

TEMPORARY HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT
WILLIAM C. KNEISLER TAVERN BUILDING
THE WHITE HOUSE
MARCH, 2018

I. NAME

Historic: William C. Kneisler Building

Common Name: Kneisler's White House

II. LOCATION: 2900 South Kinnickinnic Avenue

Legal Description Tax Key No. 5030647000
HANSON & MILBRATH'S SUBD NO 1 IN SW ¼ SEC 10-6-22 BLOCK 3 LOT 20 BID
#44

III. CLASSIFICATION: Site

IV. OWNER: HCI Properties, LLC
10060 West Loomis Road
Franklin, WI 53132

ALDERMAN: Ald. Tony Zielinski 14th Aldermanic District

NOMINATOR: John Ebersol

V. YEAR BUILT: 1893 (Milwaukee Tax Rolls 1890-1893; 1892-1893 Common Council
Proceedings, February 20, 1893, Milwaukee City Directories)

ARCHITECT: Not known

VI. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

THE AREA

The William C. Kneisler Building is located at one of Bay View's several multi-point intersections. In this instance South Ellen Street and South Kinnickinnic Avenue converge at a bend of Kinnickinnic Avenue to create a widened roadway with a small traffic island that helps motorists turn from South Ellen Street onto Kinnickinnic Avenue. The building itself is bordered by Kinnickinnic Avenue to the west, South Ellen to the north and East Estes to the east.

Kinnickinnic Avenue south of Russell Avenue is a mix of commercial buildings and residential buildings, with commercial buildings forming clusters at various intersections. Residential development preceded commercial development with much of the housing dating to the late 19th and very early 20th century. A construction boom in the 1920s added small scale period revival apartment buildings. Two church buildings are located in the blocks south of Russell Avenue: one, the Bay View United Methodist Church

was constructed at the intersection of Kinnickinnic and S. Clement Avenue in 1888-1889 and the Grace Episcopal Church, now significantly altered, constructed in 1916 at East Trowbridge Street not far from the Kneisler Tavern.

Due to the extended period of development, Kinnickinnic Avenue lacks the visual cohesiveness found along the avenue in the main street-like portion found at Kinnickinnic and Lincoln and Kinnickinnic between Dover and Russell. There are no consistent setbacks and building heights and scale as well as uses vary.

Among the variety of buildings and building types between Russell Avenue and Oklahoma Avenue, the Kneisler's White House stands out for its architectural character.

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Kneisler's White House Tavern is a two-and-one-half-story, wood frame Queen Anne style building set on a cream brick foundation. The building is irregular in shape with five sides, designed to fit its irregular lot that measures 66.99 along East Estes Street, 140 feet along the rear easterly line, 120 feet along the south property line, 70 feet along Kinnickinnic Avenue and 92.87 feet along South Ellen Street. The building is constructed up to the corner of Kinnickinnic and Ellen leaving a good sized side and rear yard. There is no formal landscaping. The side yard along Kinnickinnic has an asphalt-paved parking lot with vinyl fence. The rear yard is taken up with a volleyball court and the sand filled court is surrounded by a tall net-like - fence when in use (currently down). Around the south and east periphery are large voluntary trees and a row of large shrubs shield the adjacent house from the volleyball court. To the east behind Kneisler's are residential properties. Across Kinnickinnic Avenue is a Subway sandwich shop. To the north is an auto repair shop with large parking lot.

The as-yet-unknown architect gave the building two main elevations, that fronting Kinnickinnic Avenue and that fronting Ellen Street. The other elevations are simpler in design. The building was meant to be viewed traveling south on Kinnickinnic Avenue and in fact, due to the bend in the street at this point, crowns the vista right after you pass under the Chicago and North Western tracks that now border the Outpost Foods at 2826 South Kinnickinnic to the north.

The building features a tall hip roof (now asphalt shingle clad) to which has been added a gable that fronts on Kinnickinnic. Enlivening the silhouette of the building are two corbeled masonry chimneys, two gable roofed dormers on the Ellen Street side of the roof and two polygonal turrets that sprout from the second story and terminate with steeply pitched roofs. The turrets are a skillful touch, masking the transitions in the roof plane from gable to hip at the Kinnickinnic elevation and softening the transition in the change of plane from Ellen Street to Estes Street at the easterly portion of the façade. They also do a nice job of framing the Ellen Street elevation.

The first and second stories are demarcated by a canted beltcourse, once clad in decorative cut wood shingles and enhanced with dentil mouldings, but recently covered with asphalt shingles. This beltcourse is located around all sides of the building.

Fenestration on these two facades (Kinnickinnic and Ellen) consists of tall, narrow one-over-one sash, entrances and storefront windows. One arched window can be found in the front gable end. Windows on the second story were trimmed out more simply than those of the first. The second story Ellen Street windows totaled five in number, with simple frames. Two one-over-one sash are symmetrically arranged on the second story of the Kinnickinnic façade, separated by an ornamental single paned fixed sash, oriented horizontally, that appears to have leaded glass. A wood beltcourse united the lintels of the windows along both these facades and added extra shadow lines to the façade. The second story windows illuminated the living quarters of the Kneisler's.

The first story fenestration is more varied. On the Ellen Street side there were two entrances with very tall transoms. Each had a decorative wooden screen door. Adjacent were three tall windows with one-over-one sash. The decorative side casings extended up beyond the tops of the windows to terminate at the foot of the beltcourse that separates the two stories. Today one of the entrances has been eliminated with only a ventilating grill where the transom used to be. The entrance closest to the east corner has been shortened and the transom has been eliminated. Windows no longer have their decorative casings and appear to have been shortened. The upper sash in the window closest to the door (addressed at 2902) has clear leaded glass. The adjacent window does not. Aluminum storms cover the windows. With the installation of the vinyl siding in 2017, the windows are now "buried" in the siding instead of matching the plane of the clapboard siding.

The storefront feature is the most prominent portion of the first story and wraps around the corner entrance. There are three storefront windows on Kinnickinnic and a single storefront on the Ellen Street side. While once featuring the standard configuration of transom, window and bulkhead, the windows have been shortened, the bulkheads covered over or removed and the transoms replaced with arches that frame sunburst forms with almost petal-like segments. To the south or right of the three storefront windows was once an entry with transom that matched the height of the other entrances. That entrance has been removed. The corner entrance had a transom but it has been covered over. A projecting V-shaped sign hangs above the corner entrance. Permits records do not reflect when this was installed. Many of the neon tubes spelling out "Kneisler's White House since 1891" are broken.

The rear or northeasterly façade facing Estes Street is simpler in design. At the corner is the turret that transitions from the Ellen Street façade. The second story features two tall, narrow one-over-one sash. It is not clear if they once had the elaborate casings that were found on the Ellen Street façade. The beltcourse that formed the continuous lintel above the windows has been covered over or removed. One tall window is located on the first story. To the left or south of this window is a short and shallow bump-out with shed roof. Fire insurance maps show this was original. A modern seven-panel door on its left face leads to the interior. Above the bump-out is a square window. To the right of the bump-out there had been an entry door, now gone.

