

**TEMPORARY HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT  
GERAGHTY DOUBLE HOUSE  
APRIL 2020**

**I. NAME**

Historic: Patrick J. Geraghty Doublehouse / Roger Williams Hospital Nurses Home

Common Name:

**II. LOCATION** 2424 West Kilbourn Avenue

**Legal Description** Tax Key No. 3890721000  
HAWLEY'S SUBD NO 2 IN W 100 AC NW ¼ SEC 30-7-22  
BLOCK 269 LOTS 28 & 31 BID #10

**III. CLASSIFICATION** Site

**IV. OWNER** ProBuColls Association  
9733 West Greenfield  
Milwaukee, WI 53214

**ALDERMAN** Robert J. Bauman 4<sup>th</sup> Ald. District

**NOMINATOR** James Dieter

**V. YEAR BUILT** 1889

**ARCHITECT:** Charles F. Ringer

**VI. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

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| <b>THE AREA</b> |
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The area in which the nominated property is located is today a mix of single family houses, rooming houses, twentieth century apartment buildings and post-World War II apartment buildings as well as a large facility for the Wisconsin Telephone Company. The north boundary is State Street, a commercial and traffic thoroughfare and the south boundary is Wisconsin Avenue, likewise a commercial and traffic thoroughfare that was once lined with mansions. Buildings vary as to size and historic integrity although setbacks from the street are consistent. Some blocks have alleys, others do not. Most of the residential buildings are two and on-half story in height, made of frame construction but there is the occasional masonry building. Houses that have been rehabilitated show many of the details associated with the Queen Anne Style and display decorative shingles, bay windows, oriels and spindled porches. The early

twentieth century apartment buildings show either classical revival details or prairie style elements.

Historically, Kilbourn Avenue west of North 24<sup>th</sup> Street was once considered a fashionable address for about thirty years. Years of disinvestment followed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as more and more of the houses were turned into rooming houses or multiple rental units and deferred maintenance took its toll. A wave of apartment construction occurred in the 1960s that resulted in the destruction of much but not all historic fabric.

A number of Queen Anne style houses are located along the south side of Kilbourn Avenue across the street from the nominated property. The City of Milwaukee rehabilitated the houses and reversed decades of inappropriate alterations and today they give a sense of what the neighborhood was like in the 1880s and 1890s. The Kalvelage House, one of the city's great German Renaissance Revival masterpieces, is located next door to the nominated property and actually factored into its history.

#### BUILDING DESCRIPTION

The Geraghty Doublehouse is a two and a half story frame house that sits on a cut limestone foundation. The building is set back approximately 25 feet from the sidewalk and occupies a lot measuring 50 feet by 150 feet. A dry stack Lannon Stone retaining wall borders the front edge of the property and there is a grassy front yard with foundation plantings and a wood picket that fence extends across the front and returns to the front wall of the house. A chain link fence borders the left or west property line to the rear. It appears that the rear yard has been used for parking and just has grass.

This building is referred to as a doublehouse because the two dwelling units are arranged side by side rather than stacked above one another as in the duplex more commonly found in Milwaukee.

The two and one half story doublehouse features a complex asphalt-clad hip-roof-with-deck that has a front gable on the east end, a polygonal oriel with conical roof that extends from the second story to the attic at the west end as well as a dormer with eyebrow window at the west end of the roof. The east façade roof, the rear roof and the west façade roof each feature a single gable. The building features wood clapboards with a band of shingles delineating the first from second stories.

The front of the house is the most embellished and asymmetrical in shape. A hipped roof wood porch with decorative turned posts and prominent front gable with paneling is located at the center of the façade and shelters the side-by-side front entrances. Six turned posts support the roof of the porch and the grille may once have held turned spindles instead of the plain pieces currently installed. The left front wood door is original to the house and features a single light over eight panels. Details at the right front door could not be seen. The porch deck is wood. The porch railings and handrails are replacements and feature flat slats or surface applied balusters. There were likely guard rails and handrails with turned balusters.

Fenestration is varied around the house. To the right or east of the entrance, at the first story, there is a one-over-one sash window and there are other windows to the right of that but they appear to be blocked up or partially blocked. There is a one-over-one window at the canted corner at this story. The second story of this east half of the house has a window above the porch roof and a projecting three-sided bay supported by scrolled brackets. This bay features three one-over-one sash. The gable at the attic had a pair of original Queen Anne style sash windows that feature small panes of glass surrounding large panes of glass at the center. The gable is clad with roofing material but likely had wood shingles, possibly decorative in nature.

To the left or west of the porch on the first story is a large landscape sash with transom. To its left or west is a single one-over-one sash at the canted corner. At the second story a single window is positioned above the front porch, blocked down in size. The second story three-sided oriel, supported by corbels, emerges from the corner and extends to the attic story and is crowned with a conical roof. There are one-over-one sash at the second story. The windows at the upper most stage of this oriel are original and feature one-over-one sash with a delicate muntin pattern. Adjacent to this bay/oriel at the attic level is a small dormer with eyebrow window. It once had divided lights.

The east elevation has five windows on the first story and four on the second. They are of different sizes and correspond to the rooms on the interior. Some of the openings appear to be blocked down. The attic gable has a pair of windows, one of which is boarded over.

