

**HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT**  
**SHERMAN BOULEVARD HISTORIC DISTRICT**

**I. NAME**

Historic: None  
Common: Sherman Boulevard Historic District

**II. LOCATION**

The Sherman Boulevard Historic District is located about four miles northwest of the central business district on the west side of the City of Milwaukee. It includes buildings along both sides of Sherman Boulevard from West Lloyd Street (2100 block north) to West Keefe Avenue (3400 block north) except for the properties at 2749-51 and the south 5 feet of 2757-59 North Sherman Boulevard.

**III. CLASSIFICATION**

District

**IV. OWNER**

Multiple

**V. YEAR BUILT**

1911 - 1935

**VI. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

A. Boundaries

Beginning at the intersection of the north curb line of W. Lloyd St. and the east property line of 4236-38 W. Lisbon Ave.; then north along the east property line of 4236-38 W. Lisbon Ave. to the intersection of the east property line of 2124-26 N. Sherman Blvd.; then north along the east property lines of all buildings with frontage on Sherman Blvd. to the intersection of the south property line of Sherman Park; then east to the intersection of the east property line of Sherman Park; then north along the east property line of Sherman Park to the intersection of the park's north property line; then west along the north property line of Sherman Park to a point opposite the intersection of the north curb line of W. Burleigh St. and the west curb line of N. 42nd Pl.; then north along the east property lines of all properties with frontage on Sherman Blvd. to the intersection of the north curb line of W. Bernhard Pl., then east to the intersection of the west curb line of N. 42nd St.; then north to the intersection of the south curb line of W. Townsend St.; then west to a point opposite the intersection of the north curb line of W. Townsend St. and the east property line of 3402 N. Sherman Blvd.; then north along the east property lines of all buildings with frontage on Sherman Blvd. to the intersection of the north property line of 4259-67 W. Fond du Lac Ave.; then west, north-west to the intersection of N. Sherman Blvd. and W. Keefe St.; then west to the rear property line of 3457 N. Sherman Blvd.; then south along the west property lines

of all buildings with frontage on Sherman Blvd. to a point 5 feet north of the north property line of 2749-51 N. Sherman Blvd.; then east to the west curb line of N. Sherman Blvd.; then south to the south property line of 2749-51 N. Sherman Blvd.; then west to the west property line of 2749-51 N. Sherman Blvd; then south along the west property lines of all buildings with frontage on Sherman Boulevard to the intersection of the south curb line of W. Lisbon Ave.; then west to the intersection of the east curb line of N. 44th St.; then south to the intersection of the north curb line of W. Lloyd St.; then east to the point of beginning in the city of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, be designated a Milwaukee Historic District. The Preservation Guidelines pursuant to the Historic Designation Study Report attached to Common Council File Number 940793 shall apply to this district and are adopted by the Common Council as part of this resolution.

#### B. Architectural Character

The North Sherman Boulevard Historic District is a 14-block long linear residential area that includes buildings on both side of Sherman Boulevard from West Lloyd Street to West Keefe Avenue. The boulevard begins at the north end of Washington Park, where Lisbon Avenue, Lloyd Street and Sherman Boulevard intersect at a small plot of land called Steuben Square that serves as the gateway to Washington Park by virtue of its fine equestrian statue of Friederick Wilhelm Von Steuben, erected in 1921. Between Lloyd Street and Burleigh Street, Sherman Boulevard is a broad thoroughfare with two 33-foot wide roadways separated by a 24-foot wide landscaped median. Its dimensions change slightly at Burleigh Street where the 32-foot roadways flank a 26-foot wide median. Sherman Boulevard is crossed at regular intervals by east-west street that result in uniform rectangular blocks fronting the boulevard. The two instances, at the north and south ends of the district, the blocks are slighted irregular in shape due to the intersection of angled streets (West Lisbon Avenue and West Fond du Lac Avenue). The uniform character of the house-lined blocks is interrupted by Sherman Park, which occupies an area equivalent to four city blocks and extends along the east side of Sherman Boulevard from Locust Street to Burleigh Street.

