

Historic Designation Study Report



Charles Kren Building & Carriage Barn

2647-49 North 27th Street

City of Milwaukee
Department of City Development
Winter, 2002

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HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT

KREN BUILDING

I. NAME

Historic: Charles Kren Building & Carriage Barn
Common name:

II. LOCATION:

2647-49 North 27th Street

7th Aldermanic District, Ald. Fredrick G. Gordon

Legal Description: Block 1 being a part of Germania Park in SE ¼ Sec 13-7-21
Block 1 Lot 8

III. CLASSIFICATION: Structures

OWNER: Andrew S. and Annie Love
2647 North 27th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53210

V. DESIGNATION REQUESTED BY: Cheray A. Love

VI. BUILT: 1909 (first story)¹; 1910 (second story)²; Carriage Barn ca. 1895

BUILDERS: First Story, Badger Cement Products Co.³
Second story, James H. Bielefeld⁴

¹ Milwaukee Building permit No. 1410 dated May 4, 1909

² Milwaukee Building permit No. 11852 dated April 14, 1910

³ Permit No. 1410

⁴ Permit No. 11852

VI. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Introduction

The Kren building is an unassuming pioneer of early concrete block construction in Milwaukee. Back in 1909 when Mr. Kren had the building erected, concrete block was a new product being hailed by some critics and panned by others. Many of Milwaukee's early concrete block commercial structures have been demolished and the Kren building is believed to be one of the few of its kind remaining in a highly visible location on a major thoroughfare. The most common uses of early rusticated block in Milwaukee were for garages and residential foundations.

During the early part of the twentieth century, the building was part of a thriving commercial hub at the busy crossroads of West Center Street, North 27th Street and North Fond du Lac Avenue. Many of the original commercial buildings surrounding the intersection have been demolished over the past thirty years. The Kren building is the southern-most anchor of the commercial district on North 27th Street. Across the street at 2654 North Fond du Lac Avenue is another anchor, the locally designated Henry Van Ells building, which is the finest Flemish-inspired small commercial buildings in the state. Today, the general area, known as the Amani neighborhood, is the focus of preservation and reinvestment efforts. "Amani" is a Nigerian word meaning peace and security.⁵



The Kren Building features molded concrete block with half-round, convex mortar joints.

The Kren Building is an interesting architectural resource and one of the oldest structures in Milwaukee made completely of modular concrete block. In this report the structure will be evaluated in terms of its individual historic and architectural importance to the community. However, if there is interest in developing a comprehensive preservation strategy for the city's early concrete block architecture, then it may be advantageous to consider the building in a thematic nomination that would include several other significant examples of this unique type of construction. A thematic nomination is a planning tool used in place of a district nomination, when multiple resources contribute significantly to a specific preservation theme or priority, but are not physically contiguous.

Description

The Kren building is a two-story, flat-roofed, early 20th century commercial style structure made of rusticated concrete block. The mortar joints between the blocks are tooled to a convex, half-round shape that adds distinctive shadow lines and character to the building. The main elevation facing North 27th Street is symmetrically composed of two central entry doors that are flanked on either side by a large rectangular display window. Beneath each display window is a long, rectangular basement window that has been filled in with modern glass block. The second story is composed of a central recessed porch that is flanked on either side by a large landscape sash window. The elevation is topped with a stepped parapet wall that is trimmed at each of the far corners with a large spherical concrete ball.

⁵ Amani Neighborhood Strategic Plan. Unpublished manuscript filed at in the Planning Department, Department of City Development, 809 North Broadway, Milwaukee.

The side elevations facing north and south are fenestrated with double hung windows that respond to the needs of the interior. The rear elevation facing west is composed of a rusticated block wall topped with a clay tile coping. The first story is fenestrated with two randomly placed double hung windows. The second story features a small projecting, walkout wooden porch deck supported by two triangular wooden brackets. Access to the porch is by means of a door from the second story flat. Flanking the porch to the north are two double hung windows.