The west elevation has five windows on the first story and three on the second. A number of them have been blocked down. The pair of windows at the attic gable feature the same delicate muntin design as the windows in the corner oriel.

The rear elevation has pairs of windows on the first story and individual windows at the second. Some appear to be blocked down. A first story entrance on the west or left side of this façade has a stoop with open steps and non-historic handrails. At the center of the first story is a shed-like extension with a shed roof that has two doors, presumably to access the basement of each unit. The attic gable has a pair of double hung windows with no decorative muntins. A chimney extends from the roof where the gable meets the main roof. It is simple in design and may have been altered.

In addition to the oriel, bay, brackets/corbels and front porch, the placement of shingles and panels adds texture and interest to the doublehouse. Shingles clad some of the gables while roofing material clads others. Shingles are used to form a beltcourse around the building to differentiate the first from second stories. The shingles that are visible are square but cut and not profiled into different shapes as sometimes seen. Panels are created above and below the first story windows by applied boards that accent the windows and division between the first and second stories.

The new owner is currently working on this building and has removed the asphalt siding that covered the building for many decades. Not all of the work may up to preservation standards although the owner is making an effort. The Preservation Guidelines included in this report will guide future efforts so that repairs and upkeep will not result in a makeshift appearance or result in well-meaning but inappropriate work that could harm the historic fabric of the building.

## PROPERTY HISTORY

Cyrus Hawley was one of the major property owners in Milwaukee's formative years owning hundreds of acres on the near west side. He lived on land occupying the block bounded by West Wisconsin Avenue, West Wells Street, North 24<sup>th</sup> Street and North 25<sup>th</sup> Street. Over the decades he and his heirs sold off parcels for development. Our subject property is in Hawley's Subdivision No. 2 of the west 100 acres of Hawley's holdings.

From Fire insurance maps and newspaper reporting, this west side area was being extensively developed in the 1880s and 1890s as horsecar then electrified lines enabled residents to commute to the central business district.

Deed research was not available due to the closure of public buildings during the COVID-19 health emergency. The early history of Patrick J. Geraghty's specific property is not clear at this time.

## PATRICK J. GERAGHTY

Patrick J. Geraghty was a native of Ireland who immigrated to the United States about 1850. He entered through the Port of New York and it is unknown when he came to Milwaukee. (Passport application for Sarah Geraghty October 15, 1920 found at Ancestry.com) He may have been the Patrick "Gerraty" listed in the 1856-1857 city directory working as a clerk and boarding at the Keystone State Hotel in the third ward. In the 1866 and 1868-1869 directories Patrick is listed as a porter with North Western Mutual Life Insurance Company (NML). Starting in the 1869-1870 city directory he is listed as a clerk with NML. Not much is known about his life or interests at this time. He seems to have dodged the major censuses and shows up only in the 1910 census at the age of 75. City directories show Patrick to have worked for NML throughout his life. He is sometimes listed as clerk, sometimes stationer, then shipping clerk, or clerk in the supply department.

Patrick Geraghty was married to Catherine Holland and had the following known children: Josephine M., Sarah K., James, John, Matthew, Edward, Tim, Anna. (1910 Census; Registration of Births 1878-1879 accessed through Ancestry.com). James H. was a clerk at NML like his father. John later became a clerk at a business located in the Chamber of Commerce building.

Patrick appears to have rented quarters in various place in the third ward then moved to 810 Wells Street (old number) from 1874 through about 1879. Interestingly, he moved to the west side in 1881 and is shown living on property addressed on Cedar Street, "3 west of 24<sup>th</sup>" then "near 24<sup>th</sup>" then at # 2420. This house number is used again later when the building that is the subject of this nomination was built in 1889. What happened to this earlier house is unknown. It may have burned, been razed or moved. There is a frame house that appears on the 1894 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map next door west of Geraghty's double house. It sits on property acquired in 1890 by Joseph B. Kalvelage who would later build his magnificent German Renaissance Revival house there. Perhaps this modest frame house is the house from which Joseph B. Kalvelage and his family are said to have watched their mansion being built. (H. Russell Zimmerman, Magnificent Milwaukee, Milwaukee Public Museum, 1987, page 117)

Whatever the case, the new doublehouse was designed by architect Charles F. Ringer who happened to live a few doors away at the northeast corner of North 24<sup>th</sup> and Cedar. Information about his career is later in this report.

Geraghty's new doublehouse was addressed at 2418 and 2420 Cedar (old numbers) that translate to 2422 and 2424 West Kilbourn Avenue after 1930. He and his family lived in the east half. The Milwaukee Sentinel ran an ad on October 22, 1888 (page 5) that 2420 Cedar [the west half] was a new house for rent with eleven rooms including a bathroom, laundry and all modern improvements.

By 1890 the first tenant in the west half of doublehouse were Mr. and Mrs. George F. Place. Place was the secretary treasurer of R. P. Elmore Company. Society pages documented one of their lavish parties for which 300 invitations went out. They moved to another house on Cedar Street, # 2914, in 1895. (Yenowines, 1891 February 22 page 2; Milwaukee Sentinel 1891 February 21 page 3)

From 1894 through about 1903 Mr. and Mrs. Walter S. Paddock rented the west half. Walter was the secretary-treasurer, then vice-president treasurer of the Cream City Sash & Door

Company. Like the Places, the Paddocks' comings and goings were highlighted in the society pages and Walter's business dealings were chronicled. While living there Mrs. Paddock gave birth to a son in 1895 and in 1898 (John M.). Known children included Donald, Harriet, Walter S. Jr. and John M. (Yenowine's 1895 September 14, page 2; Registration of Births, 1898 October 15 John M. Information from Ancestry.com) The Paddocks moved to the east side, 573 Cass, old number, in 1904.

