



GARDEN HOMES HISTORIC DISTRICT
HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT
APRIL 2011

HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT

I. NAME

Historic: **Garden Homes Historic District**
Common Name: **Garden Homes Neighborhood**

II. LOCATION

The Garden Homes Historic District is located approximately four and one-half miles northwest of the central business district of Milwaukee. It includes buildings in the 4300 and 4400 blocks of N. 25th Street, the 4300 and 4400 blocks of N. 26th Street and buildings in the 2400 block of W. Congress Street and 2600 block of Port Sunlight Way. It is roughly bounded by W. Ruby Avenue, N. Teutonia Avenue, N. 24th Place, W. Atkinson Avenue and N. 27th Street

Legal Description - See Attached descriptions of the parcels within the district

III. CLASSIFICATION

District

IV. OWNER

Various, see designation file

ALDERMAN Ald. Ashanti Hamilton 1st Aldermanic District

NOMINATOR Garden Homes Neighborhood Association

V. YEAR BUILT

1921-1923

ARCHITECT: William Schuchardt (Numerous Documents)

NOTE: MUCH OF THIS REPORT IS TAKEN DIRECTLY FROM
THE GARDEN HOMES NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION
AND FROM A SUMMARY PREPARED
FOR PUBLICATION
AND LATER PRINTED
IN THE JULY/ AUGUST 1993 ISSUE
OF
WISCONSIN PRESERVATION

VI. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

A. Boundaries

Beginning at the southeast corner of the property addressed as 4316-4322 N. 25th Street and then northeast along the rear property lines of properties fronting N. 25th Street to the north property line of 4378 N. 25th Street; then continuing northeast along the rear property lines of properties fronting W. Congress Street; then north along the east property line of 2449 W. Congress Street to the south property line of 4415 N. Teutonia Avenue; then west to the east/rear property line of 4402 N. 25th Street; then northwest along the rear property

lines of properties fronting N. 25th Street to the south curb line of W. Ruby Avenue; then west along the south curb line of W. Ruby Avenue to the west property line of 4485 N. 26th Street; then south along the rear property lines of properties fronting N. 26th Street to the north curb line of West Atkinson Avenue; then southeast along the north curb line of W. Atkinson Avenue to the point of beginning.

The Garden Homes development, the nation's first municipally-sponsored, community-owned housing project was built between 1921 and 1923 on approximately 29 acres of flat land located four and one half miles northwest of the city's central business district. Garden Homes is bounded by today's North 27th Street, West Ruby Street, North Teutonia Avenue and West Atkinson Avenue. The district, which is laid out in a fan-like subdivision of curving streets, has the character of a small village with two-story, stuccoed cottages located behind small grass lawns on irregularly-shaped lots about 40 by 120 feet in dimension. Of the 93 freestanding buildings contained in the district, 11 were originally built as two-story, two-unit double houses, while the rest were detached, single-family, five- and six-room, two-story houses. There were a total of 105 living units. Since the fall of 2010, one single family house and one fire-damaged double house have been demolished leaving a total of 102 living units. An integral part of the subdivision is Garden Homes Park, a broad, boulevard-like green space that separates North 26th Street into two roadways between W. Atkinson Avenue and West Port Sunlight Way.

Conceptually, the Garden Homes development appears to have been based primarily on the "garden city" of Letchworth, England, which was begun in 1903 as a major experiment in cooperatively-owned, working class housing set in a carefully planned environment. Originally the streets of the Garden Homes district were named after famous English examples of so-called "garden city" and "garden suburb" planning: Ealing, Hampstead, Port Sunlight, Bourneville, and Letchworth. Garden Homes is now listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district with national significance in the areas of social history as well as community planning and design.

B. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Garden Homes Historic District is built-up with simply-composed, rectangular, two-story, front-gabled and side-gabled cottages that local architect William Schuchardt designed in a simplified Colonial Revival style. The major architectural feature used to differentiate the otherwise similar boxy stucco houses from one another is the one-story, covered entry porch that typically is elevated four steps above grade. All of the houses have raised basements constructed of either concrete block (used during construction that took place in the winter) or poured concrete (used during construction in warm weather). The exteriors of the houses were originally clad with cream-colored stucco with green or red asphalt shingle roofs. The modest detailing common to all of the houses included gable returns trimmed with crown molding, six-panel entry doors, six-over-six double-hung windows, and decorative window shutters on all but the rear elevations.

A patented new building material called flaxolinum keyboard sheathing was used as an underlayment for the stucco exteriors. The material is composed of chemically-treated flax straw, seven-eighths-of-an-inch thick, with molded keyways to hold the stucco applied over it. The sheathing was touted as a superior insulator and was a labor-saver compared with the wood lath underlayment traditionally used for stucco.

Another innovative construction feature designed to increase energy efficiency was the use of spruce wood fiber insulation board, one-half inch thick for the interior wall and ceiling sheathing. It was finished with plaster veneer.

Originally the houses were centrally heated with coal/wood-burning basement furnaces that have been gradually replaced over the years with natural gas or oil-fired heating plants.

The houses were built according to nine basic exterior designs which were further varied by reversing the floor plans and/or the addition of a front gable to side-gable models. The principal elevation of each house faces the street on which it is located. According to the architect's original drawings, the three variations of the five-room, two-bedroom model were denoted "5A, 5B, and 5F." The six variations of the six-room, three-bedroom model were simply denoted "6A, 6B, 6D, 6F, 6G, and 6H." A total of seven, five-room cottages were built, and the remainder of the 94 buildings are three-bedroom, six-room cottages. Ten of the 11, two-unit doublehouses were created by simply butting together two standard single family cottage plans. The six-room, three-bedroom models contain about 1,100 square feet and measure approximately 23' x 25' in plan. The smaller five-room, two-bedroom model contains about 950 square feet and measures about 20' x 25' overall in plan.

Most of the cottages have front entries, but two models have side entries and two other models have both front and side entries that each lead to the first floor living room.

Each cottage was built with the same basic floor plan which the architect occasionally used in a reverse form for some cottages. The interior dimensions of a typical six-room cottage measuring 22'6" x 24'6" overall in plan are:

Living Room	19'9" x 12'7"
Dining Room	11'11" x 11'3"
Kitchen	10' x 10'
Bedrooms	12'6" x 11'8"
	11'8" x 10'6"
	10'10" x 8'10"
Bathroom	9' x 7'

Each cottage is entered from a prominent front or side porch that opens to the living room, the largest room in the house, which accounts for about half the floor space on the first floor. An L-shaped staircase to the second floor and a closet are located on the side wall of the living room. The two other principal first floor rooms located in the rear half of the cottage are a dining room adjacent to the living room and a kitchen. A side hall in the middle of the cottage that buffers the living room from the kitchen contains steps to the basement and a niche that originally was intended to house an ice box or refrigerator. The second floor rooms, a bathroom, and two or three bedrooms (depending on the model) are reached by means of the L-shaped staircase from the living room and are arranged around a central hall. All of the rooms in the cottages were finished with maple floors.

Over the years various alterations have been made to the exteriors of the houses. These principally have involved changes to the cladding material, the porches, the installation of replacement windows and the construction of rear additions. At a fairly early date, the innovative stucco system used to clad the exterior began to fail and many of the houses are now clad in asbestos, aluminum or vinyl siding. In some cases the addition of siding has resulted in the loss of decorative elements such as the Palladian-like curved molding over the windows on cottage type 6D. Quite a number of the houses have had the open porches enclosed to form a vestibule, a useful feature in a cold climate like Milwaukee where the front door opens directly into the living room. On the houses that originally had two porches off the living room, many have had one removed or else enclosed to form a small room. A few houses have had additions made to the rear. Generally, however, the houses in the district have maintained a fair measure of their original architectural integrity.