The building retains much of its original character although some alterations have been made. The appearance of the top of the north wall has been slightly compromised by contemporary repointing work that has replaced some of the original half-round mortar joints with flat joints and stained the old block with modern Portland cement mortar. Glass block basement windows beneath the two storefront windows on the main elevation are replacements for earlier windows that probably were hopper or awing type hinged sash windows.



The carriage barn behind the Kren building is one of the better-preserved late 19th century structures of its kind on the near north side.

A one and one- half story, jerkinhead roofed, clapboard-sided carriage barn is located at the rear of the property. The symmetrically composed, side-gabled building is topped with a pair of dormers on the elevation facing east towards the back yard. No original permit exists for the barn but it appears to have been built during the 1890s. The barn, which is a contributing, historic part of the property, is an interesting structure retaining nearly all of its original features. It is one of the few buildings of its kind in relatively good

condition to be found in the general area of North 27th and West Center Streets. Together, the Kren barn and commercial building present a good example of the type

of complex that would have been built to meet the needs of the city's small business owners during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

VII. SIGNIFICANCE

The Kren building is significant to local architectural history because it is one of the few and oldest surviving examples of a small 2-story commercial building constructed entirely of early, rusticated concrete block. The store and the wooden carriage barn behind it are good examples of the type of buildings that were constructed to meet the needs of Milwaukee merchants nearly 100 years ago and the complex is one of the last of its kind remaining in the neighborhood. The complex is also important because it is the southern-most anchor of the historic commercial node clustered around the intersection of North 27th Street, North Fond du Lac Avenue and West Center Street.

VIII. ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

There may never have been a *Golden Age* of concrete block construction, but early block structures, such as the Kren Building, have their own unique architectural character. They were, in essence, a bridge between the Victorian era that preceded them and the modern concrete age that we live in today. Representative examples of early concrete block construction contribute to the city's architectural diversity and serve as references for 21st century designers who work with concrete building materials. These structures also help to recall a transition period in American architectural history when new building materials were developed in order to decrease the dependency on dwindling sources of quality wood and affordable, natural stone.

Rusticated concrete blocks (also called RCB, rock-faced block, or pitch-faced block) were used in Milwaukee between about 1905 and 1930 for utilitarian purposes, but only occasionally were they employed to construct entire buildings. As a result, concrete block commercial buildings from the pre-World War I period are rare in the city and only a handful exist today. The Kren building and the molded, modular concrete blocks that were used to construct it are reminders of dramatic shifts in American architectural fashions that began during the first decade of the twentieth century. Further, the building is also one example of the many experiments with materials and design that helped to pave the way for later, modern styles of architecture.

The simplicity of the Kren building--a plain rectangular masonry block--makes it stand apart from other Milwaukee commercial buildings of its time. The structure lacks, for example, the era's typical projecting cornices on the front elevation above the storefront windows and at the top of the wall. But the building was not merely simplified or haphazardly designed and this is confirmed by the fact that the rectangular landscape sash windows on the second story share the same height-to-width ratio with the bigger storefront window openings beneath them. This is a good example of one traditional proportioning system--now abandoned by today's modern architects--that contributed to the distinct character of Victorian and early 20th century buildings.

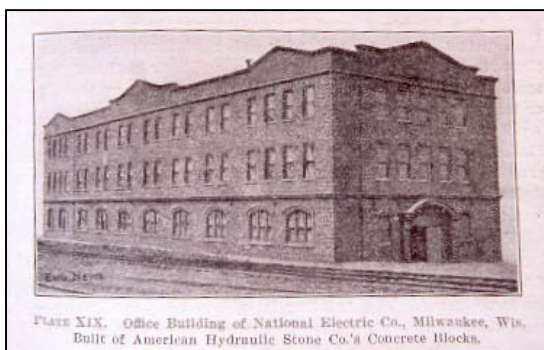


PLATE XIX. Office Building of National Electric Co., Milwaukee, Wis.
Built of American Hydraulic Stone Co.'s Concrete Blocks.