We do not know who rented the west half of the double house from the Geraghty's from 1904 through 1918. For four years, from 1919 through 1926, Harvey P. Price was the tenant. He was a railway conductor.

Patrick Geraghty died in July, 1925 and his wife Catherine is shown as a widow in 1926.

Changes were to occur in the neighborhood that permanently affected the occupancy of the doublehouse and they were linked to the occupancy of the Kalvelage Mansion next door.

#### The Kalvelage House and the Ku Klux Klan

The property for the Kalvelage mansion was purchased in 1890 by Joseph B. Kalvelage and the house itself was built 1896-1897. Kalvelage was the secretary treasurer of the Hoffmann Billings Manufacturing Company, a business that manufactured plumbing supplies and sanitary fixtures. The mansion is the city's best example of German Renaissance Revival and turned out to be overbuilt for the neighborhood. The numerous Queen Anne houses across the street and in the vicinity were no match for the mansion. Further west along Cedar Street some great houses were constructed in what is today's Concordia Historic District. Kalvelage moved to Prospect Avenue in 1920, first living in the Cudahy Tower then an apartment on Farwell Avenue. His mansion was sold to Percy C. Day, an official with The Falk Corporation. Day lived on the premises through 1923. In July 1924 Day sold the mansion to the Ku Klux Klan for \$35,000. The Klan had organized on board the USS Hawk in the Milwaukee River in 1920. One of its originators was Ray Twining. Meetings had been held in the Alhambra Building before purchasing the Cedar Street property. The former Kalvelage/Day mansion became the headquarters of the Milwaukee Provisional Klan No. 1 of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan Inc., the Realm of Wisconsin. (Milwaukee Journal 1925 March 1 page 14; Milwaukee Journal 1946 October 13 page 12)

The KKK officially dedicated their new clubhouse at midnight Saturday October 11, 1924 then showed visitors through the premises that Sunday. (Milwaukee Journal 1924 October 13 page 15). Another article from September that year indicated opening ceremonies were in September. (Milwaukee Journal 1924 September 27 page 7)

The presence of the Klan and their gatherings must have disrupted the neighborhood. A group of six men threw stones through the windows of the old mansion in apparent retaliation for the burning of a cross outside a saloon on Second Street. The Klan denied the burning of any crosses in the city. (Milwaukee Journal 1925 April 16 page 16) By August 1925 the Klan was considering the reorganization structure of their ownership of the clubhouse and announced that there would be a public initiation service on the lawn. (Milwaukee Journal 1925 August 4 page 10) This initiation included a 10 foot high lighted cross, a band playing Onward Christian Soldiers, the singing of the American Anthem, and men and women in masks and vari-colored uniforms. Several hundred witnessed the event. (Milwaukee Journal August 6 page 16) The Klan sent their members to various Klan events around the state and membership was at least 1500 to 1800 members. (Milwaukee Journal 1925 August 20 page 15)

Christmas ceremonies 1925 included the igniting of a large cross and the distribution of close to 200 baskets of food and clothing to destitute families. Leadership was quick to add that the gifts were distributed regardless of race. The Christmas ceremony in 1925 was expected to

draw 1500 attendees. ("Klan to Light Cross at Midnight Program", Milwaukee Journal 1925 December 24 page 14)

With Milwaukee membership climbing to around 4,000, not counting the women's auxiliary Kamellia, the KKK decided to look for a new location that would have enough acreage to allow for outdoor gatherings and parking. A new clubhouse or klavern would be built for \$75,000. It appears that membership numbers collapsed quickly and the KKK dissolved the building association in May, 1926. ("Five Clubs Planning to Build New Homes", 1925 May 3 page 95; "Klan Home Builders Dissolution Filed" Milwaukee Journal, 1926 May 17 page 27; Jay Scriba, "When Crosses Burned in Wisconsin", Milwaukee Journal 1965 April 6 page 16)

In the midst of all this commotion next door, Patrick Geraghty died in July, 1925. His widow Catherine lived in the doublehouse into 1926 when she sold to a new owner, Roger Williams Hospital, who also purchased the mansion next door from the KKK. Roger Williams had a third property also, located at what would be 911 North 24<sup>th</sup> Street, at the corner of North 24<sup>th</sup> and next door to the Geraghty doublehouse.

The origin of Roger Williams Hospital connects to Immanuel Baptist Church.

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| Roger Williams Hospital |
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Immanuel Baptist began with a group of German Baptists who came to Milwaukee in 1838. The congregation met at various locations then built a church building at North 7<sup>th</sup> Street and West Brown Street followed by one at North 6<sup>th</sup> Street and West Walnut Street. Their last location was at the intersection of North 25<sup>th</sup> Street and West Cypress Street (2500 West Medford). The building was started in 1918 and completed in 1920, dedicated on June 20, 1920. It was a striking Classical Revival building with a front portico and domed crossing. This accompanied a change in name from First German Baptist Church to Immanuel Baptist Church as English was replacing the German language in church services and activities.