Despite cosmetic alterations, all 93 (now 91) original cottages are still recognizable as part of a unified residential district that differs in character from the surrounding neighborhoods. All of

the original cottages are considered contributing structures because collectively they represent the nation's first municipally-sponsored housing cooperative.

VII. SIGNIFICANCE

The Garden Homes Historic District is significant for its design as well as social history. Unlike other historic districts which are grouped by period of development or as a collection of styles that relate to the broader development of American architecture, Garden Homes was designed as a set piece, with the roadways, houses and park all laid out at one time, by one architect and to fulfill an ambitious social goal of having decent affordable housing for the working class residents of Milwaukee. It was also the only development that was municipally sponsored and set up as a cooperative.

The Garden Homes Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1990 because of its national significance in the areas of community planning and development and its local significance to social history in Milwaukee. Research indicates that Garden Homes is historically important as the nation's first municipally-built housing development. It offered each of its working-class tenants an opportunity to purchase equity in the project through a cooperative ownership plan, something not attempted before and quite revolutionary in Milwaukee. In terms of its conception and organization, the district is an interesting example of early twentieth century planning as the first municipally –sponsored housing project of its kind to incorporate the fundamental principles of England's Garden City form of planning, production-line construction techniques, and patented labor-saving materials.

Garden Homes exemplifies the progressive innovation in governmental function for which Wisconsin was known in the early 20th century. As the first municipally-built public housing cooperative, Garden Homes forecast a nationwide tradition of providing low-cost, government-backed housing that continues to this day.

This nomination was submitted in response to the loss of the house at 4330 N. 25th Street which was demolished by Garden Homes Evangelical Lutheran Church for play space for its school. It was also submitted as a response to the national foreclosure crisis which has had a negative impact on Garden Homes. A fire-damaged double house was recently demolished when its owner would not relinquish title to the property to the neighborhood association which wanted to have the house repaired. Other vacant houses in the neighborhood, some now owned by the city and initially targeted for demolition, are being evaluated for rehab.

VIII. HISTORY

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw unprecedented numbers of immigrants pour into the United States. Escape from oppression and the promise of better economic conditions spurred the tide. Many immigrants found work with the burgeoning manufacturing sector, in cities like Milwaukee. The promise of a better future was, many times, an illusion. While the work offered steady employment, wages were often low, leaving families with little disposable income for housing. The great influx of people left severe shortages of affordable, decent, working-class housing. Much like today, greater profits were to be had in building the new neighborhoods for prosperous upper middle and upper income families. The nation's housing problems were addressed as early as the 1890s when Congress held the first hearings on slums and urban blight. Although the hearings created national awareness of housing problems, no federal or local government programs resulted. (A Decent Home. The Report of the President's Committee on Urban Housing. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969, p. 54)

Between 1913 and 1917 alone, Milwaukee's population increased by 79,000. During the same time period, there was a net increase of only 6,100 dwellings in the city, resulting in an estimated shortage of 7,000 housing units. (Milwaukee Sentinel April 20, 1919)

The development of Garden Homes' small, stuccoed blocks trimmed with Colonial Revival style wooden porches, can trace its origins to the city's stunning 1910 municipal election of the nation's first Socialist mayor, Emil Seidel. One of the planks of the Socialist platform was the construction of city-built, low-cost homes for workers. Seidel told the Milwaukee electorate, "We do not expect to usher in the cooperative commonwealth in one or five years, but we do intend to do all our limited means permit to make Milwaukee a better place to live in." (H. Russell Austin, The Milwaukee Story Milwaukee: The Milwaukee Journal, 1946, p. 170)

Although Seidel failed to make public housing in Milwaukee a reality before his defeat in the 1912 election, the city's second Socialist mayor, Daniel W. Hoan, elected in 1916 succeeded. Mayor Hoan created a housing commission to tackle the city's housing shortage which was worsened by the moratorium on new housing construction during America's involvement in World War I. In September of 1918, the chair of Milwaukee's housing commission, William H. Schuchardt, went to Washington, D.C. in an effort to obtain Federal assistance to construct new public housing in Milwaukee. For the first time in U. S. history, Federal government aid for housing construction was made available to manufacturing centers that could prove that a lack of working-class housing was hindering the production of war materials. Because Milwaukee could not prove such a relationship, the request for Federal aid was denied. Eventually, the Federal government built about 30,000 units of war-time housing—about half of which were only dormitories or barracks—but none was built in Milwaukee and all were sold rather than maintained as public housing. (A Decent Home, p. 54)

A lack of adequate working-class housing became a key community issue in Milwaukee prompting Walter Davidson, vice-president of Milwaukee's Harley-Davidson motorcycle company, to comment in 1920 that "The housing question is one of the most momentous the city has before it." (Milwaukee Journal, March 4, 1920)

After World War I, Milwaukee's housing commission proposed a municipally-sponsored, low-cost cooperative housing project to ease the local housing shortage. Under the commission's plan, called the Garden Homes Project, occupants would not own their homes initially; instead they would purchase housing corporation common stock equal to the value of a house. The tenants would pay for their stock by making a 10% down payment and subsequent monthly payments spread over twenty years. The payments were to cover interest, taxes, upkeep, and other fixed costs. Tenants would also receive life insurance benefits and an annual five per cent cumulative dividend on their equity. The initial cost of the project was to be financed through the sale of preferred stock carrying a 5% per annum cumulative dividend, which would be purchased by city and county governments, and other interested investors. As the occupants of the houses paid on their common stock (only occupants of the houses could hold common stock), the preferred stock would be retired. It was expected that after about 20 years all of the preferred stock would be retired and the property would be wholly owned by the residents who at that time could elect to disband the housing corporation and convert the development to individual ownership. (A Few Facts About Housing, pamphlet published by Milwaukee Housing Commission, ca. 1920, pp. 17-23)

The financing plan was based on a prototype from England where about 60 cooperative housing associations had been established by 1919. (Milwaukee Leader, May 13, 1919) Cooperative housing was promoted by English author Ebenezer Howard whose highly influential book published in 1898, Garden Cities of Tomorrow, was the basis for the plan of Letchworth, England, the first true, totally planned cooperative community.

In 1919 at the urging of Mayor Hoan and his housing commission, legislation was enacted by the State of Wisconsin that for the first time in U. S. history allowed the creation of public housing

corporations. The Garden Homes Company was formally incorporated under this enabling legislation in 1921. (Articles of Organization, Garden Homes Corporation)

Commenting on the new housing legislation in 1919, housing commission member William George Bruce said, "The [Garden Homes] Company itself should be the contractor and every possible element of profit should be squeezed out. This is not a question of charity. It is an investment for the benefit of the entire community." (Milwaukee Journal, March 4, 1920)

The housing corporation's original prospectus stated the following objectives:

1. To promote the economic erection; cooperative ownership and administration of healthful homes.
2. To place said homes in areas platted in accordance with the best ideas of city planning so as to provide the greatest utility as well as healthful conditions and attractive surroundings.
3. To encourage the occupation of modest homes at cost and within the means of those who now cannot acquire and retain their own homes.
4. To avoid the dangers that too frequently accompany the individual ownership of houses and speculative building devoid of public spirit.
5. To harmonize and join the interests of resident and investor by an equitable use of the profit arising from the increase of values and the careful use of property.
6. To provide ample space for playgrounds and recreation for both old and young.
7. To provide an opportunity for intensive gardening under instruction thus maintaining the home in part by this means. (Garden Homes Co. Prospectus)