The office building of the National Electric Co.
(ca. 1904, razed)

Other examples of early concrete block architecture are scattered throughout the city. What may have been the city's most significant early concrete block structure was demolished years ago. It was a large, three-story office building constructed for the National Electric Company on the east bank of the Milwaukee River at the west end of East Park Place. The building reportedly was featured in an engineering news magazine and a book on concrete block around 1905. It was outstanding for its time because rusticated concrete blocks were reportedly used for both the exterior and interior walls.⁶ This building was a pivotal example of the fact that Milwaukee was at the forefront of concrete building construction in the first decade of the twentieth century.

⁶ H.H. Rice, *Concrete blocks*. New York: The Engineering News Publishing Co., 1906, p. 57-58.

A very fine, early example of a small commercial building made of concrete block is the two story flat-roofed structure at 1459-61 N. Farwell Avenue that was built in 1906. Three years older than the Kren building, it features flat block for the main elevation facing North Farwell Avenue and rock-faced block on the side and rear elevations. Similar to it in massing but featuring rock-faced block on the front elevation is the William Van Langen building (1913) at 2247 South Muskego Avenue on the South Side. A very unusual example of rusticated concrete block architecture is the flatiron building (1907) at 3131-33 North Bremen Street in the city's Riverwest neighborhood. Two good examples of front-gabled store and flat buildings are located at 2244 West Hopkins Avenue and 2401-05 North Fratney Street.



1459-61 N. Farwell
Avenue (1906)

A fascinating, small district of early block construction is a Bay View house and winery (1910; 1913) and a related, Arts and Crafts style house (1918) next to it. Located respectively at 324 and 318 East Deer Place, there is nothing else in the city quite like it. On the Upper East Side, architect M.A. Bussewitz designed a large duplex for himself in 1909 at 2966 North Maryland Avenue with the likely intention of showcasing the design possibilities of rusticated concrete block and ornamental cast concrete. The structure is extensively embellished with cast concrete ornament although the basic wall material is the same type of rusticated concrete used in the Kren building. Perhaps the city's only major example of a rusticated block school is the two-story, hip roofed structure built for Apostles of Christ Lutheran Church at 3819 West Michigan Street. The building is still used as an independent school but the congregation moved away in the late 1960s.

The only locally-designated, rusticated block commercial building in the city is a one-story garage/office at 1709 North Arlington Place. Built in 1922 and now a popular tavern, it is part of the Brady Street historic district. There are no early block commercial buildings in downtown Milwaukee and in older, well-known neighborhood business districts such as Mitchell Street, Lincoln Avenue, National Avenue (Walkers Point), and North Downer Avenue. There is one rusticated block building in the commercial district clustered around South Kinnickinnic, East Lincoln and South Howell Avenues. Research efforts are in progress to find other early examples of concrete block architecture around the city.

Block-making

The introduction of concrete building blocks coincided with sweeping changes in American architecture during the early twentieth century. Along with dramatic shifts in architectural tastes, the supply of quality building lumber was dwindling rapidly and the cost of natural stone was prohibitive for many construction projects. The use of concrete block was hailed as a means to reduce the dependency on slow-growing trees for construction lumber, speed-up the building process and decrease costs. Around 1900, manufacturers had high hopes that concrete blocks would virtually replace brick as a structural material. Instead block was used where brick was not very practical, such as in foundations, or where it was an acceptable, low-cost substitute for natural stone.⁷ As a primarily construction material, block proved to be more popular in smaller communities where the cost of brick was significantly higher because of the expense to have the material shipped in.

⁷ H. H. Rice. *Concrete Block*. New York: The Engineering News Publishing Company, 1906, Introduction section, second page.