The southeasterly elevation roof features two gable roofed dormers matching those along the Ellen Street façade. The left dormer now has a metal vent extending from the gable end. The five second story windows are tall and narrow, with one-over-one sash. They too were linked by the continuous lintel that added definition and shadow line to the property. Michael Horne took photos of this elevation for an [Urban Milwaukee](#) article. On the first story is a grouping of three, one-over-one sash, probably early twentieth century, and a single window whose tall and narrow proportion match the other original windows. An air conditioner is suspended above the center sash in the three-window grouping. Remains of decorative side casings that match those on the first story of the Ellen Street façade show up in Michael Horne photos but have since been covered over. They illustrate where window openings had been located before the 1935 restroom bump-out eliminated them. The small bump-out structure extends out from this elevation, featuring a shed roof, various short windows high in the wall and an entrance with modern door. A large metal vent extends out over this structure.

The very short south facing elevation features one window on the second story and one grill vent on the first.

To summarize the exterior, many of the basic features of the building remain, including the locations of most windows, some of the doors, the rooftop dormers and chimneys and the dramatic turrets along the Ellen Street elevation. Interestingly, the roof features metal ridge caps as well as metal spires atop the turrets. These did not appear in the historic photos of the building but must have been added during the early part of the 20th century.

The storefronts were altered by 1975 (no permit record survives for this alteration) and reflect either a pseudo-colonial attempt to tie in with the White House nickname (although the White House has nothing like this) or a flower-power-era concept of updating the building to make it look a touch more contemporary.

Unfortunately, wood grain vinyl siding was installed last year (2017) perhaps in a misguided attempt to attract a buyer. In connection with that, aluminum/metal was installed to cover over all of the decorative details that made the building pop.

Many of the alterations are actually reversible and restoration can use historic photos to achieve accuracy.

Although the Historic Preservation ordinance does not designate a building's interior, it is to be noted that the original back bar and front bars are still in place. As noted in Bottom's Up, saloon fixtures like these were an important part of the saloon's aesthetics. In addition to being practical, their decorative details and fine quality hardwoods followed the architectural styles of the day. This Queen Anne style example is an extension of what would have ornamented a fireplace mantle in a fine home. "To the patrons, the fixtures exuded an air of elegance and sophistication far beyond what they could afford in their own homes and imparted a sense that they belonged to a world of class and privilege, if even for a few hours." Kneisler's White House is specifically mentioned in the book as retaining a rare original back bar. (Jim Draeger and Mark Speltz, Bottoms Up. A Toast to Wisconsin's Historic Bars & Breweries, Canada: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 2012, pages 29-31)

VII. SIGNIFICANCE

The William C. Kneisler Tavern Building, Kneisler's White House, is significant both for its history and its architecture.

The Kneisler Tavern, due primarily to its politically active owners William C. and his son Herbert, made this location a center for political meetings and a place where election night results were awaited with much anticipation. It does not appear that the Kneisler Tavern hosted any of the myriad social clubs, labor groups, fraternal organizations or mutual benefit societies that existed in Bay View. Purpose-built structures for the Masons, Odd Fellows, Iron Workers and the like accommodated those organization and places like the Kuehnel Building, and Hermes/Hoft Hall were cited in city directories as meeting locations for other groups who could not afford a building of their own. Yet the Kneisler Tavern remained the place most associated for local political and neighborhood gatherings, a place with a family ambiance that has retained much of its 19th character and charm over the generations.

The Kneisler Tavern is also an excellent example of the Queen Anne style. In true Queen Anne fashion, the building delights in the picturesque. It sports two polygonal turrets and four dormers and two corbelled chimneys from its steep roof, all to create a lively silhouette, especially when looking at the Ellen and Kinnickinnic facades. Changes in textures and materials are evident. Decorative cut shingles once embellished the front gable and canted beltcourse that wrap the elevations between the first and second story. Windows on the first story were framed by elaborate trim. William C. Kneisler must have known that his building would crown the vista when looking south along Kinnickinnic Avenue. Standing alone when built, with no neighboring structures, it was an instant visual landmark on the major street leading to lands further south.

Neighborhood Context

Kinnickinnic Avenue has always been the center for commercial activity for the Bay View community. It functioned as a "Main Street" although clusters of small commercial buildings were scattered among the

neighborhoods like in many small villages and towns. The reason for this prominence is directly tied to its history as a transportation route and its location just at the west border of the original village development.

When white settlers first arrived, the area we know as Bay View had already been traversed by Indian trails that evolved into Kinnickinnic Avenue and South Superior Street (early on known as the Lake Shore Road). Both led to Chicago and roughly parallel the lakeshore extending in a southeasterly direction. Today's South Chase Avenue was a third prominent trail called the "Chicago Road" located west of the above two. Today's east Bay Street (formerly known as Bay View Street and South Bay Street) was another old trail that led from the lakeshore west to the Indian Fields near today's Forest Home Cemetery. South of Russell Avenue Kinnickinnic jogs slightly to the east and follows the 1/8 section line down to Oklahoma. Early homesteaders such as Elijah Estes, Alexander Stewart and Joseph Williams built their houses along these roads.

In 1867 what had been a more rural development pattern changed when the Milwaukee Iron Company purchased 114 acres in the northeast quarters of Section 9 and the northwest quarter of Section 10. The mill grounds took up 27.5 acres and the remaining 76.5 acres were platted as building lots for the mill workers. It was platted under the name Village of Bay View on January 12, 1867. The first addition to this plat was recorded October 25, 1870 and added some 32 blocks for development. The original plat was bounded by the Chicago and North Western railroad tracks to the west, Conway Street to the north, Lake Michigan to the east and on the south by a lot or two south of Ontario Street. The Iron Company's first addition to Bay View was platted west of the Chicago and North Western tracks. It was bounded by Lincoln Avenue on the north, Kinnickinnic Avenue to the south, and the alley between South Logan and South Lenox Street to the west. That Kinnickinnic Avenue was just outside this boundary was significant as property in the official village had deed restrictions prohibiting saloons, tanneries and other noxious enterprises. Saloons and stores would develop along Kinnickinnic just a short distance away from the Milwaukee Iron Company's plats. The small cottages that were originally built along Kinnickinnic soon gave way to multi-story commercial/institutional/fraternal and governmental buildings by the 1880s.

A second commercial node evolved about a half mile south along Kinnickinnic, anchored between two churches, St. Lucas Lutheran at the north end and Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church at Russell Avenue. This district always remained smaller in scale and lacked the diversity of commercial businesses that the northern portion of Kinnickinnic had.

South of Russell Avenue the character of Kinnickinnic changed once again. Some very architecturally significant houses were developed in this stretch, all of which have since undergone insensitive remodeling. Two churches were built but commercial activity was almost not existent into the 1890s. All forms of development thinned out significantly the closer one got to Oklahoma Avenue.

When William C. Kneisler selected to acquire land and build at Kinnickinnic's intersection with Ellen Street, this stretch of the thoroughfare had relatively few houses. The surroundings may have given Kneisler the more semi-rural surroundings he was seeking for his business or else be poised to reap the rewards of future development.

KNEISLER'S WHITE HOUSE

The subject of this nomination is surrounded by much lore and some conjecture and given its long history as a tavern, many stories have been published about its past. Some details seem to be accurate; others may have been misinterpretations in the transcriptions of the oral history. The following information attempts to summarize the history of one of Bay View's long revered-visual landmarks and provide specific dates and facts about the building.

THE KNEISLER FAMILY

The Kneisler family was well known and respected in the city and had a long history of business enterprise. The Milwaukee family consisted of father Peter Kneisler and his wife Johanna and sons Henry C., William C., George F. and John C. They were an ambitious lot; all but one of the sons participated in family enterprises in the late 19th and early 20th century. The first and second generation entrepreneurship ended in the early 20th century as a younger generation found employment with other businesses. The one building and business still associated with the family is Kneisler's White House, the subject of this nomination.

