

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION STUDY REPORT

## EDMUND B. GUSTORF HOUSE

(Written Summer, 1985)

### I. NAME

Historic: Edmund B. Gustorf House

Common: The Boat House

### II. LOCATION

3138 North Cambridge Avenue

Tax Key Number: 28-1054-000

Legal Property Description: Savings and Inv. Assoc. of Milw. Subdivision No. 5 in SE ¼ Sec 9-7-22 Block 3, Lots 20 & 21 and Vacated Street

### III. CLASSIFICATION

Structure

### IV. OWNER

Dr. & Mrs. William E. Kortsch  
3204 North Cambridge Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53211

### V. YEAR BUILT

1922

### VI. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTON

The Gustorf House is located in an early twentieth century middle class, residential area of detached frame houses on the city's Upper East Side. It is sited on a grassy corner lot overlooking the Milwaukee River valley ornamented with a wooden rowboat used as a planter. In addition to some mature trees and shrubs, there is an ornamental wooden replica of a lighthouse on the lot. The lighthouse and boat-shaped planter were designed to complement the nautical theme of the dwelling.

The house itself is a frame structure designed to imitate a motor powered Great Lakes yacht of the 1920s. It is about 65 feet long with an 18-foot beam. The wooden structure has a deck cabin containing the living room and kitchen, while the hull contains the below-deck bedroom, bath, laundry and utility rooms. Porthole windows and metal pip railing contribute to its nautical design. The wooden hull was covered with aluminum siding in 1952 detracting from its original appearance, but otherwise it has been little altered.

## **VII. SIGNIFIANCE**

The Edmund Gustorf House is architecturally significant as a unique expression of early twentieth century fantasy architecture built to satisfy the whimsical residential aspirations of its nautically oriented first owner. It is the only known such "boat house" in Wisconsin.

## **VIII. HISTORY**

The Edmund B. Gustorf House was built in 1922 as his residence by Gustorf, who was a traveling salesman. Gustorf was 52 years old when he began construction of his "yacht bungalow," as he described it on the building permit. The wood for the hull and deck cabin of the house was reportedly ordered from a Green Bay boatyard. Gustorf occupied his house with his wife, Lotta, until 1939. He died on May 31, 1940. The house was later owned by Samuel Burns from 1950 until the present owners acquired it in 1985.

## **IX. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff finds that the Edmund B. Gustorf House appears to satisfy the criteria of significance contained in Section 2-335 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances.

## **X. PRESERVATION GUIDELINES**

The following preservation guidelines represent the principle 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. These guidelines shall be applicable only to the Edmund Gustorf House. Nothing in these guidelines shall be construed to prevent ordinary maintenance or the restoration and/or replacement of documented original elements.

### **A. Roofs**

Retain the original roof shape. Avoid making changes to the roof that would alter the building height, roofline or pitch or would introduce elements that are out of character with the nautical theme of the house.

### **B. Wood/Metal**

1. Retain the original material, whenever possible. Avoid removing architectural features that are essential to maintaining the building's character and appearance.
2. Repair or replace deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the appearance of the old as closely as possible. Avoid covering architectural features with new materials that are inappropriate or were unavailable when the building was constructed such as metal siding. Consider removing later alterations, such as the existing metal siding, and restoring the original materials.

### **C. Windows and Doors**

1. Retain existing window and door openings on all elevations. Retain the existing configuration of panes, sash, sills, doors and hardware except as necessary to restore the building to its original condition. Avoid making additional openings or changes in the principal elevations by enlarging or reducing window or door openings to fit new stock size window sash or new stock door sizes. Avoid changing the size or configuration of windowpanes or sash.
2. Respect the building's nautical style. If replacement window sash or doors is necessary, the replacement should duplicate the appearance and design of the original window sash or door. Avoid using inappropriate sash and door replacements or supplements such as unpainted galvanized aluminum storm and screen combination window units. Avoid the filling-in or covering of openings with inappropriate materials or the installation of plastic or metal strip awnings or shutters. Avoid the substitution of units with glazing configurations not appropriate to the style of the building.

D. Porches, Trim and Ornamentation

There shall be no changes to the existing porches, trim or ornamentation except as necessary to restore the building to its original condition. Replacement features shall match the original member in scale, design, and appearance.

E. Additions

All elevations are integral to the structure's architectural significance. Additions are not recommended and require the approval of the Commission. Approval shall be based upon the addition's design compatibility with the building in terms of height, roof configuration, fenestration, scale, design and materials, and the degree to which it visually intrudes upon all elevations.

F. Site Features

Retain the existing lighthouse. New plant materials, planters, paving, fencing and light fixtures shall be compatible with the nautical character of the house. Consideration should be given to reconstructing the wave-topped picket fence formerly on the site. The 1922 boathouse-type garage should be retained, if possible.