

**HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT  
BZDAWKA BUILDING  
MARCH, 2017**

**I. NAME**

Historic: Bzdawka Building

Common Name: Durango Western Wear

**II. LOCATION** 1112-1114 West Lincoln Avenue

**Legal Description -** Tax Key No. 4680956000  
Racke's Subd in SW ¼ SEC 5-6-22 BLOCK 2 LOT 22

**III. CLASSIFICATION** Site

**IV. OWNER** Anna B. Sanchez  
1112 West Lincoln Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53215

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

**NOMINATOR** Ald. Jose Perez

**V. YEAR BUILT** 1919 (permit dated April 22, 1919)

**ARCHITECT:** Unknown

**VI. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

<b>THE AREA</b>
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The Bzdawka Building is located within a cluster of commercial buildings that line Lincoln Avenue on the city's South Side.

In the part of the South Side that was predominantly Polish, south of Greenfield Avenue, there were two major shopping districts that served the immigrant Polish community. Both were east-west, major arterials and both were surrounded by densely developed neighborhoods characterized by small frame cottages, frame Polish flats and the occasional masonry house or corner commercial building.

Mitchell Street, platted in 1857 and named after Alexander Mitchell, came into prominence early on. At its east end St. Stanislaus Church parish, established in 1866, built its substantial twin towered building in 1872-1873. The community's distance from the downtown commercial district, lack of easy access to the downtown due to the Menomonee Valley, and Mitchell Street's importance as a transportation artery soon led to commercial activity along the thoroughfare. The Forest Home Railway Company laid track along Mitchell Street from South First Street to Forest Home Avenue in 1876. In the early years, this transportation system allowed visitors to travel to Forest Home Cemetery. Few local residents could afford the fares and walked to their mostly manufacturing jobs. Commercial buildings began to line the street by the 1880s as commercial buildings replaced residences, commercial fronts were added to older residences and ever larger retailers expanded. Most of the 1880s and 1890s buildings had been replaced or remodeled by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. As the second largest business district after the Central Business District, Mitchell Street became known as the Polish Grand Avenue by the 20<sup>th</sup> century where such substantial retailers as Kunzelmann-Esser, Schuster-Gimbel's, Sears, J.C. Penney's, the Grand and Goldmann's were located.

In contrast to Mitchell Street, Lincoln Avenue evolved as a neighborhood shopping district for the Polish community. Fire insurance maps show that many buildings lined the avenue by the early 1890s with most being residences. The construction of the Basilica of St. Josaphat (1897-1902) at South Sixth Street and Lincoln Avenue, in addition to the prominent Grutza Building across the street, probably fueled the commercial development. In the next two decades many Lincoln Avenue buildings were either converted to commercial use or were replaced by brand new commercial buildings. While Mitchell Street was the "downtown" of the South Side, Lincoln Avenue evolved into a secondary center for Polish activity some six block south. Lincoln Avenue filled the niche for the day-to-day shopping needs of adjacent home owners. Businesses included hardware stores, taverns, sweet shops, shoe stores, movie theaters, grocers, butchers and liquor stores. Commercial activity originally confined to the easternmost end of the street, eventually extended along Lincoln Avenue from to about South 5<sup>th</sup> Street to South 20<sup>th</sup> Street with stretches of residential in between and among the commercial buildings.

The 1100 block of Lincoln Avenue, the second block over from Kosciuszko Park, features ten commercial buildings on the north side of the street and seven on the south side of the street. On the north side of the street, where our nominated property stands, five of the buildings are masonry and five are frame. All are set apart from one another by very narrow gangways that lead to the rear of the properties. Only two properties are built right up to their lot lines. Companions to the Bzdawka Building include a former movie theater (the Lincoln Theater, 1910) and three storefronts with shaped gables. On the south side of the street there are six masonry buildings and one frame building. One building, No. 1111, is three stories tall, an uncommon height in the area. One building has a shaped gable. Some of the buildings are constructed right up to the side property lines and some have narrow gangways between the buildings.

The blocks to the east and to the west have similar character with buildings in the Arts and Crafts style, Commercial Style, Boomtown gable and Polish Renaissance Style.

To the north and to the south of this commercial block is a residential area consisting of Polish flats and cottages of frame construction, all of which have been altered with substitute siding or inappropriate remodelings.

DESCRIPTION OF BZDAWKA BUILDING
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The Bzdawka Building is a front gabled, two-and-one-half-story masonry commercial building whose main elevation fronts south onto Lincoln Avenue. It is located within a commercial district that extends, with some interruptions, from South 5<sup>th</sup> Street to South 20<sup>th</sup> Street along West Lincoln Avenue. The building occupies almost all of its narrow 30-foot width lot. A narrow passageway or gangway is located along the east property line. It is closed off from access by a short metal picket fence. Another small gap on the west side of the building, not even wide enough to walk in, is closed off from the neighboring building with a narrow masonry wall.

The Bzdawka Lincoln Avenue façade is arranged with a storefront on the first story, two groupings of windows on the second and a bank of three windows at the attic story. A small niche is located above the attic windows.