PETER C. KNEISLER

Peter Christian Kneisler (April 2, 1818-June 2, 1899) was a native of Holstein, Denmark and naturalization records show he came to the US in July, 1847 through Buffalo, New York. His wife Johanna Carolina Maria Hafemeister was a native of Prussia.

Over the course of his career, Peter underwent some dramatic changes in occupation. The 1860 census shows Peter working as a blacksmith and living in the 4th Ward. City directories between 1854 and 1866 list Peter Kneisler as a blacksmith and a wagonmaker at several addresses: 211 W. Water, Tamarack between 3rd and 4th Streets, and 233 W. Water (all old addresses). (U.S. Census 1860 through Ancestry.com; Milwaukee City Directory)

Between 1867-1868 Peter had located to Kinnickinnic Avenue just south of Maple Street, "near the city limits", in what was identified as the 12th Ward. He either built or purchased a frame building addressed at 713 Kinnickinnic and would remain here the rest of his life. It seems likely that he built the two-story with stone basement building since a check of the city directory in 1866 does not list an earlier business at this location. At this point in time his son Henry C. was 16 years old; William C. was 14; George F. was 12; and John was 10. This move coincided with a change in Peter's career and he transitioned from blacksmith to merchant.

From 1868 through 1876 Peter operated a grocery on the premises. His eldest son Henry C. and second oldest, William C., assisted in the business. When a saloon was introduced within the grocery in about 1877, patriarch Peter ceased his involvement in the business and listed himself in the directories (and census) as a physician. It is not known at this time what kind of medical training Peter Kneisler had obtained. Perhaps he had medical school background in his native Denmark but was not able to make a career in health care when he came to the United States. (Milwaukee City Directory; U.S. Census 1880)

Johanna Carolina Maria Hafemeister died on October 20, 1893 at the age of 67. Peter himself died on June 2, 1899 at the age of 81. They are buried in Forest Home Cemetery as are other family members.

HENRY C. KNEISLER

Henry was the oldest of the Kneisler children, born October 28, 1851. He first appeared in the 1869/1870 edition of the city directory and was listed as a clerk. In 1872/1873 edition he was listed as a grocer. He partnered with his father under the name Kneisler & Son in 1877, a business name that is dropped after 1878. As mentioned above, the patriarch Peter seemed to be just a figurehead in the business at this point, leaving the operations to his son Henry. A new partnership is formed with his brother William C. in 1880 and called H.C. Kneisler & Bro. (later just Kneisler Bros.). The two brothers continued to operate the grocery and added or continued a saloon at 713 Kinnickinnic into the 1880s.

From the variations in the city directory listings it may be assumed that Henry C. concentrated on the grocery end of the business while William C. ran the saloon. Having a combined grocery and saloon was commonplace in the 19th century. "As early as 1837, Wisconsin territorial groceries were licensed to allow wholesale "sample rooms" where customers might taste "less than one quart" of the liquor they were about to buy." Over time saloons evolved as stand-alone businesses but still resembled other retail establishments in overall features although the back bar and front bar came to sell either liquor by the bottle or in glasses instead of holding dry and canned goods and the like. (Draeger and Speltz, Bottoms Up, pages 6-7)

After William left the family business in 1889, Henry C. teamed up with his brother John C. The two jointly ran the grocery business as well as John's flour and feed operation located next door north at 711 Kinnickinnic. For a number of years the directories list Kneisler Brothers as just a grocery with the two addresses (711 and 713 Kinnickinnic) but from the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps it is clear the flour and feed operation was ongoing at 711 Kinnickinnic.

The 1910 census shows that Henry's family consisted of wife Mary (age 52), daughter Minnie (age 22), daughter Ida (age 19) and son Fred (age 17). Henry continued living at 713 Kinnickinnic through 1912 then moved the grocery to 598 1st Avenue (old number, later 1578 South 6th Street, site of a BP Station today at Becher Street) where he also lived. Living with him was his daughter Minnie, then employed as a clerk. Henry C. later moved to 437 ½ 16th Avenue (old number, later 1125 South 21st Street, now a playground) and lived there with his son Frederick (a patternmaker) and daughter Ida (a clerk). Henry C. died at the age of 65 on February 28, 1918.

JOHN C. KNEISLER

Youngest brother John C. Kneisler (b. 1868-March 17, 1908) first appears in the city directory in 1877, operating a flour and feed store immediately north of the family compound at what was addressed 711 Kinnickinnic. It is not known if this had been an existing building or one that was constructed around 1877 for the new enterprise. John C. partnered with his brother Henry under the Kneisler Brothers name but concentrated on the flour, feed, hay and grain business. This frame building was only one story tall and connected to a long frame shed at the rear. In turn, the shed connected to a 1 and ½ story frame barn with one story wings to the either side.

John C and his family lived in the two story frame residence to the rear of the sheds. His family in 1900 consisted of wife Emilia (Borkhagen) (b. September 1863), son Arthur G. (b. September 1883), son William R. (b. June 1885), daughter Alma (b. December 1889) and son Oscar (b. April 1891). A daughter Alseda died at the age of 1 year 11 months on February 22, 1889. (U.S. Census 1900; Milwaukee Sentinel 1889 February 23 Page 3)

The flour, feed, hay and grain operation continued at 713 and 711 Kinnickinnic after John C. died on March 17, 1908 at the age of 50. His sons Arthur G, William R. and Oscar J. kept the business going and city directories show that they ran the Bay Elevator at S. Bay and Aldrich streets as well as having offices for the wholesale and retail portion of the business in the Chamber of Commerce building downtown. The business was in operation through 1926 when it closed. The brothers pursued other occupations after that. The buildings on Kinnickinnic fell vacant and over time were demolished.

GEORGE F. KNEISLER

Third oldest brother George (b. January 16, 1856) embarked on a different course and did not participate in the family business. He worked as a cigarmaker in the late 1870s, then worked as a laborer, ran a saloon with Frederick Ziemer on today's South 1st Street in 1880 and 1881, dissolved the partnership in 1882, had a saloon or worked as a bartender at 253 Lake Street (old address) and died at the age of 30 on March 22, 1886. During this time period he was sometimes living at home (713 Kinnickinnic) or at his

place of employment. (Milwaukee City Directory; Milwaukee Sentinel 1882 April 12 page 2 column 2; 1886 March 23 page 5 column 2)

WILLIAM C. KNEISLER

The Kneisler family member connected with the building under consideration for local historic designation was second oldest son William C., born September 1853. He initially worked as a heater (1878) then fireman (1879), presumably at the Milwaukee Iron Company, and then began working in the family grocery store at 713 Kinnickinnic in 1880. He and his brother Henry C. were partners under the name Henry C. Kneisler & Bro. then Kneisler Bros. William apparently ran the saloon portion of the business. We know he held the liquor license for 713 Kinnickinnic per Common Council Proceedings listing him with a license for this address. Like most of the family, he lived in the residential part of the building (713 Kinnickinnic) until relocating in 1889.