Encountering material shortages after World War I and a general contractor who almost declared bankruptcy, the congregation persevered and the church debts were paid off in 1927.

Reverend O. R. Hauser was a young (age 29) and energetic and ambitious pastor who took over the leadership of the church in 1915 and convinced the congregation to build a new church building and engage in social gospel. He decided that Immanuel needed to do more to benefit humanity and developed the organization called the Roger Williams Home & Hospital Association. Roger Williams was a Baptist pioneer and patriot. Rev. Hauser convinced the church to take up a \$25,000 mortgage on its building and loan this amount to the Roger Williams Home & Hospital Association. Some of the church members felt this was too big an obligation for one organization and to be placed under the direction of one individual. This led to a break in the congregation where forty five members seceded and formed Bethany Baptist Church.

Rev. Hauser resigned as pastor in 1927 but remained with the church for several years, committed to the success of the hospital. Rev. Hauser invested the \$25,000 in real estate holdings and speculation in order to generate money for the hospital. The stock market crash and subsequent depression led many to default on their promised payments and the hospital could not meet its obligations. Neither the Wisconsin Baptist State Convention nor the North American Baptist Convention were able to provide financial assistance. Rev. Hauser had to yield to his creditors and the hospital closed. (Immanuel Baptist Church 1855-1955 Milwaukee, Wisconsin Centennial Celebration November 1953. No Publisher.)

A booklet or copy of a booklet entitled "Roger Williams Hospital. 2424 Cedar Street. Milwaukee, Wis. Dedicated to Humanity in the name of The Great Physician to give science a chance to do

all it can for the sick-rich and poor alike.” is in the hands of Jim Dieter, nominator of this property and now owner of the Kalvelage mansion next door. The booklet states “Roger Williams Hospital is owned and managed by the Roger Williams Home and Hospital Association, a non-stock and no profit corporation, organized by the members of Immanuel Baptist Church and affiliated churches in the State of Wisconsin. Its aim is not riches—but service, its power science and mercy.” Dedication of the hospital took place May 23, 1926 starting with a 10:30 A.M. ceremony at the church. At 2:00 P.M. Mayor Hoan gave an address followed by Rev. O. R. Hauser and Judge N. B. Neelen and this was followed by sermons and prayers at the church. The board of directors consisted of Rev. O. R. Hauser (president), Rev. L. B. Holzer (vice-president), Frank Kirchmann (secretary), D. A. Strauss (treasurer), Judge N. B. Neelen, Emma Riesen, Albert Tiemann and Jacob Scheuss.

The hospital boasted a clinic, X-ray department, an operating room, an entire floor devoted to maternity, and a pharmacy. The hospital and its equipment were all up to date and modern. Equipment consisted of a “lung-motor for the resuscitation of infants” and facilities for “scientific” infant feeding. The laboratory was under the direction of Dr. Fernan-Nunez who was an associate professor at the Marquette University Medical School. The clinical laboratory had the ability to test for blood chemistry, blood typing for transfusions, basal metabolism, tissue pathology and autogenous vaccines. Physiotherapy included ultra-violet ray, infra-red ray and Vitant heat lamps, Morse-Wave sinusoidal generator, diathermy, and Roentgen therapy machine. Radium was said to be available. Food service handled general and therapeutic meals. The surgery had rigidly supervised sterilization and all the latest in appliances and anesthesia machines under the supervision of a trained resident anesthetist.

“Absolute cleanliness, conscientious service, a home-like atmosphere, shall characterize Roger Williams Hospital.” In its first week and a half the hospital saw 20 patients, had 8 operations and was seeking to convert the third floor for hospital purposes and finding other quarters for nurses and employees. It boasted being “situated in one of the best residential districts of Milwaukee. It is located two blocks from Wisconsin Avenue, the main thoroughfare, and midway between the downtown business district and the suburbs. The present capacity is forty beds, which will be increased by an early building program.”

The hospital stated it was non-sectarian and patients from almost every faith had received care. The cost of care was said to be reasonable, ward beds costing \$3 to \$4 per day and private rooms charging \$3.50 to \$7.00 per day. There was a resident physician for emergencies and to assist at operations and there was “intern service” day and night.

Roger Williams Hospital was a member of the American Hospital Association and licensed by the Wisconsin State Board of Health and met the requirements of the American College of Surgeons. It was endorsed by the Wisconsin Baptist State Conference and the Northwestern German Baptist Conference.

The booklet referred to above included a list of 61 physicians who “have patronized” the hospital. “Patients of any reputable physician are admitted.”