The storefront is elevated above the sidewalk by a prominent bulkhead. The main recessed entrance is set between two glass show window areas. The door itself is a single light wood door with recessed panel below. A transom is located above the door. The bulkhead area now features glass block but originally had clear glass multi-pane sash. To the left or west of the storefront is an entry that accesses the upper living unit. It features a transom and a non-historic slab door with a single vertical light.

The second story is asymmetrical in design. To the right is a projecting paneled box bay featuring four, one-over-one sash. To the left are a pair of one-over-one sash. This pair features a prominent cornice.

The third story features a bank of three one-over-one windows, smaller in size than those of the second story.

Crowning the edges of the front gable is an exceptionally bold projecting sheet metal cornice that consists of steps and curves, reminiscent of Baroque gables in Europe. At the apex of the cornice is a bold keystone.

The sheet metal shaped gable is the dominant feature of the front façade. Sheet metal is also used as a cornice above the attic and second story windows and forms a projecting cornice that divides the storefront from the floors above. The sheet metal was stamped with a corduroy pattern that gave the metal solidity and stability. Stone is used in a very restrained manner, for sills, at the base of the building, and as horizontal accents at the first story and at the banks of windows on the second story and at the attic. Stone is also used for the sill of the upper niche as well as its keystone and spring blocks.

Changes to this façade include the installation of glass block to the bulkhead (date unknown, between 1979 and 1999), replacement of the original upper apartment entry door that featured a single light door with recessed panel (date unknown, photos show two subsequent replacement doors, one slab door with a diamond shaped window and a slab door with the current vertical window). Upper floor storm windows have also been replaced with what appear to be vinyl storms. The stiles and rails are narrower than the original wood storm windows. Some of the prime windows have been replaced as well. Likewise, the three-over-one sash at the attic have been replaced with one-over-one sash that appear to be vinyl. There is no documentation for this alteration. The biggest change to the façade has been with the storefront. The two large pieces of glass with delicate glazing bars, flanking the center entrance, have been replaced by four pieces of glass with heavier metal glazing bars. Signage in individual letters has been applied above the storefront in the cornice area and strings of LED lights frame the storefront interior. The front masonry has been repointed with a reddish mortar. It is not known if appropriate mortar was used in the repointing.

The brown brick of the façade wraps the east elevation by about two feet and is replaced by uniform common brick. The east elevation features two art glass piano windows at the second story that are visible from the public right of way. Also on the second story is a projecting box bay

to the north of which are additional windows. On the first story several window openings can be seen.

The brown brick of the front façade wraps the west elevation by about two feet and is replaced by common brick of a uniform color. No windows are visible from the Lincoln Avenue public right-of-way; however, from the alley it is evident that there are some windows toward the rear of the building. The asphalt roofing material and box gutters are visible from the west. A small, unornamented chimney rises from the apex of the roof toward the rear of the building.

The rear or north elevation consists of a two story addition and a one-story addition. Only a portion of the rear elevation can be seen due to the large concrete block garage built close to the property line at the alley. Behind the hip roof garage can be seen three windows in the gable end of the main building. It appears that the original windows have been replaced. The two story rear masonry addition has a flat roof, a door leading to a wood porch, a pair of windows and a single window. The first story is not visible from the alley.

#### HISTORY OF BZDAWKA SITE

The property that is the subject of this nomination is identified as Lot 22 in Block 2 of Racke's Subdivision. This block is bordered by Lincoln Avenue to the south, Grant Street to the North, South 11<sup>th</sup> Street (originally 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue) to the east and South 12<sup>th</sup> Street (originally 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue) to the west. All but two of the lots were 30-feet in width. The two wider lots fronted Grant Street. Those fronting Lincoln Avenue were only 110 feet long. By 1894 there were seven frame buildings on the north side of Lincoln Avenue in this block. All were dwellings. On the south side of Lincoln Avenue there were only three frame buildings; one was a dwelling and the other two were stores.

The property that is the subject of this nomination passed through a number of hands before it reached the Bzdawka family. Katherine Nipper held what is today's 1112-1114 West Lincoln Avenue, along with a number of other parcels in the block in 1891 when she sold them to Francis AK Rackes and his wife Mary that year. Since the lots were described as in Rackes Subdivision, it can be speculated that she was selling the properties back to the developer. (Deeds vol. 227, page 166)

The Rackes's sold this particular lot to Lorenz and Konstancia Lezyzak in 1893 for \$400. Since the 1894 Sanborn Map shows a small frame dwelling at this location, it is presumed that it was constructed by the Lezyzak's. They are not listed in the city directories at all in the years 1893 through 1895. They may have been investor owners or perhaps one of the hundreds of individuals that missed listing in the directories over the years. (Deeds vol. 317, page 33)

The Lezyzak's in turn sold the property to Hieronymus Zech of Marinette County in 1897. (Deeds vol. 384, page 407 ) Zech and his wife Anne then sold the property to Patrick Kane in 1898. (Deeds vol. 397 page 368) Patrick then turned the property over to Joseph Kane and John Kane of Chicago that same year for \$1,000. There are a number of Kanes living in Milwaukee at this time, including more than one Patrick, but none is listed as living at this Lincoln Avenue address. They were perhaps all from Chicago. (Deeds vol. 412, page 84)

The property changed hands once again when Joseph and John Kane sold the property to Constantine Czarnecki and his wife Maria for \$1,600 in 1900. (Deeds vol. 424, page 309)

A brief scan of the Milwaukee city directories shows that Constantine Czarnecki expressed the mobility often found among Milwaukee's immigrant and working class neighborhoods. Frequent moves reflected financial stresses and a desire to improve one's status and find a suitable permanent residence.