William engaged in other pursuits besides the saloon/grocery at 713 Kinnickinnic. The Milwaukee Sentinel reports during the 1880s at least seven real estate transactions in which William was either the buyer or seller. Lots were located in either the 11th or 12th wards or Bay View/Town of Lake/17th ward. He purchased from Andreas Stanach, August Weir, Charles W. Milbrath and sold to brother Henry C., Albert Luebke, Simon Harrack and Louis Neukrich. There were undoubtedly other transactions that missed getting reported in the press. (Milwaukee Sentinel, 1883 April 20 page 7; October 2 page 6; October 12 page 7; 1884 May 19 page 7; 1889 April 16; September 7 page 6; 1891 December 10; 1892 May 19 page 7)

William C. Kneisler was politically active and opened 713 Kinnickinnic for caucus meetings, anti-saloon-license tax meetings and the like. William was elected a delegate to represent the 12th ward at the Republican City Convention in 1884. (Milwaukee Sentinel 1884 March 23, March 26 page 5) The 12th ward Republicans also organized to form a Blaine and Logan club to strategize for an upcoming political campaign. Meetings were held every week at Kneisler's. (Milwaukee Sentinel 1884 July 15, July 18) Saloonkeepers organized to protest high license fees and William was selected a representative from the 12th ward in 1885. (Milwaukee Sentinel 1885 September 8 page 7) William was likewise selected a delegate to the Anti-Prohibition convention to be held in Janesville in the summer of 1891. (Milwaukee Sentinel 1891 June 20)

In 1889, seeking to expand his horizons, William left the family compound to run Union Park, further south on Kinnickinnic Avenue adjacent to the Chicago and North Western Railroad tracks that crossed Kinnickinnic. Today the park site is the location of Outpost Natural Foods grocery (2826 South Kinnickinnic), located across from Sijan Park. The train tracks are now elevated above the street. Union Park's old address was 1458 Kinnickinnic. We know that the saloon portion of the family business at 713 Kinnickinnic continued and later license holders included Henry Frank (1890, the same year William gets his license at Union Park), Frank Hoeh, Hermann H. Witt and August Prahl. Ads in the Milwaukee Daily Journal in 1890 announce the park's opening for the year and William C. Kneisler's name is boldly listed at the bottom of the ad.

The park was to open for the summer on June 8, ¹⁸⁹⁰ and the ad promised "Good Music in attendance. Schlitz's lager beer and other refreshments will be served. Ball in the Evening. Everybody is cordially invited." (Milwaukee City Directory; Milwaukee Daily Journal June 7, 1890 page 8 and multiple other dates; Proceedings of the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee 1889-1890 page 548 January 13, 1890; Proceedings 1890-1891 page 61 May 5, 1890; page 63 May 5, 1890; page 81 May 19, 1890; page 395 October 7, 1890; page 441 November 3, 1890; page 665 March 9, 1891)

Union Park had been purchased by the Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company in May, 1887 and was part of the conscious effort to promote the Schlitz brand through real estate acquisitions in addition to marketing

their beer and expanding sales across the country. In 1879/1880 the company had previously acquired Quentin's Park, renamed it The Schlitz Brewing Company Park in February 1880 then proceeded to add a concert hall, a pavilion and observatory.

The 7 ½ acre Union Park site was likewise improved and the Milwaukee Sentinel reported that the company would soon open a summer garden there. (Milwaukee Sentinel May 7, 1887 page 3 column 3)

Its location, adjacent to the Chicago and North Western tracks was commented upon in the Milwaukee Sentinel on January 26, 1890 (page 12). The crossing had no safety barriers and it was said persons could not see a train coming if approaching from the west. "There is a vast amount of travel along the avenue at this particular point, as many people last summer built homes at Fernwood [south of Oklahoma] and St. Francis parks. They have frequently complained of the unprotected nature of the crossing". One resident recommended either installing gates or hiring the unemployed/unskilled to serve as gatekeepers as they would be glad to work for "very small pay."

William C. Kneisler remained the proprietor of Union Park through 1892. At this point in time outdoor beer gardens run by private owners or breweries were among the most popular destinations for a recreational outing. City parks were still in their infancy. Land was being purchased, landscape plans being made, eminent designers like Frederick Law Olmsted were being courted and hundreds of trees bushes and flowers were being planted to enhance natural wooded groves. In contrast to the private beer gardens, the municipal parks promoted sobriety and family oriented activities like strolling, boating, horticulture, picnics, and later golfing, tennis. The 1891 city directory lists 14 private beer gardens under the heading "Parks and Gardens". While most were at the edges of urban development, others were located in the midst of the city.

It is not clear what motivated William to leave Union Park and build his own establishment, potentially in competition with his old employer Union Park. Looking at it another way, perhaps he was a good manager and Schlitz encouraged the opening of another tied house to carry its brand.

Union Park did remain in operation after William left and other operators included J. C. Schuers (1893), W. P. Schumacher (1893), T.F. Cummings (1894) and John Koenig (1899). The above discussion of the railroad crossing adjacent to Union Park indicated that many new homes were being constructed to the south so the population was moving to this southern stretch of Kinnickinnic which had been only sparsely populated up to this time. Kneisler may have wanted to capitalize on the newly developing area, one away from the challenges of an adjacent railroad track.

The tax rolls from 1890 show Kneisler owning the parcel under consideration for local historic designation. The parcel is described in metes and bounds since there had not yet been platted land around the property. The boundary description matches the lot dimensions today. Owing to a bend in Kinnickinnic Avenue, the parcel was irregular and measured 66.99 along East Estes, 140 feet along the rear easterly border, 120 feet along the south property line, 70 feet along Kinnickinnic Avenue and 92.87 feet along South Ellen Street. The parcel had excellent visibility from all directions.

The Sentinel, reporting on real estate transactions on August 26, 1891 (page six) a year later, listed Ren Estes et al as selling property to William C. Kneisler in the southwest quarter of Section 10 in the Seventeenth Ward. Specific deed research will be required to see whether a land contract had been involved since it was unusual to report the sale of property in the press a year after its actual acquisition. (Milwaukee Tax Rolls, Seventeenth Ward 1890 page 964 and 969; 1891 page 899 and 909; 1892 page 951)

At the time of Kneisler's 1890 purchase, the lands surrounding this parcel had not yet been subdivided. The process of platting could take some time. The land had to be surveyed; streets had to be laid out in conformance with city regulations; the city's Common Council had to approve the plat; the County Board

had to give approval and then the plat could be registered with the Register of Deeds. Afterwards, grading and street improvements and the like were made so sales could begin.

Developers may have been in the process of getting the adjacent land ready for platting when Kneisler purchased directly from Estes. When the property around Kneisler's acquisition was finally laid out in blocks and lots, it was called Hanson & Milbrath's Subdivision. The Milwaukee Common Council approved the plat on August 24, 1891, over the veto of Mayor Peter J. Somers who indicated that he thought the plat contained more land than the developers actually owned. The subdivision did not appear in the tax rolls for the Seventeenth Ward until 1892. (Proceedings 1891-1892, page 284 June 29, 1891; page 299 July 13, 1891; page 339 July 27, 1891; page 395 August 24, 1891)

Although Kneisler owned the property in 1890, he did not immediately construct the building we know today. His personal property assessment in the tax rolls for 1889, 1890, 1891 and 1892 shows that he was still at Union Park. One reason for the delay may have been the platting of the property around the Kneisler's purchase, causing a delay in the legal closing and making construction infeasible. When Hanson & Milbrath's subdivision was ultimately created, Kneisler's property became Lot 20 of Block 3 in the development. No improvements were shown on the property from 1890 through 1892.