The Garden Homes project was intended to provide housing for families earning a modest \$1,200 to \$1,500 per year in 1920. (Milwaukee Journal, June 24, 1921)

Raising funds through the sale of preferred stock proved difficult for the housing corporation, delaying construction. Some local politicians were reluctant to appropriate city funds for the plan because they charged it did not guarantee individual ownership of the homes. According to a Milwaukee Sentinel report some opposed the plan because it "hinted something strongly of Sovietism." (Milwaukee Sentinel, September 9, 1920)

Despite the added problem of a downturn in the local economy, the Garden Homes planners proceeded with their project. Start-up financing totaling \$177,300 was secured through the sale of preferred stock. City and county governments made initial investments of \$50,000 each and 38 local business leaders invested a combined total of \$77,300 along with a pledge to eventually invest \$300,000. (Helen Terry, Garden Homes Housing Project, unpublished manuscript written for Milwaukee Municipal Reference Library, 1934, pp. 2-3)

On July 25, 1921, the Garden Homes Corp. purchased for about \$28,000 the 29 acres of farmland known as the Groelling tract on which the development stands today. Mayor Hoan presided over the groundbreaking ceremonies for the project on September 22, 1921. On Wednesday, November 1, 1922, David Harper, the son of the city's building inspector, moved into a cottage located at 4356 North 26th Street and became the first occupant of the Garden Homes project. (Milwaukee Journal, November 1, 1922)

There were about 700 applicants for the 105 units that were eventually built. In 1921 Mayor Hoan said that the units would be sold only to individuals who could not otherwise afford a home and it was the job of the Garden Homes board of directors to select the individuals most in need of

housing to live in the project. Applicants who had personal savings in excess of \$1500 were automatically rejected and urged to purchase a home through the private sector.

The 2-story, stuccoed houses in the development were built according to the designs of Milwaukee architect William H. Schuchardt, who donated his professional services and was a member of the Garden Homes board of directors. Schuchardt's designs for the Garden Homes cottages no doubt were influenced by his 1911 visit to garden cities in England and Germany.

Each of the Garden Homes cottages has the same basic floor plan and is architecturally undistinguished, but as an assemblage they comprise a picturesque, working class village with a decidedly European character that is unlike any other residential neighborhood in the city.

The homes were built at a cost of about \$4,500 each, which was about 25% less than the cost of a comparable new house in the city at that time. Costs were cut by using a standardized plan and production line techniques at the building site. The homes were constructed in consecutive order, and each crew of tradesmen progressed from one house to the next, performing virtually the same job each time. Because of the heavy municipal involvement in the project, some city construction equipment was used to further defray costs but not at the expense of delaying regular city projects.

From a purely technical standpoint, Garden Homes is an exercise in American ingenuity. It was not the nation's first example of mass-produced housing but the use of energy and labor-saving materials to reduce costs placed the development far ahead of its time. Of particular note was the use of a patented new material called flaxolinum keyboard sheathing as an underlayment for the exterior stucco. Made of compressed flax straw with molded keyways to hold the stucco applied over it, the material was reportedly first used on the Garden Homes project.

The implementation of such a utopian scheme like Garden Homes did not come about without challenges and criticism but, amazingly, the project was built.

Garden Homes became the focus of intense public debate in the city and was opposed by many business leaders, the local real estate board, and politicians. Some business leaders were irked that Garden Homes construction workers were paid high, union-scale wages at a time when Milwaukee was generally considered a non-union or "open shop town." Others feared that a Socialist success at Garden Homes would bolster the Socialist party platform with the Milwaukee electorate. (Milwaukee Journal, May 25, 1919; Annexation Activities of the City of Milwaukee, unpublished manuscript by Arthur W. Werba, c. 1927, pp. 1-10, City of Milwaukee Legislative Reference Bureau collection)

Shortly after the 105 units in the project were completed and occupied, the development encountered some major difficulties. Because there apparently had not been a suitable location for the project within the city limits, the project planners purchased a site outside Milwaukee with the intention of annexing it to the city. Construction of the project began before the area, partly lying in the Town of Wauwatosa and partly in the Town of Milwaukee, was formally annexed to the city. The two townships subsequently tried to legally block the annexation by filing three separate lawsuits. The legal battles delayed street improvements in the project area for months and long after the first house was occupied the streets were still a muddy quagmire. (Milwaukee Journal, February 20, 1938) The case was of such importance that it eventually reached the Wisconsin Supreme Court, which, on December 7, 1925, upheld the decision of a lower court that the annexation was legal. (Milwaukee Journal, December 8, 1925)

More problems developed in 1925 when the city assessed the project's residents between \$300 and \$750 each for street and storm sewer improvements. The residents angrily protested the assessment claiming misrepresentation of the actual cost of the homes. A few residents moved out in protest. On March 11, 1925, a Milwaukee Journal newspaper article appeared with the title: "Garden Homes Losing Charm, Many Residents Leaving 'Utopia' to Evade Assessment." The article reported that George Altpeter, chief of the city annexation division who lived in the Garden

Homes development from its beginning, said “Seventy-five percent of the inhabitants will pull away and sell their stock if the special assessment is enforced.” (Milwaukee Journal, March 11, 1925)

William H. Schuchardt, the designer of the project and the vice-president of the Garden Homes Corp., expressed his disillusionment with the situation at that time and said “I am through striving to do something helpful for anybody. It is a most thankless job. I have given time and money to the Garden Homes Corporation, and now there is most unwarranted grumbling.” (Milwaukee Journal, March 11, 1925)

Despite the reported widespread dissatisfaction, a vote in March, 1925, showed that Garden Homes’ residents were split over the controversy with 38 in favor of individual ownership of the project’s homes, 32 in favor of continuing the original cooperative ownership plan, and the others unsure. (Milwaukee Journal, March 17, 1925) Later it was reported that many of the Garden Homes residents wanted individual titles to their properties in order to sell them at their appreciated values. The single family houses which had cost about \$4,500 each to build in 1921-1923 were estimated to be worth about double that amount by 1925. (Milwaukee Journal, February 20, 1938)

Responding to the tenants’ demands, in June of 1925 the state legislature enacted the Garden Homes Law Amendment which permitted the sale of the project’s homes instead of leasing them. On Friday, July 17, 1925, the Garden Homes board of directors formally decided to disband the cooperative ownership and convert the project to individual ownership. Tenants were given the opportunity to purchase their homes at prices between \$4,700 and \$5,500.

With the change to individual ownership the Garden Homes Corporation functioned only to sell the housing stock and pay off all loans—a problem-plagued process which took more than ten years.

WHAT IS A “GARDEN CITY?”

Garden Homes as its name implies, it is based on the “garden suburb” and “garden city” forms of town planning that developed in England during the late nineteenth century.

As a bold experiment in community planning, the Garden Homes project was a reaction by Milwaukee’s elected Socialist municipal government to the inadequate and crowded living conditions faced by low-income working class city dwellers.

In terms of its planning, Garden Homes is philosophically based on English models of so-called “garden-style” urban planning. In tribute to their predecessors, the Garden Homes designers named the streets of the housing project after the English housing developments that inspired them: Bourneville (1893), Ealing (c. 1881), Hampstead (1905), Port Sunlight (1888) and Letchworth (1903).