Czarnecki first appears in the 1894 city directory as a butcher living at 1001 Garden Street along with Leopold, a laborer. In 1895 Czarneski is at 723 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue (today near the intersection of Lincoln Avenue and Windlake, no longer extant ) and in 1896 at 591 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue (South 13<sup>th</sup> Street and Lapham) with Anton Henke as A. Henke & Company. Both families lived at the building. The following year, 1897, the partners go their separate ways and Czarnecki is at 709 Forest Home Avenue (today's 1400 West Forest Home Avenue).

After purchasing the Lincoln Avenue property in 1900, Czarnecki took out a permit, on April 20<sup>th</sup>, to build an 16-foot by 22-foot by 10-foot high addition to the front of the existing building to arrange for a butcher shop. He remained in business here through 1908. (Milwaukee Building Permits 1112-1114 W. Lincoln Avenue)

Albert Bzdawka and his wife Mary purchased the property in 1909. They bought the premises not from the Czarnecki's but from Heinrich and Johanna Lueth. It is not clear at this time what connection they had with the Czarnecki's. There may have been a deed that was not registered at the courthouse. Or perhaps Heinrich Lueth, a carpenter, had some form of lien on the property. Or perhaps there was a family tie. Constantine Czarnecki is subsequently absent from the directories for a couple of years but reappears in 1911, listed as a butcher and living at 762 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue (not in address conversion). (Deeds vol. 608, page 516)

Albert Bzdawka, the purchaser of Lincoln Avenue property, did not actually move to this property but rather turned it over to his son Frank. Albert Bzdawka first appears in the city directories in 1887 as a laborer, living at 534 Lapham Street (today's 938 West Lapham, a towered corner store today). The following year, Albert is shown as having a meat market at 406 Becher Street ( today's 550 West Becher Street, no longer extant) and living on the premises. This Becher Street location would stay in the family for years. Albert's family included Frank (core maker in 1898), John (brewer in 1898) and Philip (brewer in 1898) and Theofil (laborer). Son Frank eventually became a butcher and ran a meat market at 1021 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, (today's 2367 South 12<sup>th</sup> Street at Hayes) before moving to the Lincoln Avenue store that his father had purchased. His father and brothers remained at the Becher Street location. (Milwaukee City Directories)

Albert died around 1919 leaving his estate to Josephine, John, Frank, Philip and Albert Jr. Son Frank inherited the house and \$1,000 while Albert and John inherited the household goods, furniture and meat market fixtures. Albert Jr. inherited real estate described as the 63.75 feet of Lot 24 & 25 Block 6 of Carlton's Subdivision. (Deeds vol. 768, page 498 and vol. 793 page 402, and vol. 793 page 403, and vol. 845, page 49)

With his father's death, Frank and Sophie Bzdawka were now the legal owners of the Lincoln Avenue property and embarked on an ambitious expansion in 1919. On April 11, 1919 they took out a permit to move the existing frame building into the street to allow a new building to be constructed on the site. The permit for the new store and flat was taken out April 22, 1919 at a cost of \$6,000. The contractor for the project was Frank J. Smrz but no architect is listed on the permit. By August 9, 1919, the masonry building was almost completed. To date, the disposition of the old frame building, that was temporarily moved into the street, is unknown. It is likely that it was moved to a new location. Reuse of buildings was a common practice in the Polish community. (Milwaukee Permit Records)

This new building joined twelve others along Lincoln Avenue that had either been built from scratch or remodeled into examples of Polish Ethnic Architecture/Polish Renaissance Revival architecture. One more was built later in 1920 at 501-503 W. Lincoln Avenue. These buildings included:

501-503 W. Lincoln	Henry F. Czerwinski Building	1920	architect unknown
573-575 W. Lincoln	Barney Czerwinski Building	1912	Herbst & Hufschmidt

606-614 W. Lincoln	Grutza-Leszczyński Building	1899	E. Brielmaier & Sons
701-703 W. Lincoln	Steven Rozga Building	1907	O. C. Uehling
1033 W. Lincoln	Andrew Krzewinski Building	1907	Stanley Kadow
	Krzewinski Building remodeling	1911	Henry Kulas
1100-1116 W. Lincoln	Kantak Bros. Building	1916	Stanley Kadow
1131-1133 W. Lincoln	Stanley Dejewski Building	1916	A. Michalak
	Remodeling		
1332-1332A W. Lincoln	Frank Budnik Building	1899	F. Szymkowiak
1501 W. Lincoln	Kordys & Wojcieszak Bldg.	1908	A. Michalak
1530-1534 W. Lincoln	Michael Wargin Building	1914	Stanley Kadow
1822-1824 W. Lincoln	Frank Manel Building	1913	Henry A. Kulas
1936-1938 W. Lincoln	Frank Talsky Building	1911	William Herbst

As can be seen in these examples the period of popularity for these Polish Renaissance revival buildings was rather short lived, from 1899 through 1920. All have in common a prominent shaped front gable, retail or commercial ground floor and living space at the second story. It was the owner rather than tenants that tended to live above the shops and this continued an unbroken tradition, dating back to the Middle Ages, with merchants living above their shops.

