

HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT

CALVARY CEMETERY

I. Name

Historic: Calvary Cemetery

Common: Same

II. Location

Street Address: 5503 West Blue Mound Road

Legal Property Description: Tax Key No. 404-9974-100

Lands in SW ¼ Sec 26-7-21 Com at a Pt in C L of W Blue Mound Rd Sd Pt being 1883' N of S LI & 455' W of E LI Sd ¼ Sec-th S Par to E LI Sd ¼ Sec 1883' to S L thereof-Th W Alg Sd S L 1623.50; to C L of N Hawley Rd-Th N 8 Deg 55 Min E Alg C L Sd Rd 632.45' -Th N 1Deg 15 Min E Alg C L Sd Rd 1250' to C L W Blue Mound Rd-Th Ely Alg C L Sd Rd to Beg Exc Sts & Subj to an Eas'mt to WEP Co for transmission lines

III. Classification

Site

IV. Owner

The Most Reverend Rembert Weakland
Archbishop of Milwaukee
Chancery
3501 South Lake Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53207

V. Year Built

1857, 1897, 1899

Architect: Erhard Brielmaier & Sons

VI. Physical Description

Calvary Cemetery occupies 75, wooded, gently rolling acres located about four miles west of the central business district at the intersection of North Hawley Road and West Blue Mound Road. The park-like cemetery is in the romantic landscape style of the mid-nineteenth century. Numerous ornate monuments, statues, mausoleums and crypts are interspersed amidst the forest of marble and granite headstones.

Three fine buildings ornament the grounds. The gatehouse is a rambling, wooden structure in the Victorian Gothic style built in 1897. It was designed by Erhard Brielmaier

and Sons of Milwaukee. The most distinctive feature of the structure is the four-story tower and the triumphal arch over the driveway. The gatehouse originally contained the cemetery office and superintendent's apartment. It is possible that the ornament on the exterior of the building has been simplified over the years by the removal of the pinnacles and other decorative features.

The chapel is a lofty, cruciform, cream brick, Romanesque style structure with stone trim. It was built in 1899 to the designs of Erhard Brielmaier & Sons and occupies a prominent hilltop site. The entrance is sheltered by an arched portico with a pair of engaged, limestone columns. A rose window surmounts the double-door entrance with its elaborate iron strap hinges. Hemi-domed apses abut the other three sides of the small structure. A faceted peaked roof surmounts the octagonal brick drum with its arched clerestory windows.

The third structure is the maintenance building. It is a rectangular, cream brick, hip-roofed structure in the Queen Anne style with bracketed eaves and eyebrow dormers. A massive chimney rises from the center of the roof.

VII. Significance

Calvary Cemetery is historically significant as the oldest extant Roman Catholic cemetery in Milwaukee. It is the final resting-place of many prominent Milwaukeeans including city founder Solomon Juneau and his wife Josette, colorful Milwaukee Mayor David Rose, and the victims of the Lady Elgin shipwreck. It is architecturally significant for its fine examples of funerary architecture including the castellated Victorian Gothic style gatehouse, the cream brick Romanesque style chapel and an impressive array of monuments and private mausoleums.

VIII. Historical Background

The first cemetery in Milwaukee was a plot of ground in the First Ward on a bluff near the lakeshore. As the village of Milwaukee grew into a town, the little burial plot rapidly became filled with graves and a new cemetery was established on West Wisconsin Avenue in 1844. The remains from the old First Ward Cemetery were moved there. This 6.6-acre tract was filed within a decade of its founding. In 1857 Archbishop John M. Henni consecrated the initial 55-acre tract of the present cemetery. The burials from the old Cemetery on West Wisconsin Avenue were moved to the new Calvary Cemetery. In spite of its remote location almost four miles west of downtown, the cemetery rapidly filled with graves; by 1880 10,307 burials had been recorded. Twenty additional acres were added to the cemetery bringing the total to 75 acres. The grounds were landscaped in the romantic style with winding roads. Important public figures including city founder Solomon Juneau, colorful turn-of-the-century Milwaukee Mayor David Rose and Judge Shaughnessy, a prominent Milwaukee County jurist are buried there. In addition, many important industrialists and businessmen are buried there including the Millers of Miller Brewery, the Zieglers of Ziegler Candy Company and the Cudahys of the Patrick Cudahy Meat Packing Company among others.

Leaders of the Catholic church, diocesan priests, and members of various Catholic orders that were active in Milwaukee are also interred at Calvary, including Jesuits, Sisters of St. Joseph, Little Sisters of the Poor, Daughters of Charity, Sisters of St. Francis, Sisters of Mercy, and Capuchin Friars. Calvary is also the final resting place of

the victims of some of the city's most famous disasters, including the wreck of the Lady Elgin steamship in 1860, which drowned over 300 members of Milwaukee Irish community and some of the victims of the Newhall House Hotel fire in 1883, which resulted in the death of about 70 people.

Over the year, the grounds of the cemetery were landscaped and improved into the beautiful, park-like setting that exists today. In the late nineteenth century, significant celebrations including All Saints' Day and Corpus Christi were held there. It also became a popular destination for family picnics, particularly after the streetcar lines were extended out that far after the turn-of-the-century. Among the major improvements made to the cemetery were the construction of the elaborate wooden gatehouse in 1897 and the beautiful cream brick chapel in 1899. Erhard Brielmaier and Sons of Milwaukee designed both. The cemetery has remained in use to the present and there are an estimated 80,000 burials on the grounds today. It was declared a Milwaukee Landmark in 1981.