The historic district is residential in character and includes 114 single family dwellings, 79 duplexes, and 11 apartment buildings or large duplex-like structures housing three or more living units. Interspersed among these residential buildings and located primarily on corner lots are four commercial buildings and three public buildings (Washington High School, Townsend Street School, and Finney Library), along with five churches and a parsonage.

Visual consistency along the boulevard is achieved by uniform setbacks, similarity in scale, large lots, and high quality building materials. Most buildings are set back behind landscaped lawns about 40 feet from the roadway with variations in setbacks being determined by the historic siting regulations of the individual subdivisions. Lot sizes are generally larger and more spacious than on surrounding side streets and range from 40 feet by 125 feet to 50 feet by 165 feet. Individual homeowners also sometimes acquired additional land from adjacent owners from time to time to create spacious side yards. Residences range from 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 stories in height with gabled or hip roofs predominating. Due to the limited width of the lots, most houses have narrow, compact facades but extend back to occupy much of their lots' depth. Brick and lannon stone are the most common building materials with stucco, limestone, half-timbering, wrought iron, tile and decorative leaded glass being used for accents. Roofs are of tile, slate, cement, asbestos or asphalt. Garages tended to be

built at the same time as the house, were designed to match the house, and were usually built of the same quality materials. Some were attached to the rear of the houses and were approached by way of side drives from the boulevard. Others were located at the rear of the lot and approached from the alleys. While more expansive than the houses on neighboring blocks, the residences on Sherman Boulevard are not mansions, but rather reflect the prosperity and tastes of the well-to-do middle class.

The architectural styles on Sherman Boulevard reflect those most popular from 1911 to 1935 and serve as a virtual catalogue of how local architects and custom builders interpreted major national architectural trends. Since the boulevard developed from south to north, the earliest 20th century styles are located between West Lloyd Street and West North Avenue and include examples of Colonial Revival, Arts and Crafts, Mission, and Craftsman styles. North of North Avenue are some residences influenced by the Prairie style as well as numerous variations on the bungalow style. As construction peaked in the 1920's, the blocks even farther north began to exhibit many examples of the period revival styles including Dutch Colonial, Georgian, Spanish Colonial/Moorish, Mediterranean, Tudor and English Cottage. Variations on the English revival styles are the most numerous, but many houses are eclectic amalgams of the features of two or more dissimilar styles such as Prairie and Mediterranean or English and Mediterranean, for example. Some, like the log house built by William Maertz at No. 2602, defy categorization and are unique architectural expressions.

At least one residence shows the influence of the Modern style, while scattered post-war ranch houses, Cape Cods, and apartment buildings were built as infill on vacant lots between older buildings. Generally these newer structures are smaller and lower in scale than those built during the boulevard's peak years, but they are clad in Lannon stone and brick and add contrast and variety to the streetscape. In Sherman Park itself, a recreational facility in the Post Modern style was built at the center of the grounds in the 1980s.

The non-residential buildings on Sherman Boulevard show as much diversity as the houses. The Elizabethan and English Revival styles can be seen in Washington High School, Townsend Street School, and Immanuel Reformed/Greater Mount Zion Church. Community Baptist Church features Romanesque detail. Sherman Park Lutheran Church is a Lannon stone clad Gothic Revival structure. Also Gothic Revival in style is the original portion of Trinity Presbyterian Church now located behind a modern style addition. The former Third Church of Christ Scientist, now the Schragger Auction Gallery, introduced a monumental, domed Neo-Classical presence to the boulevard. The four buildings built for commercial purposes vary in their quality of design. The most handsome is the Park Building at 4240-42 W. Lisbon Avenue, built at a prestigious site overlooking Washington Park. It features an elegant Classical Revival façade embellished with fine terra cotta. The flat-roofed, one-story structure at 4259-67 West Fond du Lac Avenue was built as a simple brick store in the 1920s, but it has been extensively remodeled and is now used as a physician's office. The simple, box-like structure at 4300 West Burleigh Street and the Amoco Station at 4246 West Burleigh Street are both modern buildings. The four commercial buildings are located at the district's busiest intersections, but do not adversely affect the overall character of the district.