The concept of making concrete blocks dates back to at least the 1850s in England, and in America there are accounts of concrete block structures that were erected as early as the mid-1880s. Perhaps the earliest American patent for making hollow concrete building blocks in special forms was granted to C. S. Hutchinson on March 6, 1866.⁸ For years after that, concrete block construction remained more or less experimental until Portland cement—an ingredient that is essential to quality block—became widely available in the United States during the mid-1890s. By 1904, there were at least 60 companies around the country that sold machines and tools needed to produce concrete building blocks.⁹ Sears & Roebuck Company offered some of the most popular small concrete block-making apparatus. Low in cost, the Sears machines were advertised as a means for virtually any ambitious person to set up a successful business with the latest technology.

There is no doubt that many of America's early concrete block structures were demolished relatively early because the materials used to build them were technically deficient and deteriorated rather rapidly. According to one writer in 1904 "There has been much very unsatisfactory work in concrete building blocks. Most of this is traceable to the greed of the building block maker who, in order to reduce the cost and increase his profits has used poor concrete."¹⁰ According to another early 20th century expert,



A pair of workers could produce several hundred concrete blocks per day with this early 20th c. block-making machine from Sears Roebuck and Co.

Larger, hydraulically powered machines, made by other manufacturers, were in use at least by 1905 where greater production rates were required.

According to another early 20th century expert, "The use of [concrete block] has been especially large in regions where good aggregates and cement are obtainable at reasonable rates and in regions where the cost of [brick] is [high because of] freight charges. Furthermore, the wide distribution of suitable aggregates, the small cost of plant equipment and the possibility of using unskilled labor, are factors that have made these industries popular sources of investment for the man with little capital. These factors have had both a good influence and a bad influence on the growth of cement-product industries. They have been of advantage in promoting the widespread use of cement products, but great harm has been done the industries by the large quantity of poor material which has been turn out by incompetent manufacturers."¹¹ Engineers and architects gradually realized, however, that concrete was a valuable material capable of almost limitless variations in form and texture. Nevertheless, relatively few designs of concrete blocks were mass-produced.

Some of the first mass-produced, rusticated concrete blocks were fashioned to resemble hand-dressed, rock-faced building stones that had been used extensively during the last half of the nineteenth century. The concrete blocks were usually hollow which made them lighter and easier to install compared with their natural stone counterparts. Concrete blocks also were cheaper and could be made virtually anywhere as opposed to natural stones which could only be produced from selected quarries where stone was of the proper quality for building construction.

Rusticated concrete blocks were used often in the city as the material to replace the old wooden post foundations that were beneath many of the city's nineteenth century houses.

⁸H.H. Rice, *Concrete Blocks*. New York: Engineering News Publishing Co., 1906, p. 33.

⁹ Ibid, p 114-115.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 59. Refers to U.S. Pat. No. 53,004, granted March 6, 1866.

¹¹ M.O. Withey and James Aston, *Materials of Construction*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc. 1939 ed, p. 513.

Replacing the old wooden foundations was a laborious process called *underpinning* that involved hand digging a new basement beneath a house and then building new masonry foundation walls. Underpinning was a thriving home improvement business in the city during the first and second decades of the twentieth century.

The use of concrete block expanded during the early twentieth century as architects increasingly embraced the material and explored its design possibilities. One of those architects was Frank Lloyd Wright who, in 1923, designed a remarkable concrete block house for his client, Alice Millard.¹² It was the first of four so-called Textile-Block buildings he designed for the Los Angeles area between 1923 and 1925. Later, in 1929 he designed another concrete block masterpiece, San Marcos-in-the-Desert Hotel, which was to be located in Arizona but the project was terminated due to the onset of the Great Depression. Concrete block, said Mr. Wright, “wants to be stamped, cast or impressed with a pattern that will flow across its surface and carry in its impress the sign of organic life.”¹³ Despite the efforts of Mr. Wright and other architects, concrete block remained confined mostly to utilitarian roles in architecture. As a result, early concrete block architecture tends to go unnoticed and undervalued.