One of the earliest writings on city planning that influenced the Garden Homes designers was the 1898 book entitled “Garden Cities of Today,” written by English author Ebenezer Howard. Howard coined the term “garden city,” which he defined as a “town designed for healthy living and industry; of a size that makes possible a full measure of social life, but not larger; surrounded by a rural belt; the whole of the land being in public ownership or held in trust for the community.” (Ebenezer Howard, Garden Cities of Tomorrow, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1946 edition, p.26) The principles of city planning that Howard outlined in his book were later applied in 1903 to the building of Letchworth, which was England’s first “garden city.” Letchworth became a model of city planning studied by planners around the world and was highly influential in the planning of Milwaukee’s Garden Homes housing project. Howard’s book proposed a new social system of cooperatively-owned housing developments as well as a new approach for urban design.

Howard was highly critical of traditional city development. His “garden city” concept was not intended to be a suburban development but rather a more livable and productive urban community.

Population was to be limited to the number originally planned for the area. New communities were to be founded as soon as the existing land and houses were fully occupied. To limit the internal growth of the city and stop encroachments from neighboring urban developments, Howard's Garden City concept provided for a permanent belt of open, agricultural land around the perimeter of the community. To further maintain control of the community, ownership and control of the town was vested with the municipality itself. Much of Ebenezer Howard's work was based on the English "garden" concept of town planning which began to take shape during the middle of the nineteenth century as a reaction by social reformers against the planless and squalid working-class industrial towns that were built during the early years of the Industrial Revolution. The English garden developments represented a new vision of working-class life in a planned, controlled environment combining the advantages of town and country, but set in an essentially rural environment. The early "garden" developments, which were similar in many respects to Milwaukee's Garden Homes project, were characterized by two-story, detached and semi-detached houses located on spacious lots landscaped with grass lawns and gardens. Streets were often laid out in a curvilinear plan to respect the native trees and the natural contours of the land. A park was often an integral part of the garden developments.

Early developments in England tended to be more company towns with the employer leasing the buildings they constructed to those who worked in their plants. Later developments for the working class were constructed by the government or private housing cooperatives. The English housing developments for which the other streets in the Garden Homes project were named (Bourneville, Port Sunlight, Ealing, and Hampstead) were among the most successful and most studied examples of the co-called "garden" concept of city planning. A pamphlet published in 1922 to promote Garden Homes idealized the English developments stating, "Nowhere in Milwaukee are there such charming localities as Port Sunlight, Bourneville, Letchworth, and Hamstead Gardens." (A Few Facts About Housing, p. 17)

Among the features of these developments that were incorporated into Milwaukee's Garden Homes and make it unique in America are: the concept of cooperative ownership, the boulevard-like park on North 26th Street (originally the south traffic lane was called Letchworth Place) that divides the roadway into separate zones; a limit to the number of houses constructed; cottages designed as two-story detached and semi-detached dwellings and related by similar architectural design; separation, at least initially, from the rest of the city by open agricultural land; streets laid out in a curvilinear plan.

The ideals of the English Garden City movement overlapped with those of the City Beautiful movement in America, which began during the Chicago World's fair of 1893 and addressed the problems of haphazard city development. American interest in Howard's ideas led in 1906 to the creation of the Garden Cities Association of America. The group drew tentative plans for the construction of a series of garden communities to house 375 families in Long Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, but not a single house was ever constructed. Although the association published a journal, The Village, it never garnered widespread support and was dissolved in 1921. (Daniel Schaffer, Garden Cities for America, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1982, p.149)

Milwaukee's Garden Homes housing project built in 1921-1923 has been virtually ignored in historical accounts of the American Garden City movement. Many historians regard Radburn, New Jersey, begun in 1928 as the first American Garden City. (Carol A. Christensen, The American Garden City and the New Towns Movement, Ann Arbor, Michigan, U. MI. Research Press, 1986, p.2) Radburn, with its 1,500 residents and approximately 960 dwellings, was larger than Garden Homes and included an impressive inventory of facilities for residents including two swimming pools, five basketball courts, and two summer houses. Unlike Garden Homes, Radburn was never a cooperative, and thus it lacked an important feature of Howard's Garden City plan.

Garden homes was apparently America's first and last major experiment in municipally-built cooperative housing, earning it a unique place in the history of American public housing. From its

beginning, Garden Homes was described as a municipal project. Referring to Garden Homes, Milwaukee Mayor Daniel W. Hoan, under whose administration the project was built, wrote in 1936 that "Milwaukee was the first city in the United States to sponsor a municipal and cooperative venture to build as a demonstration over one hundred individual homes." Mayor Hoan tried to stimulate national interest in cooperative housing. He was a key figure on the National Committee on Cooperative Housing which made a recommendation to Congress in 1922 to seriously consider cooperative housing similar to the Garden Homes project to alleviate low-income housing shortages. The recommendation apparently had little effect.

THE AFTERMATH

On July 27, 1925 the Garden Homes board of directors voted to dissolve the cooperative venture and turn the properties over to the tenants who held the common stock. After purchasing their homes, many residents went on to sell them to new owners. By the late 1930's only about 40% of the original tenants still lived in the subdivision. Despite its problems, the Garden Homes Co. always remained financially solvent. Property taxes and special assessments were always paid to the city. Loans were repaid in a timely manner to both the city and county with 5% interest, and the bank loans were repaid with 6% interest. (Milwaukee Journal, February 20, 1938) William Schuchardt, the project's designer, left Milwaukee in 1927 for a teaching position in city planning at Cornell University in New York. He never again was active in Milwaukee public or private circles. Emil Seidel, the city's first Socialist mayor who initially proposed cooperative housing, purchased a Garden Homes cottage at 4431 North 25th Street in the late 1920s after the development was privatized.

The city of Milwaukee annexed more land, 229 acres, than what was represented by the Garden Homes development. It is known that Garden Homes was to be expanded beyond what was built between 1921 and 1923. Financial (lack of further investment by the business community), political (backlash against socialist policies) and social challenges (residents wanting to benefit from increased property values), all played a roll in ending the grand experiment in Garden City design. Even the street names were changed in the late 1920s. The colorful references to the English Garden cities, like Bourneville and Letchworth and Hampstead, vanished and substituted with the more prosaic 25th Street, 26th Street and so on. Only Port Sunlight remains.

It was not until the Great depression in the 1930s that widespread national interest in public housing revived, although a few low-rent apartment buildings had been constructed by the City of New York during the late 1920s. Cooperative housing was apparently never seriously considered during the embryonic period of American public housing policy in the early 1930s. in 1934 a program of direct Federal construction of low-rent housing projects, primarily in slum areas, resulted in about 60 new projects being built across the nation. This program ran into local opposition and was reworked into the Public Housing Program by the passage of the United States Housing Act of 1937, which more or less forms the basis of the current system of U.S. public housing. There was no public involvement in building housing in Milwaukee after the Garden Homes project until 1936, when the Federal government built and operated Parklawn, a cluster of low-rent apartment buildings on the city's northwest side. Now operated by the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee, Parklawn is an early example of the type of public housing projects built throughout the country since the 1930s that were intended to be operated by local governments with Federal subsidies.