The Sherman Boulevard Historic District has retained most of its original buildings. A major blow to the neighborhood occurred in the 1960s when all the houses in the 2300 block on the east side of the boulevard were razed for a proposed freeway that was

never built. The lots have remained vacant to date with the exception of one to which a house was moved from the 2200 block to make way for the creation of the Finney Library parking lot. The expansion of this lot also resulted in the razing of the T.C. Esser house at No. 2232. Although the neighborhood has experienced social and economic changes, the majority of the houses retain their original features. In scattered instances, window openings have been closed up, planters have been removed, and stucco has been replaced with asphalt shingles, clap boarding or vinyl siding.

## VII. SIGNIFICANCE

The North Sherman Boulevard Historic District is being nominated for local historic designation because of its significance in the areas of architecture and urban planning. North Sherman Boulevard is architecturally significant as a distinguished assemblage of early 20<sup>th</sup> century, middle class houses unified by their orientation to a broad, landscaped boulevard. The district is also significant as an example of the boulevard planning concept that had such an important influence on the physical development of the city of Milwaukee. The period of significance of the district is 1911 to 1935, during which time the contributing structures in the district were built.

### A. Architectural Significance

Sherman Boulevard is architecturally significant as one of the city's more outstanding concentrations of early 20<sup>th</sup> century architect- and builder-designed residences. The buildings constructed between 1911 and 1935 are excellent representations of the residential styles and high quality construction preferred in those years by Milwaukee's growing class of prosperous industrialists, manufacturers, merchants, and professionals. Many of the houses are outstanding and even flamboyant examples of the residential design work of the city's leading early 20<sup>th</sup> century architects and builders. Among those identified as having designed buildings on Sherman Boulevard are F.W. Andree (No. 2156), Henry Brust (No. 2843-45), Gustave Dick (No. 2163-65 and 2359), George Ehlers (No. 2159), A.C. Guth (No. 2200), Hugo C. Haeuser (No. 2442), Frank Howend (Third church of Christ Scientist), H. C. Kuehnel (No. 3291), Leiser & Holst (No. 2164 and 2319-21), John Menger, Jr. (No. 2602), H. Messmer & Brother (No. 2140 and 2351), Charles Roth (No. 2325-27), Henry Rotier (No. 2203-05), George Schley & Sons (No. 2443 and 2877-89), Robert H. Schmitz (No. 2217-19), Theodore F. Schultz (No. 2134), Charles Tharinger (No. 2233), Walter Truettner (No. 2308, 2504, 2536), Charles Valentine (No. 2181-83 and 2401-03), Van Ryn & De Gelleke (Washington High School and Immanuel Reformed/Greater Mount Zion Church) and George Zagel & Brother (No. 2771-73 and 3053-55). The styles and types of residential architecture represented in the district include Bungalow, Craftsman, Foursquare, Colonial Revival, Prairie, Spanish Colonial/Moorish, Mediterranean, Tudor and English Cottage Revival, Dutch Colonial, Georgian and Moderne.

### B. Planning Significance

Sherman Boulevard is significant as a successful example of urban planning by Milwaukee's Park Commission that had as its goals the creation of a series of parks ringing the city that would be linked by broad, landscaped boulevards that served, in a sense, as linear parks. This master plan was only partially realized. Newberry Boulevard was created to link Lake Park with Riverside Park. Layton Boulevard was

created to link Mitchell Park with Pulaski park and the Kinnickinnic River Parkway, but was never completed. Sherman Boulevard, however, successfully joined Washington Park with Sherman Park and was eventually extended all the way north to McGovern Park at West Silver Spring Drive. The prestige of a boulevard address fulfilled the public demand for high quality, park-like neighborhoods free of commercial and industrial encroachment. Developers took advantage of the new boulevards when laying out their subdivisions and often ensured that expensive houses would be built there by writing restrictive covenants into the deeds for the lots fronting on the boulevard.