Of interest to this nomination is the fact that the Geraghty doublehouse was used as a nurses residence for the staff who worked at the hospital. A photo in the Roger Williams booklet shows the Kalvelage mansion as the Hospital and the Geraghty doublehouse as the Home. Competent registered nurses were said to direct the nurses and “One of the Milwaukee nurse training institutions sends its pupils to the Hospital for a part of their training course”. An ad in the Milwaukee Journal shows the hospital seeking young women to enter a one year intensive training program for a nurse’s certificate and a two year program for a diploma in nursing. Credit could be transferred from work done in other schools of nursing and salary and maintenance were included. The nominator Jim Dieter has photos of nurses posing with the house in the background. (Milwaukee Journal 1928 October 19, page 49)

A third building associated with the hospital was shown in the booklet as “Convalescent Home” and was the house that stood immediately east of the Geraghty house and addressed at 249-24<sup>th</sup> Street (old number, later 911 North 24<sup>th</sup> Street). The house was for sale about the time the Roger Williams Hospital was being established. It was advertised as a good site for an apartment building. (Milwaukee Journal 1925 September 20 page 73) The Roger Williams association likely purchased this property at the same time as the old Kalvelage mansion and the Geraghty doublehouse. It was a fine Arts and Crafts style house with a substantial coach house at the rear. Attention was drawn to this property some years later.

Mayoral candidate J. C. Schafer, in his efforts to dig up dirt on the Hoan administration, wanted former pastor Otto R. Hauser investigated for occupying the hospital’s residence at 911 North 24<sup>th</sup> Street while conducting an import export business and a real estate business out of the premises. At matter was the issue of property taxes and whether taxes should be paid or the property considered tax exempt because it was owned by Roger Williams Hospital. Hauser by this time had become Hoan’s personal secretary and a leader in the socialist party. He responded that he had moved into the house in 1928 when he left Immanuel Church as pastor and paid no rent as he was general superintendent of the hospital. His importing firm had operated out of another address and was transferred to his brother Max. Hauser spent money rehabilitating the house and paid for heating. He indicated he was occupying the premises to preserve the building as it was in a dilapidated shape and would be difficult to rent out. A student wrote in to indicate that his Marquette fraternity had rented the house from 1929 through 1932. Tax Commissioner Arnold investigated the allegations and determined that there was no business being conducted and Hauser was living rent free in exchange for his services to the hospital from which he received no salary. The house at 911 North 24<sup>th</sup> Street was eventually demolished, replaced by a motel-style 15-unit apartment building in 1959. This apartment building has since been demolished and the lot is now vacant. (“Hauser’s Tax Exemption Draws Fire of Schafer”, Milwaukee Journal 1935 December 4 page 21)

#### Later History

Roger Williams Hospital went out of business in late 1935 or early 1936. City directories show the hospital building vacant in 1936 and the Geraghty doublehouse as having only one occupant, in the west half, Rudolph J. Pohl, a mechanic. The Geraghty doublehouse was vacant in 1937 and in 1938 occupants were Richard D. White, and Edna Homme a nurse.

Richard J. White worked as a vacuum man at the Hotel Schroeder. In 1939 he was still on the premises along with twelve other occupants. The former mansion / hospital likewise had 28 furnished rooms after the hospital closed. In 1941 the city directory showed William H. Moeder, a painter, on the Geraghty premises and the building was called the Kilbourn Manor with furnished rooms and twenty-two occupants.

In 1946 the mansion / hospital was advertised for sale as a stately brick mansion with 22 rooms and five baths. Its suggested uses were “hospital, convalescent home, legion or veteran post, union headquarters, church, private school, club, fraternity house, medical or dental clinic”. It was priced “under today’s market.” It ultimately stayed a rooming house. (Milwaukee Journal 1946 April 21 page 45)

By the late 1950s there were 15 units in the old Geraghty doublehouse. The house has continued as a rooming house to the present. The new owner, Bob Conklin, is planning to add more units to the attic area. The old Kalvelage mansion / Roger Williams Hospital fortunately survived years of rooming house tenants and later returned to single family use as the residence of Greg Filardo and then Jim Dieter, the current owner.



It may never be known why the Roger Williams Hospital was located at this particular site. It was not in proximity of Immanuel Church and its dense neighborhood there. This location on Cedar / Kilbourn Avenue was only a couple blocks from Lutheran Hospital which was undergoing expansion in the 1920s. Although Lutheran Hospital was founded by Lutherans it is believed to have admitted patients of all creeds by this time. Perhaps the coincidence of the Kalvelage mansion, the house at 911 North 24<sup>th</sup> Street and the Geraghty doublehouse all being available at the same time sealed the deal.

Perhaps the cache of locating in a mansion that had the space for specialized treatments was the appeal and the price of \$35,000 was a bargain for what they needed. Perhaps taking over a place just vacated by the Ku Klux Klan was an appeal to make up for that organization and do good for people. The hospital relied on support from donors and did not generate its own income aside from low charges for hospital beds. Their booklet did mention the home-like atmosphere of the place. At any rate, it is significant that those who established Roger Williams wanted it to be taken as a serious, up to date and professionally run medical facility. Such a facility required the services of a professional nursing staff and the hospital provided training and a certificate program as well as a place to live.

The successful medical facilities grew into larger institutions that razed most of the original housing around them during their expansion. Most of these institutions have since closed down or consolidated with the larger medical entities, many of whom relocated to larger properties outside the city. The Geraghty Doublehouse is the sole survivor on the near West side of known residences used for nurses' accommodations.