The building we know today was constructed or completed in 1893. Common Council Proceedings 1892-1893, February 20, 1893, show that Kneisler transferred his liquor license from Union Park to the current building in 1893, addressed at that time at 1578 Kinnickinnic. (Proceedings 1892-1893 page 648) Typically, tax rolls show some improvement on a parcel when a building was under construction. No such indication was shown on the tax rolls for 1892. Perhaps the construction started after assessments were made for 1892. We can be certain, however, from the liquor license and the city directories that the Kneisler tavern was open for business beginning in 1893. The origin for the 1891 date is unknown. Kneisler descendant Beth Hildebrandt indicates that the back bar is stamped 1891, but that would indicate a date of manufacture. William C. Kneisler owned the property before that date, was still running the saloon in Union Park through 1892 and tax rolls show no structure or structure under construction until 1893. (E-mail correspondence with Beth Hildebrandt march 28, 2018)

Oral history has indicated that Kneisler mortgaged the purchase of his property or the construction of the tavern through the Schlitz Brewing Company. That is a possibility since Kneisler had worked for Schlitz at Union Park. If the construction and or purchase was made possible through the Schlitz Brewing Company, Kneisler's would have become what is called a tied house, a saloon that was obligated to sell the product of the brewery that financed the operations. Actual research is needed to confirm the oral history about the Schlitz connection. (Note: one photograph e-mailed by Beth Hildebrandt shows a large Schlitz wall sign on the second story of the elevation facing Estes Street)

Unfortunately we do not know the designer of Kneisler's tavern building. City permit records should have given us that information but sadly, surviving permit records date only as far back as 1933. The two and one half story wood frame building was well designed to fit the unusual configuration of the lot, something that was commonly practiced in the 19th century but not so today. Its steep roof featured dormers and the odd junctures and transitions of the hipped roof were skillfully masked by two turrets with steep roofs which give prominence to the corner setting. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries corner locations were always prized and assessed higher by municipalities as a result. The buildings constructed on them tended to be more elaborate and featured more bells and whistles than those in mid-block. They were meant to attract attention, from at least two directions if not more. They often became the visual landmarks in their neighborhoods as the Kneisler building did. Historic photos show that the city once had some very colorful corner commercial properties, most of which have since been demolished.

The building would serve the Kneisler family well into the 20th century. The downstairs was devoted to the saloon while the upper floor had the family living quarters. This was a typical arrangement for many

businesses at the time not just taverns. Kneisler may have selected a large lot size in order to run a small outdoor beer garden, a smaller version of what he had managed at Schlitz's Union Park for four years. The Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for 1910 shows a long, one-story frame structure toward the back of the property. It likely had something to do with Kneisler's interest in raising and showing chickens as well as dogs. He won second place for a White Plymouth Rock cock he exhibited at the Milwaukee Feathered Stock Association meeting as reported in the Milwaukee Journal December 23, 1899. It was said "from a fancier's standpoint the exhibit has brought together a better bred lot of stock than has been seen in many years." Pigeons were also included in the judging. (Milwaukee Journal, 1899 Saturday December 23, Page 3; E-mail correspondence with Beth Hildebrand)

The Kneisler family that occupied the tavern's apartment included, in addition to William C., his wife Wilhelmine/Minnie Hafemeister whom he had married in 1881. They had four children: Alfred William Edgar, born February 23, 1886, Irene born August 1888, Herbert Walter born December 18, 1891 and Norma Eugenie Estella born December 28, 1896.

In the column about activities in Bay View in 1895, the Milwaukee Sentinel reported that the Kneisler's entertained "about twenty young friends in honor of their daughter's Irene [sic], birthday last Thursday [Thursday August 23rd]." She would have been around seven years old at the time.

Oral history has it that William C. Kneisler remained active in politics or at least made his saloon available at his new place for political discussions and gatherings associated with local elections. The Sentinel reported that a public meeting would be held at Kneisler's sponsored by the Socialist Labor Party on Sunday October 16, 1898. The topic was a lecture by Thomas Keinard of New York entitled "The Power of the Ballot in the Hands of the Working People."

The family experienced a number of deaths while owning the property. Wilhelmine/Minnie died in 1902 at the age of 47. Son Alfred William Edgar died on September 5, 1902 at the age of 16. Daughter Norma Eugenie Estella died in 1907 at age 10. Michael Horne in his June 3, 2015 article for Urban Milwaukee indicates that Alfred died of tuberculosis and Norma died of an infection from a scrape occasioned by a skating accident. (Michael Horne, "Kneisler's White House, City's Most Historic?", Urban Milwaukee, June 3, 2015)

The U.S. Census of 1910 shows that only Herbert and Irene were living at the building with their father William. The census shows that Herbert (age 18) worked as a "crater" at the Harvester Works. It appears that he tried his hand at a number of professions. He was listed in the directories as a barkeeper in 1907, a patternmaker in 1908, an electrician in 1910, a tube-roller in 1913-1916, and a foreman in 1918-1919. His sister Irene (age 21) had no occupation in 1910 but presumably kept house. She later married Rudolph E. Zahn and had children William, Norma and Betty. Betty would marry Raymond S. Hildebrand. The children would factor into the ownership of the building in later years.

William C. Kneisler died on April 27, 1919 right at the onset of Prohibition. His son Herbert took over the family business and it was soon listed as a soft drink parlor in the directories. In the 1920 U. S. Census, however, Herbert is listed as a saloonkeeper. Local oral history indicates that Kneisler's like many saloons continued dispensing alcohol throughout Prohibition. Herbert married Jessie B. Hammes when both were 23 years old, in 1914. City directories show them living with the senior Kneisler in the apartment above the saloon.

It is not known exactly when the building took on the nickname "The White House". The building had always been painted white with contrasting dark color sash and front gable shingles as seen in a historic image of the building. In a 1941 article in The Bay View Observer, the building was referred to as The Capitol, a nickname "known throughout the district." (Erwin F. Zillman, So You Will Know, a compilation narrated and edited by Erwin F. Zillman, Milwaukee: The Milwaukee Publishers, Inc., 1966, page 43) In an undated article, "Memories of Bay View", part of the Jaunts with Jamie series, it was said the two turrets

or “towers” (as they were called in the article) led to the White House name (although the actual White House had no towers) but it could also have been a result of its being a rendezvous for politicians. The nominator of this property, John Ebersol recalls that politicians Norman Hundt and Ted Wedemeyer used the premises as an informal “headquarters” or gathering spot in which to watch the election tallies come in and get posted on the chalkboard once hanging inside. Wedemeyer became the district alderman in 1936.