Smooth faced concrete blocks were made as early as 1900 but the rock-faced designs were the most popular through the late 1920s. By the middle of the twentieth century the manufacture of rock-faced block gave way, almost exclusively, to smooth faced blocks that are the most common today. Beginning in the 1980s block manufacturers again began making rock-faced block along with many other types of decorative block in response to the needs of contemporary designers and architects. A product now made by Bend Industries in Wisconsin bears a striking resemblance to the rusticated block used in the Milwaukee area in the early twentieth century.

Some communities around the country have taken active roles in identifying and preserving their early concrete block structures. The Village of Greendale, Wisconsin features an extensive district of single-family houses and duplexes made of flat concrete blocks. Begun in 1938, it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and was one of the renowned “Greenbelt” communities planned and built by the Federal Government during the Great Depression. The City of Middleton, Kentucky has nominated a simple, one-story rusticated concrete block structure, the former Bank of Middleton (1910), to the National Register of Historic Places. Other communities around the country have also landmarked relatively simple, early concrete block structures to the national and local registers.

The Kren building is one of Milwaukee’s oldest remaining examples of a small commercial building made entirely from rusticated concrete blocks. It still serves as a visual anchor in the neighborhood and has remained standing despite the fact that many of the other commercial buildings that once surrounded it have all been demolished. In sum, early concrete block architecture has been overlooked for years and because of its potential value to the community, consideration should be given now to a plan for preserving it before the remaining examples have vanished forever.

¹² Neil Levine, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996, p. 154-164.

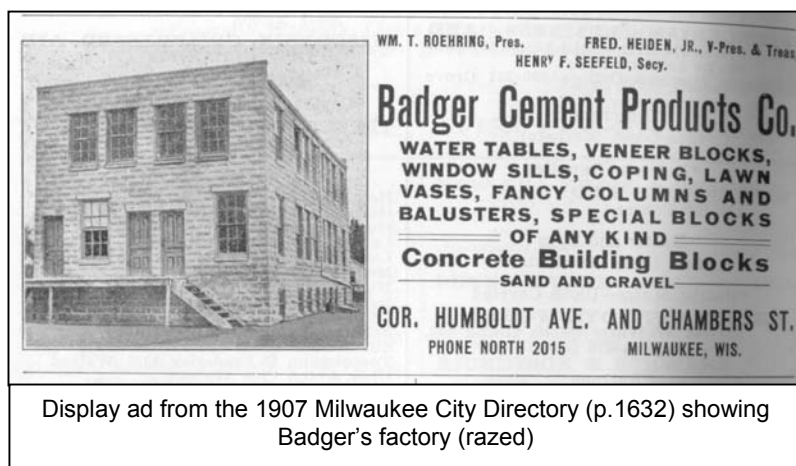
¹³ *Ibid*, p. 211.

Commercial History of the Building

The Kren Building has been a productive location for small retail and commercial ventures. The second floor has always been used as an apartment residence, usually for one of the shopkeepers. One of the more noteworthy tenants in the building between 1930 and 1937 was the local Visiting Nurses Association headquarters.¹⁴ This was not the first location of the Nurses association, but one of the remaining early sites associated with the organization that opened its first Milwaukee office in 1907.

Charles Kren, the original owner, was a shoemaker who ran a small shop in the building and lived in the second floor flat with his wife Martha. Shortly after he had the second story built in 1910, he sold the building to Rudolph Gumz who used it as an income property and apparently never lived or worked there. Mr. Kren stayed at the building and continued to run his business there until 1915. He then changed his occupation to machinist, perhaps to meet the call for factory workers during World War I, and moved into a North Side duplex at 3132 North 29th Street.

