built at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Milwaukee Duplex, perhaps more than any form of residential architecture, defines the traditional character of the city. The steeply pitched front gable of the building, one of the hallmarks of this important form of design, is also one of the pivotal features of Upper East Side residential architecture.

## **X. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

The Benjamin Freye Duplex is a pivotal structure in the architectural character of a small district of fine, frame and brick houses on the city's Upper East Side. The duplex does not appear to fulfill criteria of the Historic Preservation Ordinance for individual designation, but likely would be a contributing structure in the event it was evaluated as part of a local historic district that would include adjacent properties.

## **XI. REFERENCES**

Milwaukee City Directories

City of Milwaukee Building Permit files

Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin: Volume 2. A Manual for Historic Properties. Madison, Wisconsin: Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.

Milwaukee County Register of Deeds

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2. The information is to be used for internal purposes only.