Herbert had a long tenure running the White House. Like all taverns re-opening after the repeal of Prohibition, Kneisler’s required an occupancy permit. It was dated June 18, 1934 and indicated the place employed two male and one female employee. Zillman’s article from 1941 mentioned that Herbert had a “loyal understudy”, Roy Link, who had been there six years and “whose presence enables the bulky proprietor to enter into the civic and fraternal spirit of the community.” (Zillman, page 43)

In addition to tending bar, Herbert was a member of the Kilbourn Masonic Lodge No. 3 as well as a member of Wisconsin Scottish Rite Bodies and the Tripoli Shrine. Michael Horne reported that his last years were spent in a wheelchair following the loss of his legs to diabetes. Herbert died on Saturday, June 23, 1973 at the age of 81. After his death the family leased the bar operations to the former manager of the South Shore Yacht Club’s bar. (Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places, 2900 South Kinnickinnic Avenue, prepared by Thomas Beckman, February 1, 1975) The business was taken over by his niece Betty and her husband Raymond S. Hildebrand (daughter of Herbert’s sister Irene) and their son Scott Hildebrand and daughter Beth Freda

The property was under the ownership of William Zahn and his sisters Betty Hildebrand and Norma Paulsen in 1976. Documents in 1993 show Raymond F. Hildebrand and William Zahn were owners and in later years the property went back and forth to Karen Miller and Dawn H. Salopek, and various Hildebrand and Zahn trusts and estates before the property was sold on land contract to Sean Raffaelli and Donald Raffaelli, BUGSME LLC in December 29, 2006. On January 3, 2018 the property was sold once again to HCI Properties, whose contact is David Griffith.

The Kneisler Tavern Building has remained in near original condition over its history on both interior and exterior but recent years have seen an erosion of its architectural integrity, the most significant of which was the application of vinyl siding in 2017.

Surviving permit records begin in 1933 although records should have gone back to the time of construction.

Permit show that a ladies toilet room was added in 1933 thought to be the small addition along the southeasterly facade. Fire damage in the amount of \$3,000 was repaired in December, 1934. A 72-inch tall fence was added in 1956. An unsafe and dilapidated one story frame shed was demolished in 1958, probably the shed that appeared in the 1910 Sanborn Map. In 1974 there were orders to install proper exit door hardware, paint the dormers and provide proper drainage and a dust free surface for the parking area located along the Kinnickinnic Avenue portion of the property. The matter continued into 1977 when the lot was paved at an estimated cost of \$3,000. Cedar board fencing was installed in 1982. In 1992 a rear volley ball court (along Ellen and Estes Streets) became a matter of contention since such recreational use was not permitted in a Local Business District. The Board of Zoning Appeals granted a one-year variance on October 1, 1992 to allow the volleyball court. As a condition, the court needed to be moved as far east as possible on the property and required a fence so as to prevent balls from being hit into the public right of way and street. The Commissioner of Public Works Janes Kaminski had recommended against closing off Ellen Street during the frequently held games. The variance was renewed through the 1990s and today the volleyball court is still in place.

Permit records do not document the most significant changes that occurred to the building. The most obvious have been the alterations to the storefront windows. The three along Kinnickinnic Avenue and

the one on Ellen adjacent to the corner entrance have been shortened, have had their transoms blocked over and their bulkheads covered over. In place of the transoms are arched sunburst forms, a nod to Colonial Revival perhaps, with fan shaped panels. They are also somewhat reminiscent of the “flower power” motifs showing up on buildings in the 1960s. They were in place at the time the Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places form was prepared for the building on February 1, 1975. The easternmost entrance along Ellen Street has lost its transom. The door closer to Kinnickinnic along Ellen is completely covered over with only a vent where the transom used to be. The entrance at the far end of the front façade has been completely removed. Basement windows, showing prominently in the historic photo have been replaced with glass block or else bricked up. The grade has changed over time and the windows are just barely visible above the sidewalk. All decorative moldings that framed the windows has been removed or covered over. The first story windows along Ellen have been replaced with shorter windows. The decorative cut cedar shingles in the front gable end and along the canted beltcourse between the stories has been replaced with asphalt shingles. The 2017 vinyl siding application covered over or removed the fine exterior trim that really made the building pop. Gone or covered are the small dentils that ran below the second story cornice, the fascia board below the roof, and the beltcourse that served as a lintel above the windows. Likewise, the detailed brackets/corbels at the turret roofs has been covered. There is no sign permit to document the old neon sign “Kneisler’s White House since 1891” hanging above the entrance. It perpetuates the incorrect date of 1891.

Do the alterations impact the historic character of the building? It is visually less appealing than it was just a short time ago but the alterations are still reversible. The building still retains its historic and architectural importance.

VIII. THE ARCHITECT

No architect has yet been identified as the designer of the Kneisler White House Tavern. If the tavern was financed by Schlitz, it does not have the hallmarks of other Schlitz-financed buildings such as the Hummel Uihlein Building (2673-2679 North Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive) or the Schlitz Tavern at Humboldt and North Avenues. It does not resemble known works of Charles Kirchhoff who “prepares all the plans and has exclusive control of all the buildings erected by the Joseph Schlitz and Fred Miller Brewing Company.” (Milwaukee Sentinel, 1892 November 27, issue 9)

The designer was likely a South Side-based architect and may have included: P. M. Christiansen, Andrew Elleson, Stanley Kadow, Bernard Kolpacki, Otto Uehling, or Charles Lesser. Lesser did execute a number of Schlitz tavern buildings although they tended to be simple masonry corner buildings with corbeled parapets.

Just recently it has been discovered that the turret on the building addressed at 517 West National Avenue bears a strong resemblance to those at Kneisler’s. The National Avenue building was built for J. C. Pfeifer in 1892, at about the time that Kneisler’s would have been designed. Sadly, the architect for the Pfeifer Building has not yet been identified either.

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IX. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the William C. Kneisler Tavern Building (Kneisler's White House) be given temporary historic designation as a City of Milwaukee Historic Site as a result of its fulfillment of criteria e-1, e-5 and e-9 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 320-21(3) of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances.

- e-1. Its exemplification of the development of the cultural, economic, social or historic heritage of the City of Milwaukee, State of Wisconsin or of the United States.

For over 100 years the Kneisler's White House has been the gathering place, the informal headquarters of Bay View politicians who discuss strategy and wait out election night tallies. Founder William C. Kneisler was politically active himself in his younger years. The semipublic nature of saloons in general, made them ideal spots to congregate. Although Kneisler's did not have a large meeting hall located in the building it was a natural place to gather in the south end of Bay View where other saloons were lacking.

It is significant that other once famous halls/taverns that served as gathering spots for so much of Bay View's public activities and recreation have not been as fondly remembered or written about like Kneisler's. Kneisler's was written up in 1941 to commemorate the 50th birthday of Herbert Kneisler. At that time it was said "Yes, 2900 is so well established that it is synonymous with Kneisler and the old and young alike, like to congregate in the

happy atmosphere of the Capitol.” Zillman added “The establishment is unique in clinging to the old traditions. For instance: the blackboard for election statistics is resurrected each election, and the winners and losers alike flock to the popular rendez-vous.” The building was featured in two “Jaunts with Jamie” columns in the Milwaukee Sentinel (undated), an on line article by Michael Horne (Kneisler’s White House, City’s Most Historic”, Urban Milwaukee June 3, 2015), Bobby Tanzilo (“Urban spelunking: Kneisler’s 126-year-old White House Tavern”, On Milwaukee March 23, 2017), Damien Jaques (“The White House becomes a clean house”, On Milwaukee June 12, 2011), Molly Snyder (“Who wants to buy The White House?” On Milwaukee August 2, 2017 and “Historic Kneisler’s House to close at year’s end”, On Milwaukee December 18, 2017). In 1991 the Bay View Historical Society honored the building with one of its plaques, recognizing its continued place in Bay View culture and history. The plaque is still located next to the corner entrance.

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

Kneisler’s White House is an excellent example of the Queen Anne style which celebrates exuberant silhouettes, variety in cladding and texture and distinctive towers, turrets or bays. The style was well suited for a building occupying the unusual shaped corner lot and the building was given many architectural details that until last year, were still extant and visible. Many details are likely surviving under the aluminum trim.