## **VII. SIGNIFICANCE**

The Geraghty Doublehouse is a very good and well-preserved example of a Queen Anne style residence. Its use of the irregular massing, a projecting bay, a tower-like oriel and ornamental front porch with turned posts and a variety of sash styles are all hallmarks of the style in the 1880s and early 1890s before the style began to add classical elements such as columns and Palladian windows. The house is a good example of a side by side residence of the era when it was important to differentiate each unit and lend the building the look of a grand single family house. There are some examples in Milwaukee of this building type but more commonly adopted here was the stacked duplex with one unit placed above the other. The Geraghty Doublehouse is also important in its association with the Roger Williams Hospital that was located next door in the Kalvelage House. The Geraghty doublehouse was the home for nurses who served in the hospital and was home to nurses being trained at other institutions that were sent here for a part of their training course. The near west side became home to many medical facilities that started small and grew into some of our most prestigious institutions today. While Roger Williams Hospital was not one of the successful facilities it was part of this wave of creating places where average people and not just the rich or the indigent could be taken care of.

## **VIII. THE ARCHITECT**

There is some confusion about the architect of the Geraghty Doublehouse. One set of records shows C. F. Rugee as the architect. The other shows C. F. Ringer. It appears that the writing on the original construction permit might have been misread. City directories show no C. F. Rugee listed. There is a C. F. Ringer, a well-established architect who practiced in Milwaukee from 1870 through his retirement in the early twentieth century. In addition, Ringer's offices (88 Wisconsin and later 107 Wisconsin old numbers) were close to Geraghty's place of employment with Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance and Ringer was also a neighbor, living at the northeast corner of North 24<sup>th</sup> Street and Cedar Street, now Kilbourn Avenue. Permit records for the property that could be used for verification were out due to the recent change in ownership and the new owner working with DNS to correct violations and obtaining a rooming house license.

Carl F. Ringer was born in Germany in 1851 and came to Milwaukee in 1870. He began working as an apprentice in the office of George W. Mygatt who was one of the city's early architects. Ringer then moved on to work for Edward Townsend Mix, one of the most prestigious architects of the city in the nineteenth century. He then finished his apprenticeship years working as construction foreman for Milwaukee architect James Douglas. (Milwaukee of To-Day Cream City of the Lakes, Milwaukee: Phoenix Publishing Company, No date [c. 1893], page 202.)

Ringer opened his own architectural office in 1881. Ringer was adept at working in period revival styles and the commercial architectural styles of the day. He had clients not only in the German-American community but throughout various ethnic groups. He is believed to have maintained strong family and social ties with his German homeland where, incidentally, his sister Bertha lived with her husband Carl Benz, who was one of designers of the Mercedes-Benz automobiles.

The 1880s and 1890s were particularly busy for him. The papers chronicled dozens of projects including residences, doublehouses, churches such as Zion Lutheran at 21<sup>st</sup> and North Avenue, stores, schools, tannery buildings, manufacturing buildings. That his commissions were city-wide says a lot about the quality of his work and expertise in many building types. Many Milwaukee architects tended to have very local practices and their commissions can be found only in certain parts of the city.

Ringer's career took an interesting turn when he was appointed city building inspector in June 1911 by Milwaukee's first socialist mayor, Emil Seidel. About one year later Ringer was dismissed from his post because of a disagreement with the new mayor, Gerhard Bading, who was elected in 1912. Bading wanted Ringer out. The two reportedly clashed over a building permit Ringer granted to make structural repairs to a downtown building on the site of the later Warner Theater that the mayor wanted torn down. Bading had Ringer fired and moved his desk into a corridor. Ringer challenged his firing and the state Supreme Court ruled the firing illegal and ordered back pay in August, 1912. Ringer was reinstated to his position but feeling vindicated, Ringer immediately submitted his resignation. His victory was sweetened after the controversial building was repaired and kept in service for years after that. ("Carl F. Ringer Dead, Aged 88", Milwaukee Journal 1939 April 27 page 29)

Ringer then resumed his architectural practice with his son Carl Jr. who in 1904 had joined the firm which was subsequently renamed C. F. Ringer & Son. The firm became known for its industrial/manufacturing buildings and warehouses at that time. The partnership lasted until 1934 when the elder Ringer retired. He then traveled in Germany, Africa and the orient. Carl Jr. continued to work under the Ringer & Son firm name until his own death at age 61 at Columbia Hospital November 1938.

Ringer Sr. was a member and vice chair of the city's harbor commission, an honorary member of the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, a member of the Milwaukee Turnverein, and the Freie Gemeinde.

At the time that Ringer designed the Geraghty doublehouse, he was living just a stone's throw away from the Geraghty's, at the northeast corner of North 24<sup>th</sup> Street and Cedar Street later Kilbourn

Avenue (old address 2324 Cedar). In 1884 alone Ringer was designing dwelling houses and doublehouses in the neighborhood: a doublehouse for H. R. Green (27<sup>th</sup> and Cedar), a frame house for H. R. Green (27<sup>th</sup> between Wells and Cedar), a frame house for H. Mueller (Cedar between 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>), a frame house for H. Schroeder (24<sup>th</sup> Street between Wells and Cedar). He also designed the Howie House, today's Manderly Bed and Breakfast in the Concordia neighborhood. Extant examples of Ringer's Queen Anne style residential work show the Geraghty doublehouse to be one of his most picturesque examples with its projecting bay, two and a half story oriel, eyebrow window and turned-post gabled porch.