Because of the long, narrow lots, the store buildings had their gable ends facing the street in the tradition of Northern European cities. The gables were elaborately ornamented with their size and detailing serving as an indication of the status and prestige of their owners. The long narrow lot with its short end to the street was typical of north German trading centers where land within the fortified walled towns of the period was very limited and expensive. These urban forms were carried into Poland along trade routes by German merchants who settled in Polish towns. Their townhouses were soon copied by the indigenous Polish populace. The simple stepped gable, dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century Gothic tradition, was the earliest type of shaped gable to appear, but the form gradually evolved with the addition of scrolls, pediments and classical details. The early shaped gable had become more curvilinear by the early 18<sup>th</sup> century as the Renaissance, Baroque and Rococo styles supplanted the angular Gothic tradition. (Les Vollmert, Carlen Hatala, Paul Jakubovich. Milwaukee Historic Ethnic Architecture Resources Survey. City of Milwaukee. 1994; Milwaukee. Ethnic Commercial and Public Buildings Tour. Milwaukee: Milwaukee Department of City Development. 1994, pages 50-59)

The reasons why some Polish merchants adopted this form and others did not cannot easily be determined. Studies of the Milwaukee Polish immigrant experience by such scholars as Tom Hubka, indicated that the Poles adopted the common urban workers cottage form that was appearing across the country but adapted it to their own needs for housing. The Poles, predominantly from agrarian backgrounds, did not try to recreate their rural forms here in Milwaukee. Likewise, the Poles built commercial buildings in the language of the dominant American culture, with examples showing Queen Anne style and Boomtown gables that were ubiquitous across the country. Later 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings were in the American mainstream of commercial design. (Thomas C. Hubka and Judith Kenny. "The Transformation of the Workers' Cottage in Milwaukee's Polish Community: Vernacular Housing and the Process of Americanization (1870-1920). Draft article. No Date.)

Perhaps there was influence from the German American sector of Milwaukee's population. Interestingly, most of the Poles that settled in Milwaukee were from German held territories in northern Poland and the Baltic seacoast areas. The popularity of the German Renaissance Revival was quite evident in Milwaukee's German neighborhoods in commercial buildings as well as residences. In addition, these forms were familiar in Polish architecture in Europe. Gothic and Renaissance and Baroque forms made their way into Polish design and became a common feature of market squares across Poland. A lot may have had to do with the knowledge and skills of the numerous Polish American architects who were active in Milwaukee in this time period. Although it has not been documented that any had trained in Europe, they

were probably keeping up with the flood of periodicals and books being published about European architecture at this time. It was an era of renewed nationalism among the countries in Europe and older, non-classical architectural forms represented an “authentic” indigenous ethnicity. Much like in the German-American examples, these Polish Renaissance Revival buildings reflect for an owner a period of having arrived, being settled in, being successful, and were constructed not by immigrant merchants themselves, with a few exceptions, but by their children. Perhaps this style of building was simply an expression of being “Old World” in character and being distinctive from the average.

No architect is listed on the permit for Frank Bzdawka’s building. It does strongly resemble the Michael Wargin Building at 1530-1534 West Lincoln Avenue, built in 1914 and designed by local south side architect Stanley Kadow. Although the Wargin Building is twice the size, the details of the sheet metal cornice, third story windows and large keystone are very much like the Bzdawka Building. Research is ongoing.

Frank J. Bzdawka and his wife operated their butcher shop at this location for many years and in 1933, Frank J. leased the property to son Frank H. and his wife Helen for five years at a rent of \$600 per year.

Frank J. and Sophie continued to live on the premises but Frank became the president of Great Lakes Building and Loan Association and apparently retired from the meat market. He was also active in civic affairs. He was instrumental in founding the Milwaukee County Citizens Committee in 1937 along with Joseph K. Gronczewski, Lawrence Doligalski, Roman Kwasniewski and Albert Wojcieszak. This committee brought together organized groups of Polish Americans as well as delegates from Polish American societies, clubs, etc. with the goal of having fair representation in political offices. Bzdawka was described as active figure in political and patriotic affairs who wielded considerable influence in political circles. (Thaddeus Borun, compiler, We, the Milwaukee Poles. No Publisher. 1946. Pages 115,182)