In the era before zoning became an accepted planning tool, neighborhoods tended to evolve in a haphazard fashion. After platting, real estate developers or contractors would sometimes erect a number of residential properties in an attempt to set by example the standards of construction for an area, but generally purchasers of lots were more or less free to build whatever they wished on their property. Setback requirements and density restrictions were virtually nonexistent. As a result, costly houses sometimes found themselves adjacent to small cottages crowded two, three or even four to a lot. Houses, stores, taverns, livery stables, machine shops, and boarding houses could share a single block. The resulting neighborhoods lacked a unifying visual character and were often malodorous, noisy, and congested. While today we consider some of these older surviving neighborhoods as charmingly diverse and picturesque, it is hard to appreciate how unpleasant and unhealthy it would be to live next door to a livery stable or a small, noisy factory or workshop handling hazardous substances. Even the prosperous gold coast neighborhoods lined with the opulent mansions of the city's most affluent residents were not immune to unsavory encroachments. Newspaper accounts throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries relate how vigorously wealthy West Wisconsin Avenue residents protested commercial developments, such as the construction of a public livery stable, on their street or how the socially elite homeowners on North Prospect Avenue fought the construction of high density apartment buildings. With no legal recourse, there was not much the residents could do other than try to buy out the proposed noxious use.

As the city grew denser and more hazardous, a shift occurred in public residential tastes and expectations. The growing middle class, able to afford their own private transportation or to use the expanding and increasingly efficient public transit system, could move farther out from the center of the city in their quest for a better quality of life and a healthier environment. Meanwhile, necessity no longer dictated that the residences of the growing class of affluent industrialists, manufacturers, and entrepreneurs, be within virtual sight of their places of business as had been the case for most of the nineteenth century. The demand for exclusively residential precincts by these groups, resulted in the emergence of the "first class" restricted subdivision, laid out by developers with larger than average lots, restrictions on density and prohibitions against noxious industries and troublesome businesses such as taverns and livery stables. Deed covenants created a legally enforceable proscription against residentially incompatible activities. Many covenants further specified that only substantial houses costing over a certain amount of money could be built.

This trend toward the increasing use of deed covenants coincided with the development of the boulevard system in Milwaukee that produced such gracious thoroughfares as Highland Boulevard, McKinley Boulevard, Washington Boulevard and Newberry Boulevard, among others. The importance of wide landscaped streets or boulevards as urban planning tools has its roots at least as far back as Renaissance

Europe, but the large scale, nineteenth century, government-sponsored rebuildings of Paris and Vienna prompted American civic leaders to take a hard look at America's urban areas and formulate plans to make them more beautiful and livable. Such influential individuals as Frederick Law Olmsted conceptualized boulevards as broad, linear green spaces, essentially linear parks, which could connect or terminate at spacious parks. Improving city life through better urban design received more attention following the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893, whose impressively designed grounds were dubbed "The White City." Groups such as the American Civic Association also promoted the benefits of rational urban design that would improve city residents' lives and health.

In Milwaukee the first boulevard street was a short stretch of West Wisconsin Avenue between North 8<sup>th</sup> and North 11<sup>th</sup> Streets. It, however, was more the product of an accident than a plan. It was created to rectify a situation that occurred when the old portion of Wisconsin Avenue east of North 6<sup>th</sup> Street was finally connected to the newer portion of Wisconsin Avenue west of North 8<sup>th</sup> Street by the removal of an impassable natural bluff, and it was discovered that the two streets did not align. To solve the problem, it was decided to create a short section of wide, ornamental boulevard that would serve as a transition zone for the misaligned roadways and also provide an attractive gateway to the exclusive residential area that lay to the west. The press reported optimistically as early as 1848 that the resulting 150-foot-wide boulevard on West Wisconsin Avenue would be extended west to the city limits in emulation of the boulevards of Paris, but this dream went largely unfulfilled. In 1877 another proposal was put forward to ring the city with a series of 100-foot-wide boulevards, probably in imitation of the Ringstrasse in Vienna, but identifying a source of funding and establishing jurisdiction over their construction and maintenance proved elusive.

