

HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT

PABST MANSION **(Captain Frederick Pabst, Sr.)** (Written Fall/Winter 1985)

I. NAME

Historic: Captain Frederick Pabst, Sr. House

Common: Pabst Mansion

II. LOCATION

Street Address: 2000 West Wisconsin Avenue

Legal Property Description: Certified Survey Map No. 3243 Etc. in NW & NE ¼ sec 30-7-22
Parcel 2

III. CLASSIFICATION

Structure

IV. OWNER

Wisconsin Heritages, Inc.
2000 West Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53233

V. YEAR BUILT

1890-92

VI. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Frederick Pabst House is a three-story, symmetrically planned, Flemish Revival style residence of tan pressed brick, with stone quoins and carved stone and terra cotta ornamentation based on 17th century Northern European Renaissance forms. The roof is covered with red Dutch pantile, and the downspouts and conductors are made of copper. The south (main) façade and west side of the building have arcaded porticos with ornamented pilasters.

Shortly after 1908, when the building became the property of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese, an originally free-standing conservatory was connected to the east side of the building and converted into the archbishop's chapel. The exterior of this conservatory-chapel is very Baroque in expression, with cherubs, caryatids and columns. The large coach house, at the rear of the main building, was also adapted at this time for use as the Chancery Office. It has since been razed.

The symmetrically laid out interior is eclectically decorated in a variety of Victorian adaptations of period styles, most prominently the German Renaissance and Rococo styles. Materials used on the interior include mahogany, ebony, birch, oak, marble and onyx.

The building, in excellent condition, remains very similar to its original appearance. It is sited back from Wisconsin Avenue behind a broad lawn landscaped with mature trees and planting beds. The rear portion of the property, originally containing the Coach House and gardens, has been sold off and is now covered with a surface parking lot. It is not included in this nomination.

VI. SIGNIFICANCE

The Pabst Mansion, as it is best known, is architecturally significant as Milwaukee's finest example of Flemish Renaissance domestic architecture. It is historically significant as the residence of Captain Frederick Pabst, Sr., a nationally known brewing magnate and a major figure in making the Pabst Brewing Company the nation's largest brewery.

VIII. HISTORY

The Pabst Mansion was built in 1890-92 as the residence of Captain Frederick Pabst, Sr., president of the Pabst Brewing Company. The house was designed by prominent Milwaukee architect George Bowman Ferry of the firm Ferry and Clas, who considered it to be one of his finest residential commissions. Ferry and Clas subsequently designed many important buildings in Wisconsin, including the Milwaukee Central Library, 814 West Wisconsin Avenue, the Headquarters of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in Madison and other prominent structures. At the time of its construction, the Pabst Mansion was considered to be one of the finest houses in the city.

Frederick Pabst occupied the house until his death in 1904, after which his widow and several unmarried children stayed on there until 1908 when it was acquired by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Milwaukee for use as the Archbishop's residence. It was occupied by the Archbishops until the mid-1970s. In 1978 it was sold to Wisconsin Heritages, Inc., the present owner, who has restored it for use as their headquarters and as a house museum.

Captain Frederick Pabst's involvement with the brewing industry began in 1862 when he married Maria Best, an heiress to the Phillip Best Brewing Company, one of Milwaukee's pioneer breweries. Together with his brother-in-law, Emil Schandein, Pabst built the Best Brewing Company into the nation's largest by 1874, a ranking it held until 1946. The company grew steadily until by 1889 when Emil Schandein died, the Best Brewing Company was internationally known. Pabst immediately renamed the company the Pabst Brewing Company and began construction of a magnificent residence to rival the grand house that Emil Schandein had built at North 34 Street and Wisconsin Avenue a few years before this death (razed).

Pabst was one of the leading German-born citizens of Milwaukee at the time. As a civic leader, he was interested in German art and culture, and was a member and officer of the Wisconsin Academy of Science, Arts and Letters, the Wisconsin State Historical Society, and the Musical Society of Milwaukee. Pabst is also noted for his establishment of the Pabst Theater, which contributed significantly to the development of the theatrical arts in Milwaukee.

By the turn of the twentieth century, Captain Pabst was the undisputed brewing leader of the country, if not the world. His success was reflected not only in his role in Milwaukee's business community,

but also in the extent of the nationwide restaurant and hotel chain he had established to promote Pabst beer. By developing an aggressive network of distribution outlets, Pabst had secured a national market and Pabst beer was shipped to all known parts of the world. The beer's reputation was greatly enhanced by being judged the best at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The word's "Blue Ribbon" were first added to the label in 1895 with the Blue Ribbon label first used in 1898. At home Captain Pabst was named the first president of the Wisconsin National Bank in 1892 (now part of First Wisconsin National Bank). He subsequently erected the Pabst Building (formerly at the northwest corner of North Water and East Wisconsin) in 1892 to house the bank. When it was built, the Pabst Building was Milwaukee's tallest structure.

Captain Pabst died in 1904 at the height of his company's success. Control of the brewery was passed on to his sons, Gustav, who became president, and Fred, Jr., who was vice president, both of whom had their own fine homes on nearby Highland Boulevard by this time.

IX. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Frederick Pabst, Sr. House be designated a historic structure in accordance with the provisions 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 Captain Frederick Pabst, Sr. 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. Dormer, 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.

Retain the original roofing materials, wherever possible. Avoid using new roofing materials that are inappropriate to the style and period of the building. Replace deteriorated roof coverings with new materials that match the old in size, shape, color and texture.

B. Materials

1. Masonry

- a. Unpainted brick, terra cotta or stone should not be painted or covered. 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, terra cotta 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.
- d. Repair or replace deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible. Avoid using new material that is inappropriate in appearance 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. 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 the 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. 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 building.