## SOURCES

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## IX. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Geraghty Doublehouse be given permanent historic designation as a City of Milwaukee Historic Site as a result of its fulfillment of criteria e-1, e-5 and e-6 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.

The Geraghty Doublehouse for about ten years was used as a nurses home in connection with the Roger Williams Hospital that was housed in the former Kalvelage mansion next door. The 1920s saw an explosion of small hospitals and health care facilities on the near west side. Despite the proximity (two blocks away) of what was later known as Lutheran Hospital (established in 1865) that was a large and well-staffed medical facility, other medical facilities proliferated on the near west side and included: Children's Hospital (1923), Mt. Sinai Hospital (1913), Misericordia Hospital (the former William Pitt Lynde house/ Catholic Archbishop's residence) (c1908), Deaconess Hospital (1909), First Hospital (1923), Milwaukee County Dispensary and Emergency Hospital (1927-1928), Family Hospital (post World War II), and Milwaukee Maternity Hospital (1903)

This list does not include the numerous private nursing home or homes for the elderly that also populated the area as lifestyles changed and more elderly had no families to care for them. The reasons for this concentration of health services on the near west side probably is due to its dense population, proximity to major transportation arterials such as Wisconsin Avenue, and the availability of large mansions at inexpensive prices made available by the shift of the well-to-do to the upper east side and north shore communities. More and more medical facilities provided for the training if not accommodation of nurses, who were now recognized as an important facet of medical care. The Roger Williams Hospital had three buildings in its facility, the old Kalvelage Mansion, the Geraghty Doublehouse and another at what would later be addressed as 911 North 24<sup>th</sup> Street, identified as a convalescent home. The Geraghty doublehouse served as the home for nurses working and training at the Roger Williams Hospital next door. The hospital was ultimately not successful and succumbed to financial problems, not having the kind of support that allowed other institutions to succeed. Had the hospital been successful the Kalvelage mansion and the Geraghty doublehouse may not be here today.

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

Rationale: The Geraghty Doublehouse is a very good example of the Queen Anne style in its first phase of popularity that occurred between 1880-1893. This phase is known by its many fussy details, picturesque rooflines and a proliferation of different materials. Silhouettes are accented, towers are polygonal in shape with polygonal peaked roofs, oriels can be found at corners breaking up the boxiness of the building. Shingles are commonly applied to the buildings either as belt courses or filling gable ends and entire stories. They can be but cut or shaped and often a variety of designs are used. After the 1893 Columbian Exposition and its importance to American design and planning, the Queen Anne style began a shift to simpler forms, fewer materials and the incorporation of classical details like columns and Palladian windows.

The Queen Anne style traced its origins to the late 1860's work of English architect Richard Norman Shaw. Although misnamed after England's Queen Anne, who reigned from 1702-1714, the style was actually a reinterpretation of earlier, rural medieval manor houses of fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth century England. Shaw's designs were extensively published and came to be much admired in the United States. Popular Boston architect H. H. Richardson, who based his early works on Shaw, further advanced the development of the

style in the United States in the 1870's. It was the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876, however, that really popularized the new style. The two half-timbered buildings erected by the British government at the Exposition were much praised and touted as modern structures that could easily be adapted to the residential architectural of this country. Since the Tudor architecture that served as the inspiration for the English Queen Anne style was perceived as being an ancestor of America's Colonial architecture, the style was readily accepted by a populace that was beginning to feel nostalgic about its own Colonial past. Like their counterparts throughout the rest of the country, Milwaukee architects became skillful at designing Queen Anne style buildings beginning in the early 1880s and kept it up until just past the turn of the [twentieth] century. The popular demand for this fresh, new, highly original and highly livable house type was tremendous.

As mentioned above, the early phases of the Queen Anne style celebrated the use of a variety of building materials. Shingles, clapboard, brick, stone, terra cotta, and stucco were popular and sometimes all were combined on the same house. Irregular floor plans, picturesque massing, and variety in color and texture were also emphasized. A profusion of chimney stacks, dormers, and gables added to the complexity of the roof profiles. Bay windows, oriels, balconies, and sweeping verandahs disguised the boxy character of the house giving it a rambling, picturesque look. A great variety of window shapes, types and sizes was commonly used on a single house and beveled, etched and colored glass panes were popular for glazing. Chimneys became significant elements of the design and were often paneled or inset with raised brick, terra cotta or stone ornaments and dramatically corbelled at the top.

- e-6 Its identification as the work of an artist, architect, craftsperson or master builder whose individual works have influenced the development of the city

Charles F. Ringer was a significant architect in the city of Milwaukee and his ability to design houses, churches, stores and factory buildings is a testament to his abilities and his training under Edward Townsend Mix and James Douglas. His work was a big part of the fabric of Milwaukee. He produced numerous residential designs for west side owners as well as east side owners.

### **Preservation Guidelines For The Geraghty Doublehouse**

The following preservation guidelines represent the principal concerns of the Historic Preservation Commission regarding the temporary historic designation of the Geraghty Doublehouse. 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 such as masonry repair, re-roofing, and so on but exclusive of routine painting of previously painted surfaces and trim, 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 with its gables, conical roof over the oriel and dormer with eyebrow window. No changes can be made to the roof shape which would alter the building height, the roofline or its pitch. No change can be made to the shape and height of the oriel roof.