In 1935 the Bzdawka Meat Market was one of eleven stores that were picketed by protestors who were angry over the high cost of meat products. The protestors were housewives who were trying to send a message to Washington, D. C. and President Roosevelt. The one day event was said to have had some effect on sales that Friday but that there had been no overall decline in meat and fish sales. Similar strikes took place in Detroit and Chicago and elsewhere around the country that year protesting the high cost of meat. (“Ask Writs for Pickets Aiding in Meat Strike. Court Appeal Suggested to Store Owners”, Milwaukee Journal, Saturday September 14, 1935; “Picketing Drives Meat Buyers to Stores of Rivals.” Milwaukee Journal, Saturday September 14, 1935)

The butcher shop subsequently became the talk of Lincoln Avenue during wartime when the Milwaukee Journal featured a story headlined “Police Keep Order at Butcher’s Sale of Ducks, Chickens” on March 20, 1943. The opening line read “Well, it’s come to this—a Milwaukee butcher was selling ducks and chickens Saturday under the protection of the Milwaukee police department.” Bzdawka asked for police assistance when his shipment of 1,400 ducks and 1,500 chickens arrived on a Friday and he anticipated a huge crowd. The police were able to keep order and it is said that the stock had pretty much been depleted by noon on Saturday although the crowds kept coming.

In a similar Milwaukee Journal story, “Feathers Fly at Duck Sale. Meat Market “Madhouse” as Housewives Scramble for Live Fowl” followed on March 30, 1945. With the promise of several hundred live ducks, the line started forming by 9 A.M. and extended back to South 10<sup>th</sup> Street and around the corner. “Inside was a madhouse” as police kept admitting a few customers at a time. “The ducks were sold cafeteria style. Bewildered at being the center of so much attention, they huddled in wire cages, piled one on top of the other, in a courtyard behind the market. After the women selected their fowl, they stood in line to have their purchases wrapped and weighed...A real battle took place when police admitted about 20 women to scrap over the

last 10 ducks. The poor birds took a beating as three or four aggressive housewives would grab one duck and start pulling.”

Some three hundred customers were still in line when the last duck was sold. It was barely 9:30 A.M. An employee thought there were “about half a hundred” ducks sold but the police estimated the number at about 400. The source for the fowl was “some duck farm.” A photo accompanying the article shows the line of customers three deep. All wanted the fresh fowl for Easter dinner on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Frank J. Bzdawka died at the age of 64 on June 15, 1944. His obituary indicates that he had been a life-long resident of Milwaukee. He was survived by his wife Sophie, his son Frank H. and daughter Helen Flagge, his sister Josephine Kujawa, and brothers Philip and Albert. His funeral services were held at the Rosolek & Sons chapel at 1403 W. Hayes Avenue and at Saints Cyril & Methodius Church. He was buried at St. Adalbert's cemetery.

Sophie continued to live in the upstairs apartment through her death from cancer in August, 1962 at the age of 74. She herself had been an immigrant from Poland and lived in Milwaukee from the age of two. Services were held at the Worden Funeral home at 1601 West Lincoln Avenue and at SS Cyril and Methodius Church on Windlake. She was buried at St. Adalbert's Cemetery.

By this date her son Frank H. and his wife Helen had moved to 3340 then 3540 South 14<sup>th</sup> Street. He retired from the business around 1960-1961 and the storefront became vacant.

Frank H. and his sister Helen Flagge petitioned for the settlement of their mother's estate in 1972. (Deeds vol. 645, page 1327)

The following year, 1973, Marvin Tyacke applied for an occupancy certificate to operate an antique store on the premise. Tyacke lived at 923 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street. (Building Permit Records)

On May 10, 1974 the city issued rehab or raze orders on the rear masonry garage. On July 30, 1974, descendant Patricia Ann Davidson took out a permit to raze the garage at a cost of \$550.

Frank H. Bzdawka and Patricia Ann Davidson then sold the building to Jose and Dolores Gutierrez in late 1974. An occupancy permit applied for by Jose Gutierrez on October 22, 1974 indicated that he was the prospective buyer and would use the building for upholstery of household furniture and autos. Gutierrez built a new concrete block garage at the rear in 1975.

Jose and Dolores Gutierrez sold the building to Eduardo and Elizabeth Perez in January 1999 and they in turn sold the property to Ana B. Sanchez, the current owner in September 2003.

Durango Western Wear, owned by Roberto Vargas, is the current occupant of the building.

While there are still some Polish specialty shops on Lincoln Avenue, a growing number of business and building owners on Lincoln Avenue since the 1970s have been Latino in ethnicity, reflecting the growth of that community on the city's South Side. In many ways history continues with the stories of new immigrants and their children and families establishing themselves in the city and partaking in the American dream.

## **VII. SIGNIFICANCE**

The Bzdawka Building is significant for its architecture and what it can tell us about the South Side Polish community of Milwaukee.



The Bzdawka Building is an excellent example of ethnic architecture in Milwaukee and one of a number of examples that cluster along the commercial district on Lincoln Avenue. Ethnic Architecture is defined as building stock that takes its design cues from buildings that were prominent in the places of an immigrant group's origins.