It took the creation of the Park Commission in 1889 before serious boulevard planning could take shape. The park commissioners lobbied tirelessly for the creation of boulevards and pleasure ways to link the various public parks they were establishing throughout the city and its environs. The intent was to extend the parks visually throughout the city by way of tree-lined and landscaped thoroughfares and to provide green breathing spaces in congested areas. Chapter 167 of the State of Wisconsin Laws of 1895 created the official boulevard designation and gave the Milwaukee Common Council the power to designate thoroughfares as boulevards upon recommendation of the Park Commission. Official boulevard designation under city ordinance provided not only prestige but prohibited heavy commercial vehicles from using the thoroughfare except for deliveries to the residents who lived along the thoroughfare. By 1914 the ordinance was expanded to give the Park Commission control of the planting and care of the parked plots along the boulevards. Parked lots were the extra-wide green spaces between the sidewalk and the curb found on some streets or the garden lots flanking the entrance to a boulevard.

The advent of the boulevard system coincided with a growing demand for higher class exclusively residential areas. The boulevards with their large lots, tree-lined streets and accessibility to public parks were the natural recipients of this upper income residential expansion. Because boulevards were created in all parts of the city, one of the unique outcomes was that residential enclaves of high quality houses were created throughout the city in long, linear strips amidst much more modest surrounding neighborhoods. As a result, for many years in the early twentieth century, Milwaukee did not have any single "best" address, but rather a series of prestigious boulevards scattered throughout the city, although some boulevards were much more exclusive

and expensive than others. Sometimes the Park Commission spearheaded the creation of a boulevard to achieve a park purpose, as it did Newberry Boulevard to link Lake Park and Riverside Park in 1897. In other instances, developers laid out boulevards in their subdivisions to serve as any amenity or centerpiece with which to attract high-income homeowners. In these cases, the developer and property owners would usually petition the city to receive official boulevard designation after the street was already developed or the lots sold. Such local thoroughfares as Highland Boulevard, McKinley Boulevard, Hi Mount Boulevard, and Grant Boulevard were developed in this way. Unlike the Park Commission boulevards, these real estate developer boulevards do not usually connect two parks, although they are sometimes in close proximity to a park, such as Grant Boulevards which terminates at Sherman Park.

Sherman Boulevard, as a creation of the Park Commission, satisfied a number of municipal planning concerns in providing a transportation link between parks and opening up congested urban areas. Private developers subsequently ensured the construction of “high class” homes that were distinct from the surrounding neighborhoods by quality of design, detail and size. Through restrictive deed covenants, such subdivisions as Boulevard park and Residence Park established minimum construction costs and allowed for only single family residences to be built along the east side of Sherman Boulevard from North Avenue to Locust Street. Vernon Heights had similar restrictions and also specified uniform setbacks, but allowed for expensive duplexes to be built on the west side of Sherman Boulevard north of Center Street. Some of the other subdivisions had similar regulations.

To summarize, unlike the private, gated subdivisions of St. Louis or the expansive, multi-block mansion neighborhoods found in most cities, Milwaukee’s various types the boulevards created a network of open public green spaces throughout the congested city, distributed upper income housing more evenly throughout Milwaukee’s residential districts, and also allowed for improved traffic flow between the city’s parks while accommodating and showcasing the era’s newest and most desired mode of transportation, the private automobile.

## VIII. HISTORY

Sherman Boulevard was created along the section line that divides Sections 24, 13 and 12 to the east from Sections 23, 14 and 11 to the west, all in Town 7 North, Range 21 East. Historically, section lines and even quartersection lines were dedicated for roadways. Many of the cities important transportation arteries, including North Avenue, Center Street, and Burleigh Street were created in this fashion.