Milwaukee's progressive housing practices, exemplified by Garden Homes, were instrumental in attracting the favorable attention of the Federal Resettlement Administration, which selected Milwaukee as one of four cities out of a field of 52 nationwide in which to develop a large, suburban, experimental, greenbelt, new town project during the late 1930s. Built at a cost of about \$10 million this vast project, known as Greendale, created a carefully planned new community in suburban Milwaukee that incorporated Garden City design concepts, standardized plans, and mass production construction techniques. Unlike Garden Homes, of course, Greendale is a model town that features a large residential district, a business center, school districts, churches, and police and

fire stations. In selecting the Milwaukee area for the project, the Federal government stated that, "Milwaukee was outstanding by virtue of its very efficient planning department." (Edward Kerstein, Milwaukee's All American Mayor, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., pp. 115-116)

What was left of the utopian vision in Milwaukee was a neighborhood, conceived from scratch that is distinctive to this day. In terms of its overall design, Garden Homes represents an outstanding solution to the problem of providing economical, functional and aesthetically-pleasing moderate-income housing. The houses are not individually outstanding architecturally but as an assemblage they comprise a picturesque, working-class village with a decidedly European character that is unlike any other residential neighborhood in the city. Although all of the cottages have the same basic floor plan and were site built using a mass production approach, Garden Homes nevertheless manages to be an architecturally-interesting project with exteriors that were deftly and economically varied to avoid a banal, institutional appearance. One need only to compare the project to recent developments in the city to see how architect Schuchardt provided enough variation to create a lively and distinctive development. Interestingly, Schuchardt followed the model of other garden cities architects when designing Garden Homes. In England, architects were looking back to English vernacular architecture as the basis for their designs rather than high style European models based on classicism. Similarly, Schuchardt was looking back to American roots, the quintessential American style, a simplified Colonial Revival, as the foundation for his designs.

ALTERATIONS

With the conversion to private ownership, the houses of Garden Homes began to experience changes as owners sought to customize their appearance, deal with premature stucco failure, create sheltered entrances, and make repairs that were not always sympathetic to the original appearance. Many have added garages, approached by side drives as there were no alleys in the development. Sometimes rear additions or decorative fireplaces were built. It is important to note that these changes have not taken away from the importance of Garden Homes' significance. The houses, the site plan, central park and street layout still remain as a testament to an enlightened socially conscious and socially ambitious project.

RECENT EVENTS

The recent recession has impacted the housing in Garden Homes as well as decline in owner occupancy. There are some foreclosed properties. Some houses are not foreclosed but have been boarded up. Another suffered from fire damage and the owner worked on repairs. Wanting to provide playground space for its student population, Garden Homes Evangelical Lutheran Church has begun buying up properties in Garden Homes with the intent of demolishing the houses. The church did demolish 4330 N. 25th Street in October, 2010 after attempts at local historic designation failed. Another fire damaged doublehouse at 4387-4389 N. 26th Street was demolished on February 23, 2011. Up to this point, Garden Homes has remained amazingly intact. Neighborhood residents have banded together to tackle the problems presented by the economy and disinvestment on the part of some owners. They are currently seeking ways to have houses repaired and lived in by owner-occupants and this is rekindling the sense of community that was once part of the foundation of the development. The preservation of Garden Homes is critical for retaining National Register status and its accompanying tax credit incentives, and for possibly achieving National Historic Landmark status, which could open other avenues for funding projects.

THE ARCHITECT

William H. Schuchardt, the designer of the cottages in the Garden Homes Housing project, was a well-known Milwaukee architect and industrialist during the first quarter of the twentieth century. William Schuchardt and his twin brother, Carl W., were born in Milwaukee on April 28, 1874. Their mother, Rosalie (Winkler), was a Milwaukee native, and their father, Louis, was a German immigrant who worked for an uncle's banking firm in New York City (Schuchardt and Gebhardt) before coming to Milwaukee. Louis later worked for more than forty years as an

accountant/auditing clerk for Milwaukee's Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company. (William George Bruce, History of Milwaukee, Vol. III Chicago: S.J. Clarke publishing Co., 1922 p.767) The Schuchardt family lived for many years on the city's near north side at 324 West Cherry Street (razed) before moving in 1893 to a Queen Anne-style frame house that is still standing at 941 North 29th Street. William also had another brother, Rudolph F.

William Schuchardt attended city public schools, and later studied at the University of Wisconsin in Madison between 1891 and 1893. He finished his college studies in architecture at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, graduating with a bachelor's degree in 1895. After college, Schuchardt traveled throughout Europe for about a year and visited England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain. Returning to America in 1896, Schuchardt worked briefly as a draftsman for Richard E. Schmidt in Chicago. (American Architects Directory, New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1955, p. 492) In 1897 Schuchardt worked as a draftsman for the well-known Milwaukee architect Alexander Eschweiler. During the early years of his career Schuchardt lived with his family at 941 North 29th Street. In 1898 the Milwaukee City Directory lists Schuchardt as an architect, although it is known that he primarily worked at that time in Philadelphia for the architectural firm of Cope and Stewardson. (American Architects Directory p. 492) His design work from that date remains unknown. In 1900 Schuchardt apparently returned to Milwaukee and worked as a draftsman for architect Elmer Grey. The following year Schuchardt formed a partnership with the established Milwaukee society architect, Howland Russel. Their office was located in the 300 block of East Mason Street in the city's central business district (razed). Schuchardt's name disappeared from the 1902 and 1903 City Directories, and it is believed that during those years he had returned to the East Coast to work for several different architectural firms. Returning to Milwaukee in 1904, Schuchardt opened his own architectural practice in Room 716 of the Goldsmith Building, which was located on the southwest corner of West Wisconsin Avenue and North Jefferson Street (razed). During this period he designed many expensive residences in the period revival styles popular at that time including: the Loyal Durand residence (1906) located at 2212 North Lake Drive; the Augustus F. Chapman residence (1907) located at 2426 North Terrace Avenue; the Howard Greene residence (1907) located at 2025 North Lake Drive; and the Heilbrouner residence (1908) located at 2950 North Shepard Avenue. (Milwaukee Building Permits) In 1909 Schuchardt moved his office to 734 North Jefferson Street in the city's central business district (razed). Schuchardt married Gertrude Nunnemacher on November 1, 1911, and he subsequently moved out of the family house in 1912 and into a large Colonial Revival-style house built in 1890 that is still standing at 930 East Knapp Street. He then moved his offices to Jefferson Street.

One of the largest buildings Schuchardt designed in the Milwaukee area is the Neo-Gothic-style Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1905 West Wisconsin Avenue, constructed in 1915. That same year Schuchardt formed a partnership with Walter W. Judell. An example of the partnership's design work is the Harrison Green residence (1917) located at 2671 North Wahl Avenue. In 1917 the firm moved back to 734 N. water Street in the city's central business district. The onset of America's involvement in World War I marked a turning point in Schuchardt's career. Building construction came to an abrupt halt in Milwaukee as the nation concentrated on the production of goods for the war effort. With little architectural work available, in June of 1918, Schuchardt took a job as the Vice-President, Secretary, and General Manager of Pelton Steel Co., a south side Milwaukee steel casting firm that employed about 200 workers in the production of military-related goods. (Bruce Vol. III, p. 767) in addition to his position at Pelton Steel, between 1919 and 1921 Schuchardt served as Secretary-Treasurer of the Western Iron Stores Co. located at 555 North Plankinton Avenue (razed). Schuchardt's partnership with Judell was apparently dissolved after they designed the Theodore F. Vogel residence in 1919 which is located at 2219 North Lake Drive. Around 1918 Schuchardt also began to assume duties on a public housing commission created by Milwaukee Mayor Daniel W. Hoan to study the city's working-class housing shortage, a condition that was worsened by the World War I construction lull.