Spot checks of city directories and occupancy permits reveal that the tenants in 1938 were an ice cream store and a fur repair shop. In 1949 a retail glove store moved in to the north half of the building and by 1950 the south half was occupied by a beauty salon. By the early 1960s a drapery store was in the north half of the building and in 1966 a wig store was in the same space. As of early 2002 a beauty shop was located in the north half of the storefront and the rest of the building was vacant.



Display ad from the 1907 Milwaukee City Directory (p.1632) showing Badger's factory (razed)

Builders

Badger Cement Products Company, a firm that specialized in the manufacture of concrete block, constructed the first story of the building.¹⁵ City directory research indicates the company began operating in 1905 at the very beginning of the "Concrete Block Age" in Milwaukee. The owner, William T. Roehring,

worked out of a 2-story, concrete block factory on the east side of North Humboldt Boulevard at East Chambers Street, which is presently the site of the Pumping Station playfield. He also lived at the same site, probably in a small house or cottage.

By 1915 the firm's manager and president was William D. Kuebler and a year later, in 1916, the company disappeared from the city directories. Badger may have merged with another firm, but it is more likely that the business closed in response to the nation-wide moratorium on building construction that began in 1916 with America's entry into World War I. Today, there are no extant buildings or physical remnants associated with the business.

¹⁴ Milwaukee city directory research.

¹⁵ Milwaukee Building permit No. 1410 dated May 4, 1909.

James H. Bielefeld was a South Side carpenter and builder who constructed the second story addition to the Kren Building. Relatively little is known about his work at this point in time. According to city directory research he began working in Milwaukee as a carpenter in 1904 and lived on the city's South Side at 1518 South 25th Street. He was listed for the first time as a carpenter and contractor in 1906. In 1910 he moved into the 2700 block of South Hayes Avenue. By 1910, the year the addition to the Kren Building was constructed, he settled into another house on the same block at number 2728.

IX. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Kren Building is an interesting architectural resource and one of the pioneer structures associated with concrete block construction in Milwaukee. In terms of an overall preservation strategy for the city's early concrete block architecture, the building could be considered as part of a broader, thematic nomination that would include other significant examples of this unique type of construction. However, the Kren building is worthy of consideration for individual designation as a City of Milwaukee Historic structure as a result of its fulfillment of criteria e-7 and e-8 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 308-81(2)(e) of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances.

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

Rationale: Criterion **e-7** is applied because the Kren building is one of the few examples in Milwaukee of a small commercial building made of early 20th century rusticated concrete block.

e-8 Is related to other distinctive areas which are eligible for preservation according to a plan based on an historic, cultural, or architectural motif.

Rationale: Criterion **e-8** is applied because the Kren building would be a fine addition to a thematic nomination of the city's other significant early rusticated concrete block structures.

REFERENCES

Amani Neighborhood Strategic Plan. Unpublished manuscript filed at in the Planning Department, Department of City Development, 809 North Broadway, Milwaukee.

H.H. Rice and William M. Torrance. *The Manufacture of Concrete Blocks and their use in Building Construction*. New York: The Engineering News Publishing Company, 1906. Milwaukee Public Library call no. 693.5 R49

History of Milwaukee, City and County. Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co. 1922.

