

HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT

ROBERT MACHEK HOUSE

(Written Winter 1986)

I. NAME

Historic: Robert Machek House

Common: Same

II. LOCATION

1305 N. 19th Street

Legal Property Description: Weil's ADD'N in SE ¼ 19 & NE ¼ SEC 30-7-22 Block 4 S 85' (Lots 18-19 & 20) & N 5' W McKinley Avenue Vac. Adj. & Aslo Lot "A" in Block 4 Kilbourntown Addition No. 1 Adj.

III. CLASSIFICATION

Structure

IV. OWNER

Mr. & Mrs. Donald Nasgowitz
1305 North 19th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53205

V. YEAR BUILT

1893-94

VI. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Machek House stands on its original site at the corner of North 19th Street and West McKinley Avenue. All of the surrounding Victorian era residential area, except for the Machek House, was razed in the early 1960s and replaced with a subdivision of modern ranch houses. The attractively landscaped lot is surrounded by a handsome wrought-iron fence in a lacy pattern.

The Machek House is a distinctive, half-timbered, frame and stucco, one-and-one-half-story cottage of Eastern European Victorian design. The exterior of the relatively small house is elaborately ornamented with skillfully executed carved wood trim millwork reflecting Renaissance and Medieval motifs. With its high, wood-paneled basement story, elaborate half-timbering and fanciful fenestration the Machek House presents a very Eastern European appearance.

Adjoining the house to the north is a large, 2-story, stucco-and-half-timbered, gable-roofed addition built in 1971 containing a two-car garage, bedrooms and bathrooms. The exterior of this addition, which is almost as large as the house itself, is articulated with woodwork, timbering and hand-carved ornament to harmonize with the house. The result is so successful in its scale, massing and detailing that it could be mistaken for the original carriage barn built with the house. It is connected to the house by an enclosed frame breezeway.

VII. SIGNIFICANCE

The Machek House is architecturally significant as an unusual example of folk architecture in which an artisan woodcarver expressed his trade in the design of his unusual house. The Machek House is a very un-American Victorian House reflecting the building traditions and romantically inspired aesthetics then popular in Eastern Europe.

VIII. HISTORY

Robert Machek was a woodcarver, carpenter and cabinetmaker. He came to the United States in 1888 or 1889 from Vienna, Austria and settled in Milwaukee. He built this house in 1893-94 and was first listed in the city directory at this address in 1894.

Prior to his arrival in Milwaukee, Machek's artistic skills had been internationally recognized by the King of Serbia, who presented him with a silver medal for his work on the Royal palace in Belgrae in 1884. With this prestigious honor and his own showcase home, he probably anticipated numerous commissions in Milwaukee. However, this was not the case and Machek left Milwaukee in 1907 for Denver and later California where he died in 1920. His wife Mary and his son Arthur remained in Milwaukee. Mary died in 1941 after which her son Arthur lived in the house until his death in 1945. Upon Arthur's death it passed to his cousin, Rudolph Kreissl. In 1947 Kreissl sold the home to John B. Hahn, from whom Henry and Iris Reis purchased it eleven years later. They, in turn, sold it to the present owners in 1964, who have restored the house.

IX. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Robert Machek House be designated a historic structure in accordance with the provision of 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 Robert Machek 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.

Replace deteriorated roof coverings with new materials that match the original in size, shape, color and texture. Avoid replacing deteriorated roof covering with new materials that differ to such an extent from the original in size, shape, color and texture so that the appearance of the building is altered.

B. Materials

1. Stucco

Repair stucco with a stucco mixture duplicating the original as closely as possible in appearance and texture.

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. 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

The east, south and west 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 the principle 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. Retain the existing wrought iron fence and masonry posts.