Schuchardt was a staunch supporter of cooperatively-owned or so-called co-partnership housing. Writing in an annual Milwaukee building inspector's report published about 1910 Schuchardt stated, "Co-partnership housing has come to stay in Europe because it offers the wage earners a better

bargain than any other scheme yet proposed. Co-partnership housing in Europe is a success, and labor leaders, philanthropists, and employers look forward confidently to a time when tenements and ugly monotonous workingmen's districts will be considered convincing evidence of barbarism. The remarkable results achieved by these co-partnership housing corporations hold a clear and unavoidable challenge to us in America. Will we accept the challenge or confess ourselves unequal to the task? What will we in Milwaukee do about it? Have we adequate vision, have we sufficient initiative and the desire for better things or will we be content to merely muddle along?" (A Few Facts About Housing p. 14) Schuchardt's interest in cooperative housing dates to at least 1911 when he made a trip to England and Germany to study several housing cooperatives based on the planning principles advocated by Ebenezer Howard in his 1898 book, Garden Cities of Tomorrow. Schuchardt's European trip undoubtedly influenced his earliest-known design work for a Garden City-type development, an entry that was submitted in 1913 to the City Club of Chicago's international competition to address inadequacies in residential land use planning. (Alfred Yeomans, City Residential Land Development Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916)

Schuchardt was one of the key figures in the development of the Garden Homes Housing Project in Milwaukee, the nation's first municipally-sponsored, cooperatively-owned housing development. In 1921 Schuchardt designed the nine basic cottage prototypes that comprise the 93-building Garden Homes Housing Project, which was built between 1921 and 1923. Schuchardt became president of the board of directors of the Garden Homes Co., which was created by state legislation to oversee the administration of the housing project.

Schuchardt was a civic-minded individual who also served in Milwaukee as secretary of the Columbia Hospital Board of Directors, and as a trustee of the former Milwaukee Downer College between 1912 and 1925. An avid art collector, Schuchardt was a director of Milwaukee's Layton Art Gallery (defunct) between 1915 and 1925, and the Milwaukee Art Institute (razed) from 1910 to 1925. In memory of his wife, Gertrude, who died in 1919, Schuchardt donated to the Milwaukee Art Institute his collection of etchings that included works by major artists such as Rembrandt, Millet, Corot, Whistler, and Durer. (Bruce p. 768) This collection has since passed to the successor institution, the Milwaukee Art Museum. In 1923 the widowed Schuchardt moved out of the large house at 930 East Knapp Street and back to the family home at 941 North 29th Street with his mother, Rosalie. By 1924 Schuchardt had left his job with Pelton Steel to become the vice-president of Durant Manufacturing Co., a builder of counting machines located at 1929 North Buffum Street. In that same year Schuchardt was appointed by the Common Council to the Milwaukee Public Land Commission, of which he became president.

In 1925 Schuchardt's dream of a model cooperative housing project was shattered when dissatisfied Garden Homes' residents demanded and won individual ownership of their houses. Responding to criticism of the project, Schuchardt was quoted as saying "I am through trying to do something helpful for anybody." Two years later in 1927 at the age of 53, Schuchardt left Milwaukee and was never again active in Milwaukee public or professional circles. His mother, Rosalie, went to live with another son, Carl W., who lived at 3508 North Prospect Avenue in suburban Shorewood, and the family house at 941 North 29th Street was apparently sold. (Milwaukee city directories)

After leaving Milwaukee, Schuchardt became a Professor of City Planning at his alma mater, Cornell University and headed up the regional and city planning department at the college. Nine years after the death of his first wife, Schuchardt married Mildred Fraser on Nov. 17, 1928. By 1929 he had moved to Southern California where he worked with architects David Allison and Sumner Spaulding for about 12 years. Schuchardt served on the Los Angeles City Plan Commission between 1938 and 1948, and he was on the Board of Governors of the Los Angeles County Museum between 1944 and at least 1955. He was elected honorary member of the American Institute of Planners in 1949. Schuchardt died at the age of 84 on Thursday, April 17, 1958. His last known home address was in Arcadia, California, an eastern suburb of Los Angeles. (American Architects Directory p. 492; Who Was Who in America, Vol. 3 Chicago: A. H. Marquis Co., 1960 p. 764; Milwaukee Journal, April 18, 1958, p. 2 part 2)

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IX. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Garden Homes be given historic designation as a City of Milwaukee Historic District as a result of its fulfillment of criteria e-1, e-3, e-4, e-6, e-7, and e-9 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 320-21 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.**

Rationale: Unlike other historic districts which are grouped by period of development or as a collection of styles that relate to the broader development of American architecture, Garden Homes was designed as a set piece, with the roadways, houses and park all laid out at one time, by one architect and to fulfill an ambitious social goal of having decent affordable housing for the working class residents of Milwaukee. It was also the only planned development that was municipally sponsored and set up as a cooperative.

Garden Homes exemplifies the progressive innovation in governmental function for which Wisconsin was known in the early 20th century. As the first municipally-built public housing cooperative, Garden Homes began a nationwide tradition of providing low-cost, government-backed housing that continues to this day. In addition to the creative cooperative package, Garden Homes aimed to curb urban blight and enhance the quality of city life by giving city government more control over long-term planning and maintenance of neighborhoods. Living units were to have adequate light and air and the location of the development had to be healthful for the tenants. It was intended for the city to be involved for at least twenty years or until each resident had accumulated stock equal to the value of his or her house. The project was to be a model for future development although that did not occur.

The proposed local Garden Homes Historic District has already been listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1990 because of its national significance in the areas of community planning and development and its local significance to social history in Milwaukee. Research indicates that Garden Homes is historically important as the nation's first municipally-built housing development. It offered each of its working-class tenants an opportunity to purchase equity in the project through a cooperative ownership plan, something not attempted before and quite revolutionary in Milwaukee and the country. In terms of its conception and organization, the district is an interesting example of early twentieth century planning as the first municipally-sponsored housing project of its kind to incorporate the fundamental principles of England's Garden City form of planning, production-line construction techniques, and patented labor-saving materials. It predates Radburn, New Jersey, begun in 1928, that is often considered as America's first Garden City.

National Historic Landmark status, the top level of national designation, is being explored at the present time because Garden Homes occupies such a unique place in the development of publicly sponsored housing in the United States.

e-3 **Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city of Milwaukee.**

Rationale: The proposed Garden Homes Historic District is a major accomplishment of the administration of Milwaukee's Socialist Mayor Daniel Hoan. The grouping of buildings, still mostly intact after all these decades, is the physical embodiment of the city's so-called "sewer socialists" whose goals were to improve the lives of the city's residents rather than impose a rigid political ideology. Assisting the lives of the working class who could not attain the American dream, despite all their hard efforts, was a major goal of Mayor Hoan. Hoan steered Milwaukee clear of many of the problems other major cities encountered during the Great Depression and was known throughout the country for his progressive leadership.

e-4 **Its portrayal of the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.**

Rationale: The proposed Garden Homes Historic District was developed as a set piece, conceived, designed and constructed as a whole with each house an important component. All of the houses were clad originally in the same material but had a variety of window groupings, porches and roofs that added interest to the Colonial Revival style of each. The recent loss of two buildings, 4330 N. 25th Street in October 2010 and 4387-4389 N. 26th Street (a doublehouse) on February 23, 2011, does not diminish the importance of the district.

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 of Milwaukee, state of Wisconsin, or of the United States.**

Rationale: Architect William Schuchardt was an outstanding architect of his time in Milwaukee. He studied at Cornell University and was trained through work at a number of architectural offices not only here but in other cities. Among his architectural commissions are the Loyal Durand residence (1906) located at 2212 N. Lake Drive, the Augustus F. Chapman residence (1907) located at 2426 North Terrace Avenue, the Grant Fitch house on Prospect Avenue, the Fred Vogel house on Lake Drive and the Harrison Green Residence (1917) located at 2671 North Wahl Avenue.