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. Re-roofing requires consultation with historic preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness to ensure appropriate materials and installation and proper construction of flashing, gutters, downspouts and valleys. Electronic devices such as, but not limited to, satellite dishes require review with historic presentation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness. The request for the installation of solar devices will be reviewed on a case by case basis based on provisions of 66.0401, Wis. Stats. No large rooftop construction or addition is allowed, such as a full story, as this would have a negative impact on the historic character and proportions of the building. The construction of other rooftop features, such as but not exclusive to dormers, cupolas, and so on, requires review by the Historic Preservation Commission and a Certificate of Appropriateness. When re-roofing, ridge vents are preferable where possible and any pan vents should be located on roof slopes not visible to the street. The chimney is simple and utilitarian in design and at the rear gable and its removal could be considered by the commission.

B. Materials

1. Masonry

- a. Unpainted brick or stone must not be painted or covered. The masonry at the foundation is not to be painted. 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.
- 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 (to remove paint, environmental pollutants, graffiti etc.) 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. 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. The application of plywood, metal, vinyl or other substitute products 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 such as but not limited to bargeboards, finials, corbels, brackets, cornices, and porches.
- b. Retain or replace deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the appearance of the old as closely as possible. Covering wood 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.

## C. Windows and Doors

1. Retain existing window and door openings. Retain original doors and windows within those openings. It appears that the attic gables have some original windows and match a historic view from the 1920s. Some landscape sash appear to have been altered. Further examination will be required to determine other original windows based on window profile, hardware and so on. Today the windows have one over one sash but may have had other configurations originally. Do not make 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 original window panes or sash.

At least one if not both front entry door appears to be original. The east door is currently covered over. The single light above eight panels is characteristic of high end entry doors from the 1880s. The rear prime door cannot be seen from the street but does have a wood storm. If the front entry door that is visible at the west side of the entrance needs work it should not be removed. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required for repair. Should doors need to be replaced, there are examples being made today that would be appropriate for the building. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required for replacements. It is possible to have original doors restored in function and finish. Historic Preservation staff will assist the owner in selecting an appropriate contractor.

2. In the event any windows need to be replaced, consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required to determine appropriate replacements. New glass must match the size of the historic glass. Do not fill in or cover openings with inappropriate materials such as glass block or concrete block. Basement windows are now filled in with wood boards. They can stay but the owner may reopen the windows and return the windows to their original appearance. If security is an issue, there are appropriate ways to install bars at the windows. Glass block may be approved for basement windows not visible from the public right of way.

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. Inappropriate windows may not be replaced with new inappropriate windows. Storm windows and storm doors are encouraged for the preservation of the prime windows and doors. The Commission has approved wood storms. 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 discouraged. 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

Wood trim and ornamentation can be found at the front porch, the second story east bay and the two story oriel at the west side of the facade. The decorative wood shingles that form a band between the first and second stories, the brackets at the front bay and oriel, the turned porch posts, wood trim around the building all need to be preserved and there appropriate ways to repair instead of removing and replacing them. Wood trim and details cannot be covered with aluminum, vinyl or other substitute materials.

The front porch features a wood deck and non-historic lattice skirting. Guard rails and handrails are not original and the guardrails have not been installed professionally.

The wood shingles between the first and the second story and some of the gable ends cannot be replaced by vinyl or other substitute materials. Their texture is important to the style of the house.

The decorative brackets cannot be removed or replaced by brackets made of substitute materials.

Work on the trim, gables, porch and other details will require consultation with historic preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness.

#### E. Additions

No additions can be constructed on the front, east or west elevations as the property will not support such an expansion per code and it would negatively impact the design of the house. Should the owner want to expand the rear, the commission will review any proposal for appropriateness. Approval shall be based upon its compatibility with the primary 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. They should either complement the historic building or have a neutral effect on it.

#### Outbuildings

There are currently no outbuildings on the property.

#### F. Signs/Exterior Lighting

Plastic internally illuminated box signs with a completely acrylic face are not permitted. Approval will be based on the sign's compatibility with the architectural character of the historic building.

#### G. Guidelines for New Construction on the Site

See also Additions above. It is important that any proposed new construction be designed to be as sympathetic as possible with the character of the house. Small scale structures such as a gazebo or fountain may be permitted depending on their size, scale, and form and the property's ability to accommodate such a structure. The following categories are consistent with all sites that receive local historic designation.

##### 1. Site work

New construction must respect the historic site and location of the building. The primary building on the site must maintain the appearance of a freestanding structure as it was built.

##### 2. Scale

For new construction, 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 original house. 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 house.

##### 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. Arrangement of windows, doors, roof shape, and foundation openings must be compatible with the historic property.

##### 4. Materials

The building materials which are visible from the public right-of-way and in close proximity to the original house should be compatible with the colors, textures, proportions, and combinations of cladding materials used on the historic building. Since the historic building is clad in clapboard and wood shingles, new construction would have the same.

Faux wood grained panels, wood panels, cementitious panels, panels constructed of pressed wood, metal panels or corrugated metal, concrete block, or made of other materials would be inappropriate for new construction

#### H. Guidelines for Demolition

It is not anticipated that the Geraghty Doublehouse would be demolished, either in whole or in part. 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 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.