- e-9 Its unique location as a singular physical characteristic which represents an established and familiar visual feature if a neighborhood, community or the city.

Sited at a bend of Kinnickinnic Avenue with its signature turrets and dormers, Kneisler’s has been a visual landmark from the time of its construction. Its generous sized lot guaranteed that it would stand free and clear and not be hemmed in by later development.

Preservation Guidelines
For the
William C. Kneisler Tavern Building (Kneisler's White House)

The following preservation guidelines represent the principal concerns of the Historic Preservation Commission regarding the temporary historic designation of the William C. Kneisler Tavern Building (Kneisler's White House). The intent of the commission is to preserve the historic, existing exterior features of the building and guide any changes and restorations that might be done on the exterior.

Building maintenance and restoration must follow accepted preservation practices as outlined below. Any exterior changes including repair/restoration of siding, windows, roof, turrets and other details 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 dramatic combination of hip roof with front gable is a signature feature of the building. No changes can be made to the roof shape which would alter the building height, the roofline or its pitch. All original dormers and their gables roofs are to be retained as they are a significant part of the design and silhouette of the building. Turret roofs along with their detail are to be retained. Retain ridge caps and turret pinnacles as they are an important part of the roof. No rooftop construction, addition, or construction of additional stories is allowed, as this would have a negative impact on the historic character and proportions of the building. Re-roofing requires consultation with historic preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness to ensure appropriate materials and installation. 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. Telecommunications and electronic and energy efficiency equipment (satellite dishes, cell antenna equipment, solar panels, solar shingles, etc.) all require review and approval by the Historic Preservation Commission. Decorative cut shingles in the front gable have been covered with asphalt shingles. It is encouraged that they be removed and decorative cut shingle be reinstalled or restored.

B. Materials

1. Masonry

- a. Unpainted brick or stone 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. Covering masonry with other materials (wood, sheet metal, vinyl siding, etc.) is not allowed. The original cream brick foundation has been painted. It can remain.
- 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. 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 or 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. If there is a future proposal to re-open the basement windows and clean the paint off the foundation brick, Historic Preservation will assist with technical information and help the applicant with the Certificate of Appropriateness process.
- 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. It appears that there has been recent siding (2017) of the exterior with wood grain patterned vinyl. Aluminum/metal has been used to cover over decorative detail on the wood cladding and alter the trim at the windows, the turrets, and along the side walls on all elevations.
- 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. No trim is to be removed from the building. 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 decayed areas of wood and wood trim. Any new elements must replicate the pattern, dimension, spacing and material of the originals, including the species of wood. The current condition can remain but any future alterations will likely trigger the removal of the vinyl siding and the uncovering and repair of dentils, fascia boards, beltcourses and trim around windows and doors and the uncovering of transoms. It is highly encouraged to remove the vinyl siding and aluminum/metal trim and make repairs and paint the wood siding and trim. Any removal of vinyl and aluminum siding and trim will require a Certificate of Appropriateness and documentation of conditions before restoration would begin. NOTE: Historic photos show that the wood clapboards had a uniform narrow exposure on both the first and second stories. In more recent times, possibly when the storefront windows were altered, clapboards with a wider exposure were installed on the first story. If a restoration is proposed, either narrow or wide clapboard exposure can be considered for the first story.

C. Windows and Doors

1. Retain existing window and door openings and original doors and windows within those openings. Second story windows appear to be original but now have aluminum storms. The storefront windows have been altered on the Kinnickinnic Avenue and Ellen Street sides of the building. Their transoms were removed and replaced with sunburst motifs set within arches. This alteration was already in place when the Milwaukee Landmarks Commission considered the building in 1975. [It was ultimately not given landmark status] This alteration may be retained although there is evidence of deterioration. If they are to be removed, the original transoms are to be restored and the storefront windows returned to an appearance that resembles their original configuration including bulkheads.

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. Do not remove, cover over or block down existing openings. Do not make changes in existing original fenestration or entrances 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 wood 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. In the event any windows need to be replaced, consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required to determine appropriate glazing patterns. It is highly encouraged to return to the original configuration of the storefront windows as seen in historic photos. 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. Basement windows have either been filled in with glass block or bricked in. 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 changes or replacements or restoration will require a Certificate of Appropriateness and appropriate wood windows.

Any 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. The current aluminum/vinyl storms may remain but when they are changed out wood storms and screen will be required. Any replacement doors must be appropriate to the historic period of the building. 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 not allowed in the windows that front the street. On other doors and windows they 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.

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. A replacement feature must match the original member in terms of scale, design, color, appearance and material. Existing historic trim must not be removed unless it is for the purpose of repair. Spot repair is preferable to wholesale replacement of details. Wood epoxy repair is often highly desirable for permanently repairing smaller areas of decay or damage to wood elements. It is strongly encouraged to remove the cladding that now conceals the ornamental trim and make any necessary repairs. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required before any changes or repairs are made to the building.

E. Additions

Additions are not encouraged as all five elevations are visible from the adjacent streets. Any proposed addition or additions must be smaller and shorter than the original building and not obscure the historic building and its details. If considered they must be set back from Kinnickinnic Avenue and Ellen Street and not change the unusual footprint of the building.

F. Signs/Exterior Lighting

The installation of any permanent exterior sign or light fixture will 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. It is strongly encouraged to retain and restore the existing historic neon signage.

G. Site Features

The adjacent parking lot and volleyball court are part of the historic site. Future changes to these elements including but not limited to removal, landscaping, outdoor patio, decks, new fencing and so on will require Commission approval. New plant materials, paving, or fencing shall be compatible with the historic architectural character of the building. Should a fence be considered in the future examples of appropriate fencing can be found in As Good As New and Living With History. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required before starting any work that would involve the landscape features, parking, walkways, driveway, outdoor seating, and so on and will require 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. Small-scale accessory structures, like a gazebo, garage/parking pad or fountain, may be permitted depending on their size, scale and form and the property's ability to accommodate such a structure. Any request to construct free standing structures as a new garage would be subject to review for code compliance and appropriate design and would require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

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.

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 the 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. New construction will not extend over the top of the current historic building. . Any new construction must scale details, bays, roofs and so on to be compatible with the historic building.

3. Form

The massing of the new construction must be compatible with the goal of maintaining the integrity of the 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 (in this case all five elevations are visible) should be compatible with the colors, textures, proportions, and combinations of cladding materials used on the historic building. Since the historic building is frame, new construction in wood with wood cladding is required. Faux wood grained panels, artificial wood panels, cementitious panels, panels constructed of pressed wood, metal panels or corrugated metal, or concrete block or other non-traditional materials would be inappropriate for new construction

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 11(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