In Milwaukee, these groups happened to be the Germans and Poles, the two largest immigrant groups present in the city in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Germans settled earlier and had a higher level of prosperity. They designed commercial buildings, residences, and churches with the architectural features that were experiencing a rebirth on the European continent in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the wake of nationalistic fervor and unification of principalities. These design features included stepped gables, curvy shaped gables, and shaped gables in combination with towers that had bell shaped and helmet shaped roofs.

The Poles, in contrast had fewer financial resources and directed their communal efforts toward fine churches, many of them with a characteristic Polish dome or domes. The Poles did not leave behind the legacy of fine, masonry houses as did the Germans in Milwaukee. Rather, it fell to the second generation of Poles to take up the standard of ethnic pride. They expressed their ties to the old country chiefly through their commercial buildings, many of which date to the period of World War I through about 1920. It was this war that brought reunification to Poland after more than a century of having been divided and under the authorities of Russia, Germany and Austria. The children of the immigrant Poles were now in a position to express their ethnicity, an ethnicity that no amount of foreign domination could extinguish. They were Americans now but could still pay homage to their past.

Lincoln Avenue evolved as a strong, vibrant commercial district second only to Mitchell Street that had already achieved prominence by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Both streets owe their origins to transportation and to the establishment of a strong parish that concentrated activities along the street. It is a reflection of the financial growth and stability of the Polish community that it could support two commercial districts. Mitchell Street became home to large retailers and nationwide chains and offered a "downtown" shopping experience. Lincoln Avenue in contrast, stayed local with business owners running family operated shops at a small scale. This smaller scale has in many respects helped to preserve Lincoln Avenue. Smaller buildings have been easier for the current generation of the immigrant community to revitalize in contrast with the much larger and more expensive structures on Mitchell Street.

## VIII. THE ARCHITECT

At this time no architect has been identified with the design of this building. It is interesting to speculate that this could be the work of Stanley Kadow, whose design of the Michael Wargin Building at 1530-1534 West Lincoln Avenue bears resemblance in the treatment of the sheet metal work of the shaped gable including a large keystone and handling of the trim of window openings on the façade. Kadow's father was also a butcher, like Bzdawka, but established in Manitowoc. There may have been business ties or professional affiliations between the families.

Stanley Kadow was born in Germany on March 26, 1868 the son of Frank Kadow. The family immigrated to the United States before Stanley was a year old and settled in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. His father operated a meat market. Kadow relocated to Milwaukee around 1888 and from 1890 through 1893 worked for the architectural firm of Ferry and Clas. He went into practice on his own the following and moved to Bay View in 1895 where he lived the remainder of his career. We know of around 81 buildings he designed in Bay View alone. He also designed the Lincoln Theater Building in 1910 two doors down from the Bzdawka butcher shop as well as 1319 West Lincoln (1910), 1017 West Lincoln (1910, 1926), 1530 West Lincoln (1914), 1033 West Lincoln (later remodeled) 1106 West Lincoln and the Wargin Building cited above. Both the Kantak Building at No. 1106 and the Wargin Building featured the bold keystone at the apex of the front gable much like the Bzdawka Building..

Kadow died on December 6, 1933 at the age of 65.

## SOURCES

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Bzdawka, Frank J. Death Certificate June 1944. Page 3024

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"Feathers Fly at Duck Sale." Milwaukee Journal. Friday, March 30, 1945.

Hubka, Thomas C. and Kenny, Judith. "The Transformation of the Workers' Cottage in Milwaukee's Polish Community: Vernacular Housing and the Process of Americanization (1870-1920)". Draft article. No Date.

"Meat Market Operator Dies. Frank J. Bzdawka." Milwaukee Journal. Friday, June 16, 1944.

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Milwaukee. Ethnic Commercial and Public Buildings Tour. Milwaukee: Milwaukee Department of City development. 1994.

"Picketing Drives Meat Buyers to Stores of Rivals." Milwaukee Journal, Saturday, September 14, 1935.

"Police Keep order at Butcher's Sale of Ducks, Chickens." Milwaukee Journal. March 29, 1943.

Sanborn Insurance Maps of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Co., 1894, 1910, 1910-1926, 1910-1961.

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Vollmert, Les; Hatala, Carlen; and Jakubovich, Paul. Milwaukee Historic Ethnic Architecture Resources Survey. Milwaukee: City of Milwaukee. 1994.

## IX. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Bzdawka Building located at 1112-1114 West Lincoln Avenue be given historic designation as a City of Milwaukee Historic Site as a result of its fulfillment of criteria e-1 and e-5 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 320-21(3) of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances.

- e-1      Its exemplification and development of the cultural, economic, social or historic heritage of the city, state of Wisconsin or the United States.

Rationale: Despite the century of Poland's division under Germany, Russia and Austria, the identity of being Polish never left the inhabitants, even when they immigrated to the United States. The Poles who settled in Milwaukee were largely from the territory under control of the Prussian state and along the Baltic seacoast. They brought with them a desire for home ownership, a desire for their own businesses, a desire to make their churches a prominent symbol of their faith.