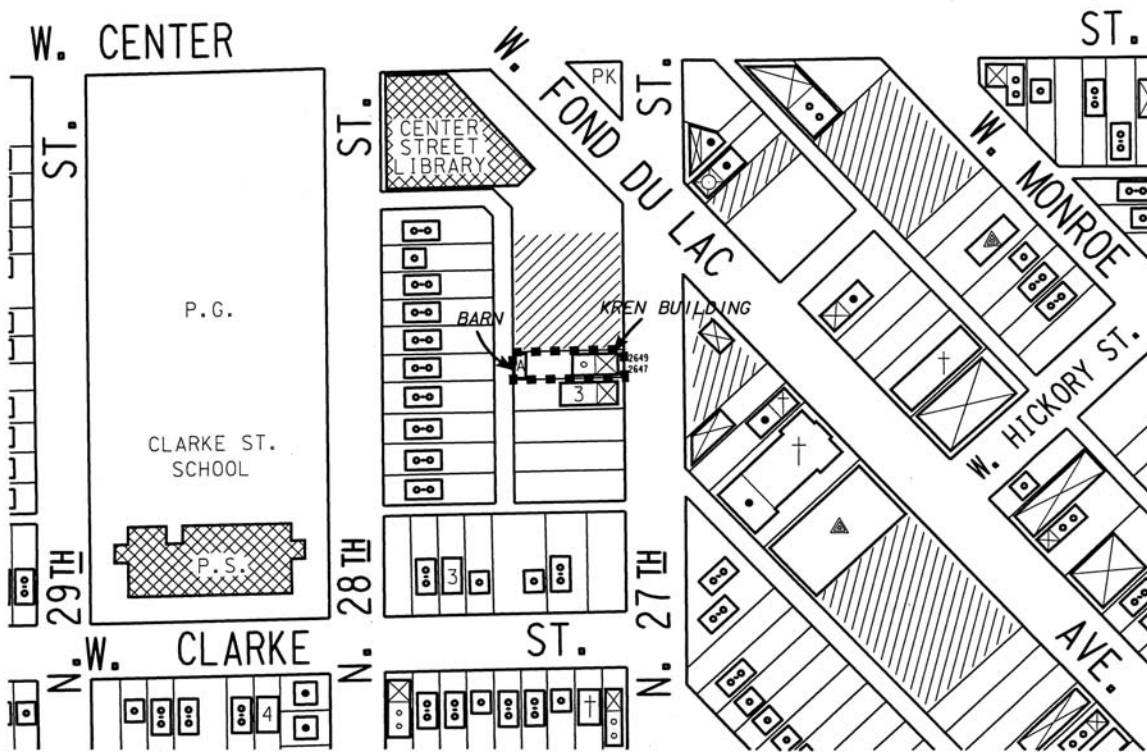
Neil Levine. *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996. Milwaukee Public Library call no. 720.92 W949LE

The Westbrook Concrete Block Company website. westbrookblock.com/coinfo.html

Milwaukee City Directories.

M.O. Withey and James Aston, *Materials of Construction*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc. 1939.

Sanborn's Insurance Map of Milwaukee, 1894.



KREN BUILDING & BARN
 2647-49 N. 27th ST.
 MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN



PRODUCED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION CENTER
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X. PRESERVATION GUIDELINES

Preface

The guidelines are primarily intended to preserve the exterior of the concrete block commercial building and the wooden carriage barn behind it. These structures have changed little since they were built more than 90 years ago. The guidelines are not intended to prevent or inhibit ordinary maintenance of the buildings. Proper maintenance techniques are encouraged through the guidelines, but it is not a requirement to restore any architectural features that were missing before designation. However, in the event missing features are voluntarily replaced they generally have to match the originals as closely as possible.

The preservation guidelines represent the principal concerns of the Historic Preservation Commission regarding this historic designation. The Commission reserves the right to make final decisions based upon particular design submissions.

A. Roofs

Retain the original roof shapes of the commercial building and the carriage barn. Avoid making changes to the roofs that would alter the buildings' height, roofline or pitch.

B. Materials

1. Masonry
 - a. Like most historic masonry, early concrete block was not painted. Traditionally, any coloring of the block was done at the time of manufacture by adding pigment to the mix of cement, aggregates and water. However, the commission may approve the use of an approved concrete stain or paint for historic concrete block exteriors depending on the circumstances.
 - b. Repoint defective or deteriorated mortar by duplicating the original in color, style, texture and strength. 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 original half-round, convex joints.
 - c. Clean masonry only when necessary and with the gentlest method possible. Sandblasting and other abrasive blasting to concrete block and other exterior masonry surfaces is prohibited. These methods of cleaning erode the surface of the material and accelerate deterioration and the accumulation of dirt on the exterior of the building. Avoid the indiscriminate use of chemical products that could have an adverse reaction with the masonry materials, such as hydrochloric acid that could adversely interact with any lime that might be in the block.