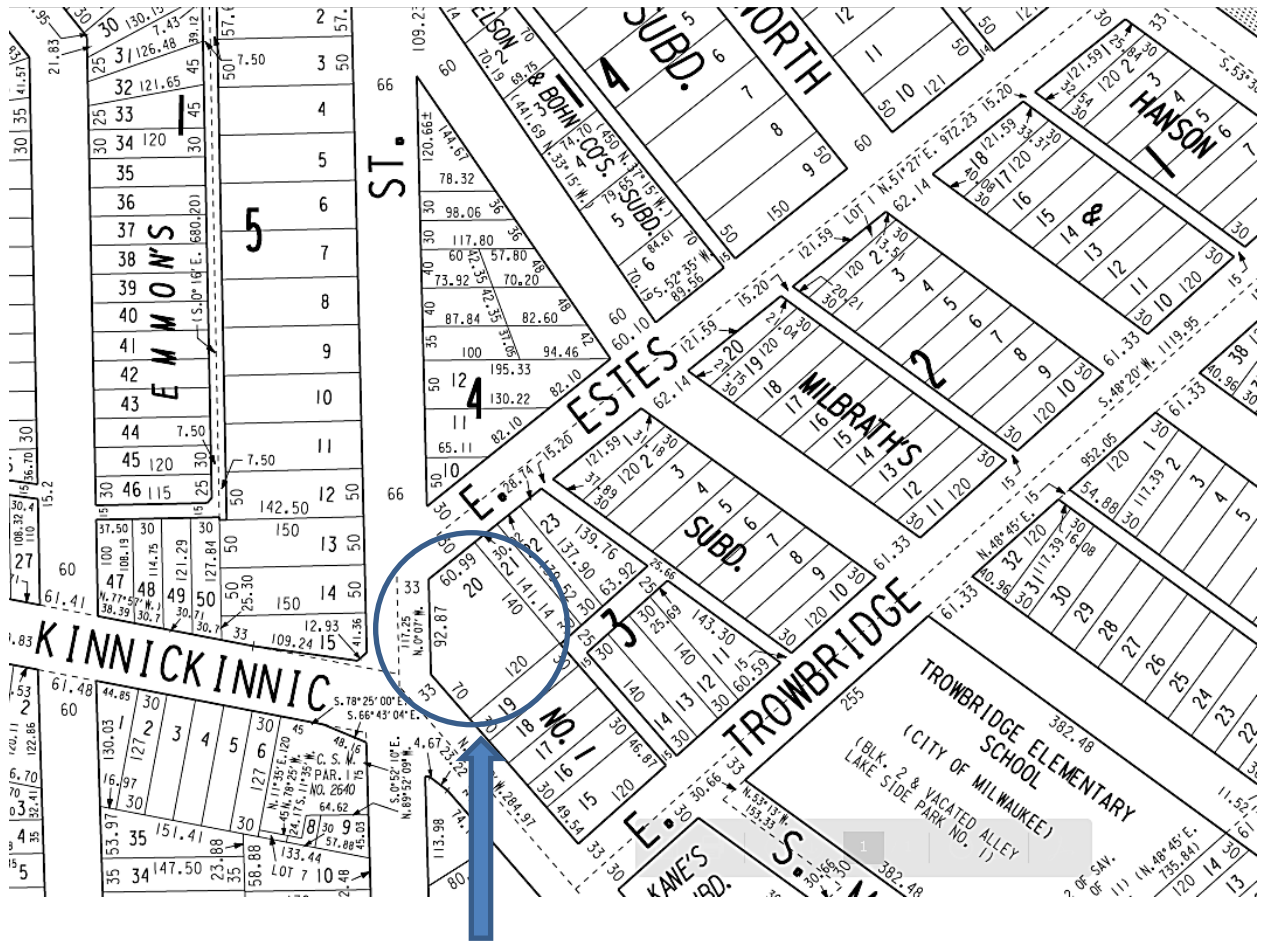
Consideration will be given to whether or not the building or a portion of it contributes to the neighborhood and the general street appearance and has a positive effect on other buildings in the area.

4. Potential for Restoration

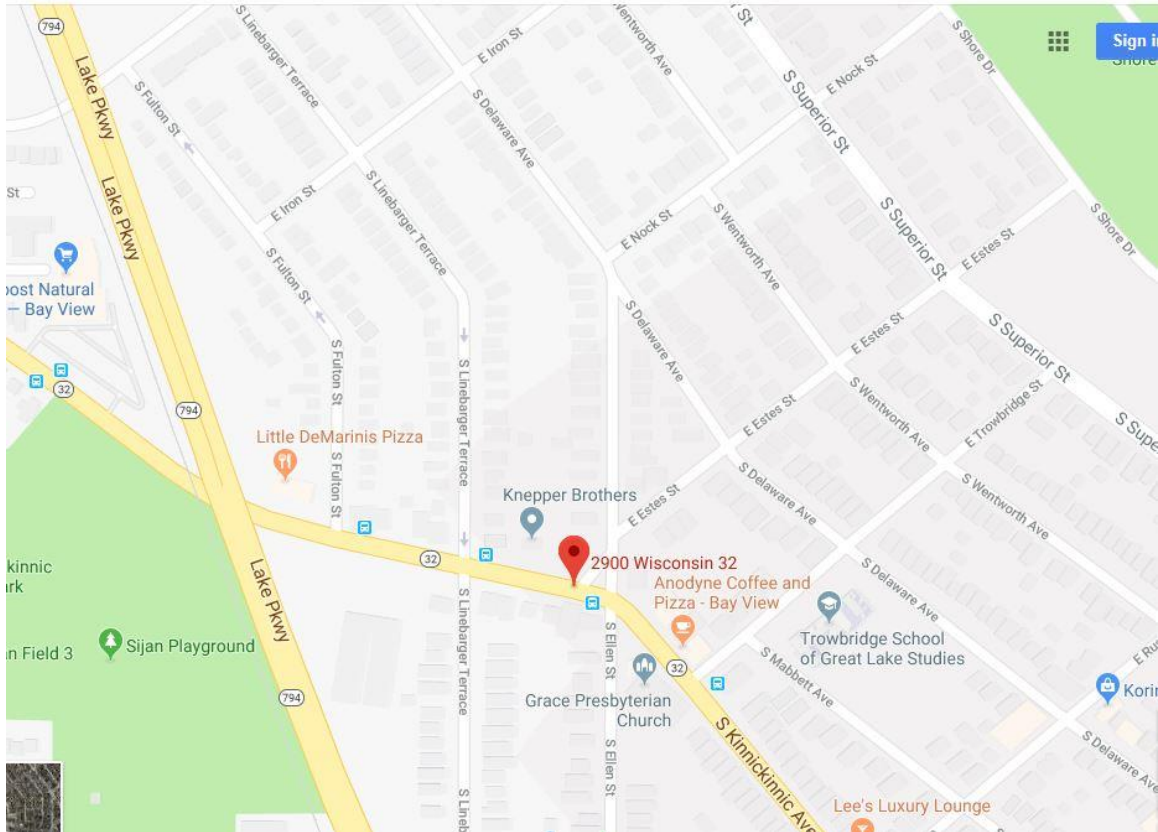
Consideration will be given to whether or not the building is beyond economically feasible repair.

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. Note: The single story “bump-out” on the façade facing Estes Street is original per the 1910 Sanborn map. The “bump out” on southeasterly façade houses restrooms and was added in 1935.




William C. Kneisler Tavern Building
Kneisler's White House
2900 South Kinnickinnic





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Brand New Restaurant Space




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Key Features/Highlights

- > Redesigned and remodeled restaurant space
- > Three seasons outdoor space
- > On-site parking available
- > High-profile corner site in one of Milwaukee's trendiest neighborhoods
- > Potential second floor private dining/banquet




Proposal that prompted the nomination for historic designation



Tanzilo, On Milwaukee 2017



2018



Horne. Urban Milwaukee 2015



2018



Horne. Urban Milwaukee 2015



2018



Tanzilo On Milwaukee 2017