Despite the fact that Mitchell Street became the downtown of the South Side, it is Lincoln Avenue, more modest in scale, populated with smaller mom and pop stores that survived into the present day with a distinct character that cannot be found elsewhere in the city. Not subject to the pressures of expansion and mainstream American design, the Bzdawka Building and Lincoln Avenue speak to the moment in time when it was fashionable to construct buildings that not only expressed one's Polish heritage but also an American status symbol of commercial success.

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

Rationale: The Bzdawka Building is an excellent, intact example of Polish Ethnic Architecture/Polish Renaissance Revival in a commercial building. The style can be characterized as having a prominent front gable that displays elements from either the Gothic, the Renaissance, the Baroque or Rococo architectural traditions. In contrast to the elaborate Queen Anne style storefront with cut shingles, elaborate trim and towers, or the extended Boomtown gable once seen all over the city, Polish Ethnic Architecture/Polish Renaissance Revival features stepped or curvilinear shapes in a wide variety of design. These shapes are an abstraction of the cornices and scrolls seen on buildings in Europe in the centuries past and are a bold statement of ties to the homeland. Of the thirteen buildings that exhibit this style on Lincoln Avenue, the Bzdawka Building is among the best preserved.

### **Preservation Guidelines for the Bzdawka Building**

The following preservation guidelines represent the principal concerns of the Historic Preservation Commission regarding the historic designation of the Bzdawka Building at 1112-1114 West Lincoln Avenue. The intent of the commission is to preserve the historic, existing exterior features of the building.

Building maintenance and restoration must follow accepted preservation practices as outlined below. Any exterior changes including repair of ornamental trim 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 roof shape. The shaped gable is the signature feature of the building and is not to be obscured by rooftop elements. The installation of skylights where they would be visible from the street are not permitted as they would have a negative impact on

the building. Skylights however may be added to the roof if they are not visible from the street or public right of way. No changes can be made to the roof shape which would alter the building height, the roofline or its pitch. 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. If the building gets re-roofed, consultation with historic preservation staff is required to review and approve the new roofing material, flashing, drainage and gutters. Should a satellite dish be installed it should be placed where it is not visible from the street, preferably at the rear. No rooftop construction or addition is allowed, as this would have a negative impact on the historic character and proportions of the building. The construction of other rooftop features requires review by Historic Preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness.

B. Materials

1. Masonry

- 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. Note the building's façade features brown brick but the side walls feature a common yellow brick. Neither should be painted. Covering masonry with other materials (wood, sheet metal, vinyl siding, stucco, 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 chapters in the books, As Good As New or 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. 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. The ornamental sheet metal cornices on the shaped gable and at the storefront are essential features to preserve. They may not be removed or replaced with substitute materials. Where holes may exist in the sheet metal, repairs can be made. The wood/metal box bay at the front façade and at the east elevation must be preserved in its historic form. They may not be altered or covered over.
- 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 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. Structural wood epoxies are suggested for the lasting repair of damaged or decays areas of wood trim. Any new elements must replicate the pattern, dimension, spacing and material of the originals. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness is required before beginning repairs as some materials may actually harm the historic features.

C. Windows and Doors

1. Retain existing window and door openings. Retain the existing configuration of panes, sash, surrounds and sills, except as necessary to restore them to the original condition. Do not make additional openings or 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 the original window panes or sash. 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. The use of structural wood epoxies is strongly encouraged to repair any minor damage or decay to wood windows.
2. Most of the windows currently visible on the building appear to be one-over-one sash. There are art glass "piano windows" on the east elevation of the second floor in addition to a grouping of windows at the second story box bay. The three front gable windows once had three-over-one sash. It appears that the windows on the second story and in the front gable have recently been replaced with vinyl. While the windows fill the existing openings, the dimensions of the frames are thinner than the originals and are not appropriate. When the current replacement windows fail and the windows need replacement again, wood sash will be required to fill the openings. Clear low-e glass is acceptable but not tinted glass. New glass must match the size of the historic glass. New windows must be made of wood. Do not fill in or cover openings with inappropriate materials such as glass block or concrete block. Glass block is permitted in basement windows on the rear elevation where they are not visible from the street

Do not use modern style window units, such as horizontal sliding sash or casements, in place of double-hung sash or the substitution of units with glazing configurations not appropriate to the style of the building.

Any surviving 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. Wood combination/storm screen units or fixed storm windows that fit the shape of the original opening are permitted.

The storefront area features a recessed central opening flanked by glazed windows above a glass block bulkhead. The original large windows have been replaced with a system that has two vertical sheets of glass with heavy glazing bars. This new glazing is not appropriate to the design of the storefront but can remain while still serviceable or until the owner decides to change it. Future replacement windows will match the historic appearance. The single light center entry door is original and is to be retained. If repairs are needed consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required. The service door to the upper floor has been changed out with a flush, hollow core door. Historic photos show this door to have been a single light door. This door can remain while serviceable. Any replacement door would need to match the historic appearance.

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 generally not allowed where they are visible from the street. 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. No roll down or scissor-style security grates are allowed.