IX. Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that Calvary Cemetery be designated a City of Milwaukee Historic Site as a result of its fulfillment of criteria one, three, five and nine of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 2-335(2)(e).

X. Preservation Guidelines

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. These guidelines shall be applicable only to the Calvary Cemetery Historic District. Nothing in these guidelines shall be construed to prevent ordinary maintenance or the restoration and/or replacement of documented original elements.

A. Guidelines for Rehabilitation

These guidelines are based upon those contained in Section 2-335(10) of the historic preservation ordinance. These guidelines are not intended to restrict an owner's use of his/her property, but to serve as a guide for making changes that will be sensitive to the architectural integrity of the structure and appropriate to the overall character of the district.

1. Roofs

- a. Retain the original roof shape. Dormers, skylights and solar collector panels may be added to roof surfaces if they do not visually intrude upon those elevations visible from the public right-of-way. Avoid making changes to the roof shape that would alter the building height, roofline, pitch or gable orientation.
- b. Retain the original roofing materials, wherever possible. Avoid using new roofing materials that are inappropriate to the style and period of the building.
- c. Replace deteriorated roof coverings with new materials that match the old in size, shape, color and texture. Avoid replacing deteriorated roof covering with new materials that would differ to such an extent from the old in size, shape, color and texture that the appearance of the building is altered.

2. Exterior Finishes

a. Masonry

- i. Unpainted brick or stone should not be painted or covered. Avoid painting or covering natural stone and unpainted brick. This is likely to be historically incorrect and could cause irreversible damage if it was decided to remove the paint at a later date.
- ii. Repoint defective mortar by duplicating the original in color, style, texture and strength. Avoid using mortar colors and pointing styles that were unavailable or were not used when the building was constructed.

- iii. Clean masonry only when necessary to halt deterioration and with the gentlest method possible. Sandblasting brick or stone surfaces is prohibited. This method of cleaning erodes the surface of the material and accelerates deterioration. Avoid the indiscriminate use of chemical products that could have an adverse reaction with the masonry materials, such as the use of acid on limestone or marble.
 - iv. Repair or replace deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible. Avoid using new material that is inappropriate or was unavailable when the building was constructed, such as artificial cast stone or fake brick veneer.
- b. Wood
- i. Retain original material, whenever possible. Avoid removing architectural features such as half-timbering, window architraves and doorway pediments. These are, in most cases, an essential part of a building's character and appearance that should be retained.
 - ii. 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 artificial stone, brick veneer, asbestos or asphalt shingles, vinyl or aluminum siding.
3. Windows and Doors
- a. Retain existing window and door openings. Retain the original configuration of panes, sash, lintels, keystones, sill architraves, pediments, hoods, doors, and hardware. Avoid making additional openings or changes in the principal elevations by enlarging or reducing window or door sizes. Avoid changing the size or configuration of windowpanes or sash. Avoid discarding original doors and door hardware when they can be repaired or reused.
 - b. Respect the stylistic period or periods a building represents. If replacement of 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 such as unpainted galvanized aluminum storm and screen window combinations. Avoid using modern style window units such as horizontal sliding sash in place of double-hung sash or the substitution of units

with glazing configurations not appropriate to the style of the building.

4. Porches, Trim and Ornamentation

- a. Retain porches and steps visible from the public right-of-way that are historically and architecturally appropriate to the building. Avoid altering porches and steps by enclosing open porches or replacing wooden steps with cast concrete steps or by removing original architectural features, such as handrails balusters, columns or brackets.
- b. Retain trim and decorative ornamentation including copper downspouts and guttering, copings, cornices, cresting, finials, railings, balconies, oriels, pilasters, columns, chimneys, bargeboards or decorative panels. Avoid the removal of trim and decorative ornamentation that is essential to the maintenance of the building's historic character and appearance.
- c. Repair or replace, where necessary, deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible. Avoid using replacement materials that do not accurately reproduce the appearance of the original materials.

B. Guidelines for New Construction

It is important that new construction be designed so as to harmonize with the character of the district in terms of siting, scale, form and materials.

C. 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 9(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.

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 or the city.

3. Location

Consideration will be given to whether or not the building contributes to the historic integrity of the district.

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.

6. Replacement

Consideration will be given to whether or not the building is to be replaced by a compatible new building that would fulfill the same aesthetic function in the area as did the old structure (see New Construction Guidelines).

D. Fire Escapes

Required fire escapes shall be designed and located so as to minimize their visual impact from the public right-of-way.

E. Signs

The installation of any permanent exterior sign other than those now in existence shall require the approval of the Commission. Approval will be based on the compatibility of the proposed sign with the historic and architectural character of the building and the district.

F. Site Features and Landscaping

Use traditional landscaping, fencing, retaining walls, signage and street lighting that is compatible with the character and period of the district. Avoid introducing landscape features, fencing, retaining walls, street lighting or signage that are inappropriate to the character of the district.