In addition to designing for Milwaukee's socially connected, Schuchardt was also interested in public service and the roll that architecture and planning could play in the lives of city residents. His leadership of various manufacturing concerns gave him credibility among the city's governmental leaders as well. He served on the board of Columbia Hospital, the Layton School of Art, the Milwaukee Art Institute, the Layton Art Gallery and Downer College. He also served on Milwaukee's housing and land commissions. His work on the design of Garden Homes was done without fee, and reflected his interest in cooperative housing and his belief that even modest houses could be well-designed and affordable. His efforts could be seen in Milwaukee's zoning efforts, lakefront planning and street planning in Milwaukee in the 1920s. His obituary indicates that Schuchardt established a national reputation as a city planner. Schuchardt went on to teach at Cornell University, head up regional planning there and then served on the Los Angeles City Plan Commission in his later years.

e-7 **Its embodiment of elements of architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship which represent a significant architectural innovation.**

Rationale: The proposed Garden Homes Historic District was far ahead of its time in the utilization of energy and labor-saving materials to reduce construction and operating costs. Of particular interest was the use of a patented new material called flaxolinum keyboard sheathing as an underlayment for the exterior stucco. Made of flax straw, with molded keyways to hold the stucco applied over it, the material was apparently first used on the Garden Homes project. It was significant in that it served as both lath and insulation and was installed in large panels, thus speeding construction time over the conventional wood stick lath and stucco technology used at the time. The material is apparently no longer made but is remarkably similar to a modern sheathing material with the trade name "graylite," which is commonly used in residential construction. Flaxolinum or improper installation, or both, might have been responsible for the delamination of the stucco on some of the cottages within a few decades after completion.

The interior walls and ceilings were sheathed with another new, energy and labor saving material called spruce wood fiber insulation board, one-half-inch thick, which was finished with a skim coat of plaster veneer. This technique is similar to the present system of gypsum board finished with plaster veneer that was introduced during the late 1930s.

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

Rationale: The proposed Garden Homes Historic District is a development that stands out from the neighborhoods that adjoin it because it is centered around a park, features winding streets and has a consistency of scale, setback and design that set it off. Its presence has given an identity to the area in which it is located and has led to the naming of an adjacent church, Garden Homes Evangelical Lutheran Church and Garden Homes Elementary School.

X. PRESERVATION GUIDELINES GARDEN HOMES HISTORIC DISTRICT

Any exterior alteration, exclusive of painting, will require a Certificate of Appropriateness. Any existing exterior features can remain. The historic designation does not mean that owners are required to restore their buildings to original condition, but that when major changes are made, such as the installation of new siding, windows, doors and porches, that they are compatible with the original designs of the houses.

The following preservation guidelines represent the principal concerns of the Historic Preservation Commission regarding this historic designation. However, the Commission reserves the right to make final decisions based upon particular design submissions. Building maintenance and restoration must follow accepted preservation practices as outlined below. The intent of the guidelines are to preserve the houses as closely as possible to their original form and details and to preserve the Garden Homes Park so that they remain contributing features to the Garden Homes National Register historic district.

A. Roofs

Retain the roof shape. Skylights are discouraged on the front elevation but may be added to the rear roof slope if they are not visible from the street or public right of way. Existing skylights may remain in place but in the event of re-roofing, any front skylights should be removed and the roof restored to its original shape and appearance.

No major changes can be made to the roof shape of the houses, which would alter the building height, roofline or pitch. Locate mechanical systems and vents on the rear slope of the roof and paint them out to minimize impact.

The construction of new dormers or other rooftop features, addition of skylights, solar panels and satellite dishes, and re-roofing require review by Historic Preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness. A satellite dish or solar panels, if installed, must be reviewed by HPC staff, and must be located on the rear half of the roofs or on the side of the house as far to the rear as possible. Retain the existing original chimneys if possible. No rooftop construction is allowed, as this would compromise the appearance of the house. The roofs were originally finished with red or green shingles and those colors are preferable when re-roofing time comes around. Architectural shingles are not required and a three-tab shingle, the least expensive variety, is strongly encouraged.

B. Materials

1. Masonry

- a. Covering original masonry with other materials (wood, sheet metal, vinyl siding, etc.) is not allowed. The only masonry on an original Garden Homes house was the raised foundation, typically poured concrete or concrete block, and the brick chimney.
- b. Repoint defective mortar in chimney and foundation by duplicating the original in color, hardness, texture, joint finish and joint width because mortar that is too hard is prone to premature failure. 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. Replaced mortar joints should be tooled to match the style of the original which was a simple raked joint. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness is required before starting any repointing. If the chimneys are rebuilt, a reddish brown brick that matches the original should be used.

- c. Clean masonry only when necessary to halt deterioration and with the gentlest method possible. Sandblasting or high pressure water blasting or the use of other abrasive materials (soda, nut shells, etc.) on brick and concrete surfaces is prohibited because it erodes the surface of the material and speeds up deterioration of the masonry. Do not use chemical products that could have an adverse reaction with the masonry materials. Work should be done by experienced individuals. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness is required before any cleaning would begin.
- d. Existing substitute siding that was applied before the local historic district was created, may remain. If there is a request to replace it in the future, staff will work on helping the owner with installing the appropriate new stucco siding. If small areas of existing substitute siding are damaged, they may be replaced with new, matching substitute siding. In the event all the substitute siding is removed, the guidelines would be to install new stucco siding to generally match the original finish

2. Wood/Metal

- a. Retain original material, whenever possible. Do not remove architectural features such as original porches and windows that are essential to maintaining the building's character and appearance. Owners should repair original materials rather than completely remove and replace them. This is often an economical way to go.
- b. Retain or replace deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the appearance of the old as closely as possible. In the Garden Homes Historic District, the original front porches were not elaborate but are essential to the character of each house. Many of the front porches have been altered from the originals. They may remain. If a new front porch or porches were to be built they should follow the original plans. Do not cover any original architectural features with new materials that do not duplicate the appearance of the original materials. Covering wood or metal with aluminum or vinyl or other substitute material is not permitted although the existing aluminum or vinyl or other substitute siding may be retained. In the event the siding is removed, however, the original stucco finish should be restored.
- c. Ornamental wood details, such as gable returns at the roof, must be retained. Any new elements must replicate the pattern, dimension, and spacing of the original as shown in the original construction plans.

C. Windows and Doors

1. Retain original window and door openings as they are essential to the architectural character of the house. Retain the existing configuration of panes, sash, surrounds and sills, except as necessary to restore to the original condition. Do not make additional openings or changes to existing window or door openings by making them larger or smaller to fit new stock window sash or new stock door sizes. Do not change the size or configuration of the original windowpanes or sash. Use storm windows or protective glazing which have glazing configurations similar to the prime windows and which obscure the prime windows as little as possible. New windows and even patio doors can be installed on the rear elevation but the windows must be replaced with sizes that match the original.
2. Respect the building's stylistic period. If the replacement of doors or window sash is necessary, the replacement should duplicate the appearance and design and material of the original window sash or door. New glass must match the size of the historic glass-which is relatively easy to do today. The front doors were originally the six-panel variety and these are readily available today in the event a door has to be replaced. Do not fill in or cover openings with inappropriate materials such as glass block or concrete block. Glass block windows may be installed in basement windows on the rear of the houses. In the event other windows in the house are changed, they should be made of wood, match the originals and be fitted with a wood combination storm/screen. The existing metal storms do not have to be removed. Although not as energy efficient as a typical wood combination storm-screen, they can be painted out to minimize their appearance. 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.

Vinyl, vinyl clad, metal, and metal-clad or fiberglass prime window units are not permitted. If new windows are required, replacements will be of wood and match the six-over-six style of the originals. Insulating glass is allowed in new windows. Sometimes the existing wood windows can be fitted with insulating glass and this practice is strongly encouraged if possible. Original doors featured six panels. If the original front door is still extant, every effort should be made to preserve it. If that is not possible, then replacement doors should match the original six panel design and fit into the original opening. The same applies to the side entrances. 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 for basement windows are permitted but their design must be simple in nature and generally reflect the guidelines on page 79 of Living with History. Bars may also be installed on the rear windows of a house. 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. Replacement features must match the original member in scale, design, color and appearance. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required before any changes or repairs are made to the building.

