

Elmer, Linda

From: John Gurda <mail@johngurda.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 27, 2018 10:54 PM
To: Elmer, Linda; Hatala, Carlen; robtjohn@milwpc.com; bihildebrand@hotmail.com
Subject: Re: 2900 S. Kinnickinnic Ave.

To the members of the HPC:

I'm writing to express my support for the designation, first temporary and then permanent, of 2900 S. Kinnickinnic Ave. as a Milwaukee landmark. I haven't seen enough of the current owner's plans to form an opinion, but I think the building deserves designation on its own merits, regardless of what is proposed. Three characteristics stand out:

- 1) Architectural distinctiveness. How many Queen Anne saloons are there in Milwaukee? Not many, I'm sure, and even fewer that were built to match the angle of the streets on which they're located. Ellen Street and Kinnickinnic Avenue intersect at an angle you wouldn't find in any urban planning manual, and the building follows suit. Its graceful turrets and gables make it unusual in the city; its plan makes it unique.
- 2) Geographic prominence. The building dominates an east-facing bend in Kinnickinnic Avenue as that street, an old Indian trail, meanders through Bay View. The structure is highly visible for blocks in either direction, making it one of the neighborhood's most familiar, and most cherished, landmarks.
- 3) Historical significance. In the 1920s, when Herb Kneisler owned the establishment, it was such a center of political activity that Bay View residents dubbed it the "White House." Successive owners, with more or less success, have maintained the tavern's tradition as a pub-style center of community, with an ambience (and a back bar) that recall the days of free lunches and nickel beers.

Bay View is currently in the midst of a renaissance that has brought welcome new life to its housing stock, its businesses, and its community institutions. As developers seek more opportunities, it is vitally important to maintain the architectural fabric that was woven into the community when Bay View was a company town built around a lakeside iron mill. After surviving intact since 1891, the White House has recently suffered the denaturing influences of vinyl siding and aluminum window frames. Landmark designation would have prevented those unfortunate occurrences, and it would ensure that the building maintains the integrity it still has for future generations to appreciate. There is ample reason to designate 2900 S. Kinnickinnic an official Milwaukee landmark. I sincerely hope that the Commission agrees.

Respectfully,
John Gurda