#### D. Trim and Ornamentation

There should be no changes to the existing historic trim or ornamentation except as necessary to restore the building to its original condition. The front box bay must retain its recessed spandrels. A replacement feature must match the original member in terms of scale, design, color, appearance and wood species. Spot repair is preferable to wholesale replacement of details. Sheet metal work can be repaired. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required before any changes or repairs are made to the building.

#### E. Additions

As the building occupies almost all its lot, no additions will be permitted at the front or side elevations. Any rear 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. Approval shall be based upon the addition's design compatibility with the building in terms of window proportion and placement, building height, roof configuration, scale, design, color, and materials. Additions must be smaller than the original building and not obscure the historic building.

#### F. Signs/Exterior Lighting

The installation of any permanent exterior sign or light fixture on the building shall

require the approval of the Commission. Approval will be based on the compatibility of the proposed sign or light with the historic and architectural character of the building. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required to assist in the selection of exterior fixtures. Plastic internally illuminated box signs with a completely acrylic face are not permitted.

G. Site Features

The building and its rear additions currently occupy almost the entire lot and there is not space for plantings. There is an iron picket fence that closes off the gangway between the subject building and its neighbor to the east. Any alterations to the paving, any plant materials, fencing, or rear condition of the property require a consultation with Historic Preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness.

H. Guidelines for New Construction

It is important that new construction be designed to be as sympathetic as possible with the character of the structure. It is unlikely that the property can support small-scale accessory structures, like a gazebo, garage or fountain. The rear of the property does contain a two-story and one-story addition to the primary building in addition to a garage. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness is required.

1. 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. Any new construction would be located to the rear since the lot lines and character defining features of the building would prevent any construction at the side or front elevations.

2. 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 a 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.

3. Form

The massing of the new construction must be compatible with the goal of maintaining the integrity of the original historic building as a freestanding structure.

4. 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.

I. 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.

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 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.

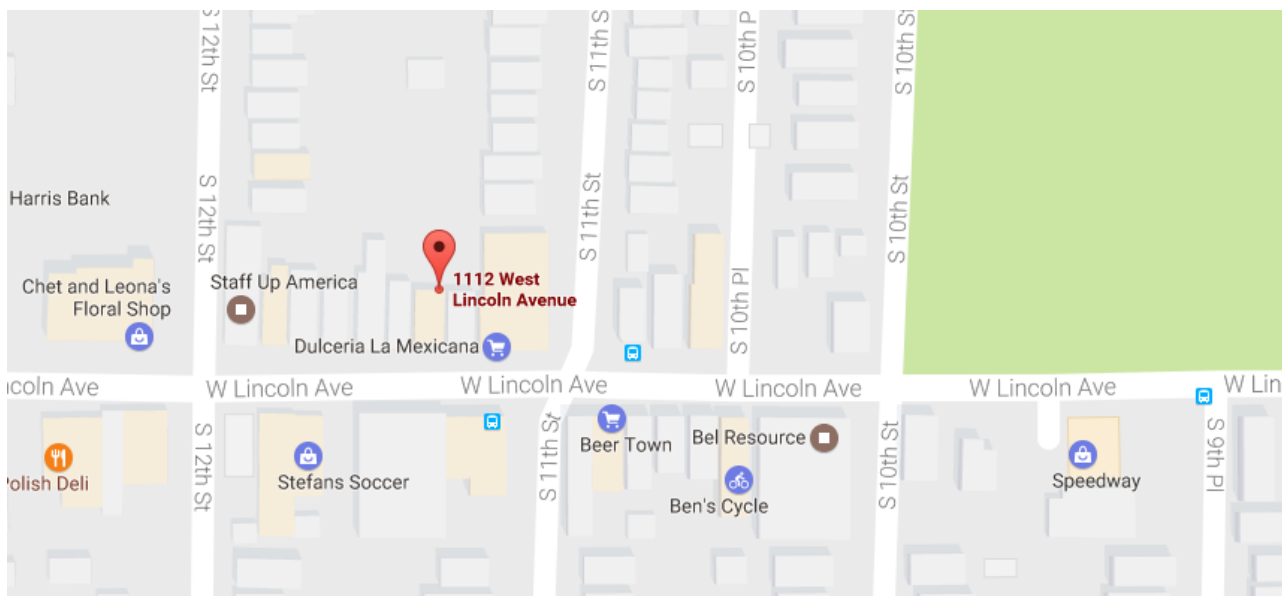
5. Additions

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. Consideration will be given to the rear additions and garage should the owner want to replace them.





1112-1114 West Lincoln Avenue



1112-1114 West Lincoln Avenue      Google maps



1112-1114 West Lincoln Avenue, Assessor's photo June 30, 1999



1112-1114 West Lincoln Avenue Assessor's Photo September 2, 1999







Photo December 30, 1927. Roman B. Kwasniewski photographer. UWM Manuscript Collection 19. Box 289.



Survey Photo 1993



1112-1114 West Lincoln Avenue. Interior. Photo dated May 19, 1931. Roman B. J. Kwasniewski photographer. UWM Manuscript Collection 19. 8 x 10 in. nitrate box 1