E. Additions

No additions will be permitted on the front or sides of the houses as this would destroy the character defining features of the buildings. Any other addition requires the approval of the Commission. Ideally an addition should either compliment or have a neutral effect upon the historic character of the building. Approval shall be based upon the addition's design compatibility with the building in terms of window size and placement, building height, roof configuration, scale, design, color, and materials, and the degree to which it visually intrudes upon the principal elevations or is visible from the public right of way. Additions must be smaller than the building and not obscure the historic building.

F. Signs/Exterior Lighting

The installation of any permanent exterior sign or light fixture on the front elevation requires 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 are not permitted. There are many types of light fixtures appropriate for Garden Homes. Historic Preservation staff can provide examples. Plastic internally illuminated box signs are not permitted.

G. Site Features

New plant materials, paving, fencing, or accessory structures (garden sheds, storage sheds, and gazebos) shall be compatible with the historic architectural character of the district and requires a Certificate of Appropriateness. Any raised, rear deck installation requires a Certificate of Appropriateness. Current rear structures and accessory buildings may remain but their replacement will require consultation with Historic Preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness. The installation of retaining walls along the front of the property is not allowed. Existing fencing may remain. If replacement is considered, new fencing will follow the examples in Living With History and As Good As New. Any new driveway may be replaced in kind with concrete or asphalt. Any changes to the location of the drive will require consultation with Historic Preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness. New garages may be constructed at the rear and must be generally compatible with the overall design of the house. The garage does not have to be stucco clad and the installation of smooth cement board siding is allowed. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required before starting any work that would involve the landscape features, the position of the driveway and service walks and new construction.

GARDEN HOMES PARK

Garden Homes Park is a central feature of the Garden Homes Historic District. The open green space was designed to be a communal area for recreation and relaxation and was the focal point around which the development was designed. Its retention as a green space is essential. No residential, commercial, religious or other construction is permitted. Small structures associated with parks such as

playground equipment are permitted. The planting of trees and flower gardens is consistent with the green space concept of the garden city movement upon which Garden Homes was based. Signage is also allowed and requires 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 structures in the district. Small-scale accessory structures, like a gazebo or fountain, are generally permitted in the rear yards depending on their size, scale and form and the property's ability to accommodate such a structure.

1. Siting

New construction must respect the historic siting of the buildings. It should be accomplished so as to maintain the appearance of the buildings from the street as freestanding structures. New houses must be the same general size, scale and design of the original houses. Rebuilding to original plans is strongly encouraged.

2. Scale

Overall building height and bulk, the expression of major building divisions including raised foundation, overhangs and window size and placement that are part of the new principal structures in the district must be compatible to and sympathetic with the design of the original buildings in the district. Secondary building such as garages and outbuildings must be smaller in size and shorter in height than the historic building on the lot. While there are many possible designs for new garages, the Historic Preservation office has plans for new garages that are available to owners of houses in local historic districts.

3. Form

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

4. Materials

The building materials which are visible from the public right-of-way should be consistent with the colors, textures, proportions, and combinations of cladding materials used on the historic buildings.

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.

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. All buildings in the district are considered historically significant.

3. Location

In general secondary buildings in the district such as garages can be demolished if they are beyond repair.

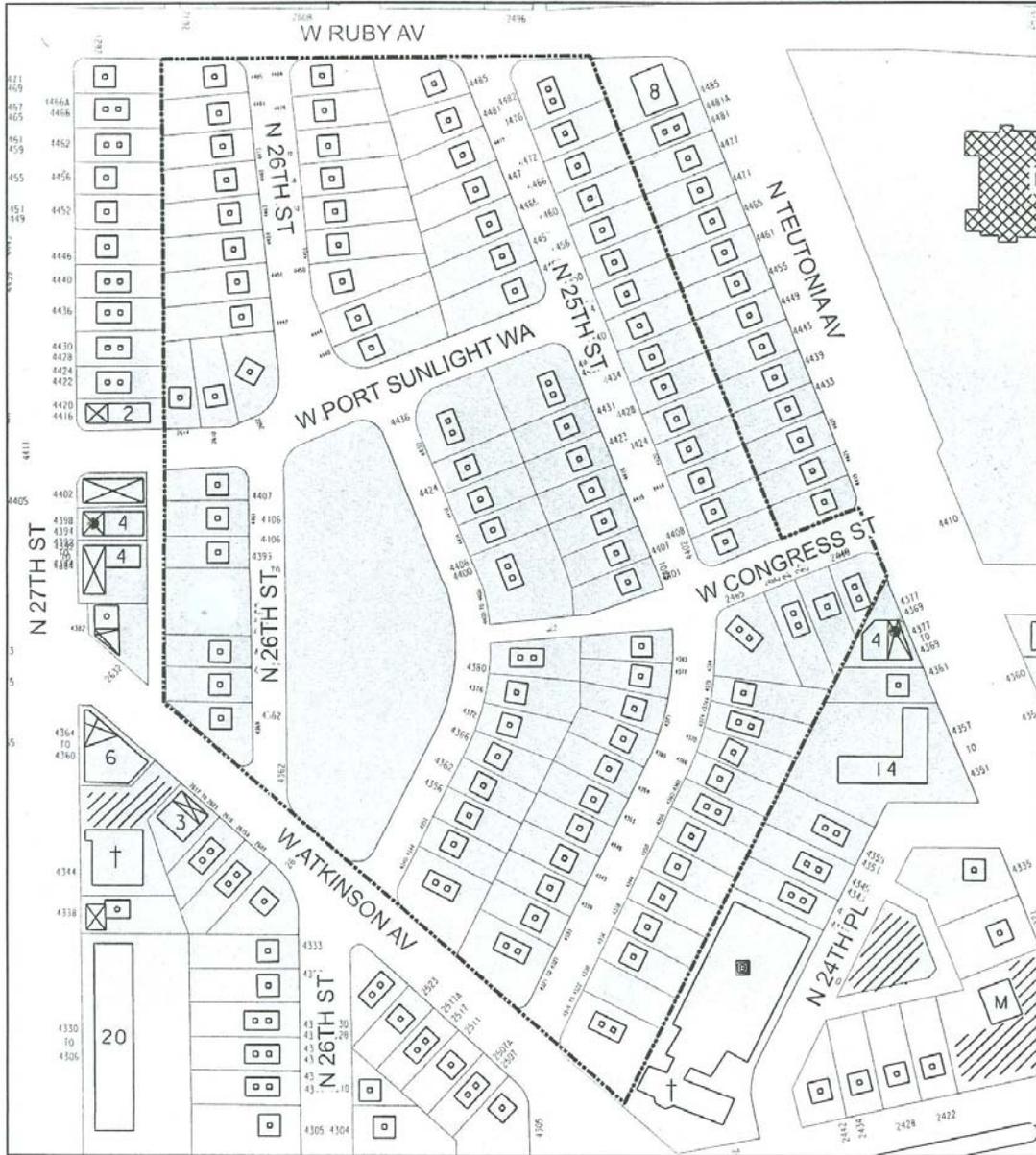
4. Potential for Restoration

Consideration will be given, on a case-by-case basis as 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 house or does not contribute to its character.

Garden Homes Historic District



 District Boundary

0 100 200 400 Feet


 City of Milwaukee 2-22-11
 IRR125650 RTW