

HISTORIC PRESERVATION STUDY REPORT

GEORGE KOCH HOUSE

(Written Fall 1985)

I. NAME

Historic: George Koch House

Common: Lion House

II. LOCATION

3209 West Highland Boulevard

Tax Key Number: 388-1713-126

Legal Description: Subd. of Blk 5 in Subd of Lots 10-19 Inc in Dousman's Subd of NE ¼ Sec 25-7-21, Blk 5 Lots 19 and 20

III. CLASSIFICATION

Structure

IV. OWNER OF PROPERTY

The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod
c/o Concordia College
1333 South Kirkwood
Kirkwood, MO

V. DESCRIPTION

The Koch House is located on a landscaped lot sited well back from the street in a neighborhood of large, late nineteenth century houses and institutions. It has been part of the former Concordia College campus for many years.

The Koch House was built in 1897 to the designs of architect Edward V. Koch as a resident for George Koch. It is a one-story on raised basement, cream brick, hip roofed, and classical Revival style residence. The essentially rectangular building is embellished with metal and limestone trim. The house's façade faces McKinley Boulevard. It is symmetrically composed around a projecting central portico with paired columns sheltering the massive, fan lighted, oak front door. The unusually tall entrance door is located a half level and is reached by a broad flight of steps flanked by carved limestone lions on pedestals. Flanking the entrance are paired, oversized windows that fill all of the front wall surface between the portico and the paired brick pilasters that articulate the corners. The modillion cornice is topped by a metal parapet balustrade of Classical profile that encompasses the roof.

The house was gutted by a fire on May 14, 1984 that destroyed much of the interior and the monitor roof. Prior to the fire, the interior of the house had been stripped of its woodwork and most of the partitions. The exterior walls remain in tact.

IV. SIGNIFICANCE

Date of Construction: 1897

Architect: Edward V. Koch

The Koch House is architecturally significant as one of the most unusual residences constructed in Milwaukee in the nineteenth century. It is notable for its originality and fine craftsmanship. It is historically significant for its association with George Koch, a prominent nineteenth-century banker. Even in its fire damaged state, the house remains a prominent landmark on the West Side and retains its exterior design integrity.

VII. HISTORY

The Koch House was constructed as a residence for George Koch, Cashier on the West Side Bank, soon after his 1896 marriage to Amelia Millenbach of Detroit. It is not known why he chose such an unusual design for his new residence.

George Koch was born in Milwaukee in 1863 and spent his entire life in this city. He was employed for several years by the William Frankfurth Hardware Company and later entered the employ of the Manufacturers Bank. Still later he was active in the grain, feed and commission business. Afterwards he became associated with a branch of the Merchants & Exchange Bank at Third and Juneau Avenue, which later became the West Side Bank. He became cashier and remained active in the bank's management until his death on March 7, 1922. The West Side Bank became one of the premier financial institutions of the German-American business community. Koch was a well-known figure in German business circles and was a member of the West Side Turners, the Wisconsin Club and the Calumet Club. Appropriately, he constructed his fine residence on fashionable Highland Boulevard amidst the imposing mansions of the Pabsts, Vogels, Usingers, and Milwaukee's other leading German-American families. At the time, Highland Boulevard was one of Milwaukee's most exclusive residential areas.

In 1944, after the house had passed out of the Koch Family, it was converted to five apartments. Later it was acquired by Concordia College, which still owns it. An interior renovation project begun in the late 1970s or early 1980s was halted soon after the interior was gutted. On May 14, 1984, the interior of the house was damaged by fire.

IX. 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 George Koch House. Nothing in these guidelines shall be construed to prevent ordinary maintenance or restoration and/or replacement of documented original elements.

A. Roofs

Retain the original roof shape. Dormers, skylights and solar collector panels may be added to roof surfaces if they are not visible from the street. Avoid making changes to the roof shape that would alter the building height, roofline or pitch.

B. Materials

1. Masonry

- a. Unpainted brick or stone should not be painted or covered. Avoid painting or covering natural stone and unpainted brick. This is historically incorrect and could cause irreversible damage if it was decided to remove the paint at a later date.
- b. 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.
- c. 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 chemical products that could have an adverse reaction with the masonry materials, such as the use of acid on limestone or marble.
- d. 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.

2. Wood/Metal

- a. Retain original material, whenever possible. Avoid removing architectural features that are essential to maintaining the building's character and appearance.
- b. 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.

C. Windows and Doors

1. Retain existing window and door openings on all elevations. Retain the existing configuration of panes, sash, surrounds, sills, doors, and hardware except as necessary to restore the building to its 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 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 aluminum combination storm and screen units. Avoid the filling-in or

covering of openings with inappropriate materials such as glass block or the installation of plastic or metal strip awnings or shutters. 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.

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. 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 historic and architectural character of the building.

G. Site Features

New plant materials, fencing, paving and lighting fixtures shall be compatible with the architectural character of the house.