- d. Repair or replace deteriorated material with new materials that duplicate the old as closely as possible. Avoid using new material that is inappropriate or was unavailable when the building was constructed.
- 2. Wood/Metal
 - a. Retain original material, whenever possible. Avoid removing architectural features that are essential to maintaining the building's character and appearance. Retain the original iron handrail on the second story, recessed porch.
 - b. Retain or replace deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the appearance of the old as closely as possible. Avoid covering architectural features with modern materials that are incompatible with the historic character of the building. The installation of new vinyl trim or siding is not allowed.

C. Windows and Doors

- 1. Retain existing window and door openings. Retain the existing configuration of panes, sash, surrounds and sills, except as necessary to restore to the original condition. Avoid making additional openings or changes in existing fenestration by enlarging or reducing window or door openings to fit new stock window sash or new stock door sizes. Avoid changing the size or configuration of windowpanes or sash.
- 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 of the original window sash or doors. Avoid filling-in or covering up openings with incompatible materials such as glass block. Avoid the installation of modern window units with glazing configurations that are incompatible with the style of the building (e.g., installing Colonial style windows in place of original double hung windows). The original windows in the buildings are important features and should be retained and repaired if at all possible.

D. Trim and Ornamentation

Existing trim or ornamentation should not be changed except as necessary to restore the building to its original condition. Replacement features shall match the original member in scale, design and appearance, but not necessarily in material.

E. Additions

Additions are permitted with the approval of the Historic Preservation Commission. Ideally an addition should either compliment or have a neutral effect upon the historic character of a building. The commission will review the compatibility of the addition with the historic buildings and may consider the following details: Window size and placement, scale, design, materials, roof configuration, height and the degree to which the addition impacts the principal elevation(s) of the buildings.

F. Signs

The installation of any permanent exterior sign shall require the approval of the Commission. Approval will be based on the compatibility of the proposed sign with the architectural character of the building. The existing signs do not have to be removed, but new translucent plastic signboards that are illuminated from behind and mounted in a metal box are discouraged and usually not approved by the commission.

G. Site features

New plant materials, fencing, paving and lighting fixtures should respect and enhance the historic architectural character of the buildings.

H. Guidelines for New Construction

It is important that any new construction be designed so as to be as sympathetic as possible with the exterior character of the buildings.

1. Siting

New construction must respect the historic siting of the carriage barn and the commercial building. It should be accomplished so as to maintain the appearance of the buildings from the street as free-standing structures.

2. Scale

Overall building height and bulk, the expression of major building divisions including foundation, body and roof, and individual building components such as overhangs and fenestration that are in proximity to a historic building must be compatible to and sympathetic with the traditional design of the buildings.

3. Form

The massing of new construction must be compatible with the goal of maintaining the integrity of the buildings as distinct, freestanding structures. The profile of roof and building elements that project and recede from the main historic buildings should express the same continuity established by the historic building if they are in proximity to it.

4. Materials

Exterior finish materials for new construction that is both visible from the public right-of-way and close to the historic buildings, should be consistent with colors, textures, proportions and combinations of cladding materials used on the historic, existing buildings. The physical composition of the materials may be different from that of the historic materials, but the same appearance should be maintained.

I. Guidelines for Demolition

Although demolition is not encouraged and is generally not permissible, there are instances when demolition may be acceptable if approved by the Historic Preservation Commission. The Commission shall take the following guidelines, with those found in subsection 9(h) of the ordinance, into consideration 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.

3. Location

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

4. Potential for Restoration

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

5. Additions

Consideration will be given to whether or not the proposed demolition is a later addition that is not in keeping with the original design of the structure or does not contribute to its character.