Sherman Boulevard, however, might have become just another roadway had it not been for the Milwaukee Park Commission, which, in 1890, purchased the tract of land that become Washington Park between Lloyd and Vliet Streets. In 1891 the Milwaukee Park Commission purchased another 24-acre parcel from the Perrigo family north of Locust Street between the future Sherman Boulevard, which was then called 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, and 41<sup>st</sup> Street. Washington Park was quickly improved according to the plans provided by the prestigious landscape firm of Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot, and the streetcar access soon made the park the most popular public space of the city’s west side. The Perrigo Tract, in contrast, lacked direct access via public transportation and remained a largely unimproved wooded lot, used only by a few patrons for picnics and by the Park Commission as a nursery for the rest of its parks.

The parks, once outside the city limits, were annexed to the city in 1899. They began to attract residential development by the turn-of-the century near Washington Park and a decade or two later around the Perrigo Tract, which had been officially named Sherman Park by 1900 to honor Civil War General William Tecumseh Sherman.

Development occurred incrementally around the two parks and on Sherman Boulevard itself. As various subdivisions were platted, developers often simultaneously petitioned for annexation to the city of Milwaukee in order to provide water, sewer and other services to potential lot buyers. This piecemeal annexation led to an irregular profile at the western city limits. Some 24 separate subdivisions, in addition to several large unsubdivided parcels, have been identified along Sherman Boulevard. While some had prosaic names styled after the realty company (Richter, Schubert & Dick's Addition) or family names (Geseu's Subdivision), many developers capitalized on the buying public's desire for clean, healthy, spacious neighborhoods and the desirable proximity to the boulevard and park in choosing their subdivisions' names. The resulting names, Boulevard Park, Residence Park, Sherman Boulevard Heights, Vernon Heights, Rainbow Ridge and Bonny Park, conjure up sylvan vistas even today.

In the 1901 city directory, North 43<sup>rd</sup> Street had already become known as Sherman Boulevard, and was most likely named after the park. While informally called a boulevard at this time, official designation was granted by the city in 1910 when control and jurisdiction over that portion from Lisbon Avenue to North Avenue was transferred to the Park Commission. As the boulevard was improved in incremental stages northward, those sections were, in turn, transferred to the jurisdiction of the Park Commission.

The residents of Sherman Boulevard tended to be prosperous, self-made men, the sons of immigrants, and included those in the skilled trades, management positions, industrialists, doctors, attorneys, teachers, accountants, contractors, retailers, and civil servants. Many were of German or Jewish ethnicity, but a significant number were of English, Irish, Polish or Bohemian heritage as well. Among the notable early residents were: Theodore C. Esser, president of T.C. Esser, Paints and Glass (No. 2232, razed); Louis E. Levi, president of Hydrite Chemical Corporation (No. 2233); John H. Leenhouts, Milwaukee County Assessor of Incomes (No. 2331); Lorenze Frankfurth, president of Frankfurth Hardware (No. 2352); George Kriz, M.D., general practitioner (No. 2359); William J. Koehring, president of Koehring Company, manufacturers of concrete mixers and cranes (No. 2371); Arthur J. Bitger, vice-president of Bitger Cloak & Suite (No. 2427); Benjamin Adelman, president of New Way Service Corporation and Quality Laundry Service (No. 2743); Walter P. Perlick, vice-president of R. Perlick Brass Co. (No. 2775); Henry W. Tews, secretary of Tews Lime & Cement Company (No. 2803); Roland E. Stoelting, Milwaukee Commissioner of Public Works (No. 2848); Edward A. Drott, president-treasurer of Drott Tractor Company, Inc. (No. 2856); Walter Soerens, president-treasurer of Kilbourn Motor Company (No. 2878); Edward V. Koch, architect and chief building inspector for the City of Milwaukee (No. 3025); and William R. Sorgel, president-treasurer of Sorgel electric Company (no. 3379). Sherman Boulevard was evidently, for a time, the most prestigious address of the west side, as city directories show that even homeowners on highly desirable nearby Grant Boulevard often moved to Sherman Boulevard as their fortunes improved.

The residents of Sherman Boulevard had very broad architectural tastes, and the styles of their houses range from modest bungalows to flamboyant Spanish Colonial Revival and elaborate Tudor Revival houses. At a glance, English period styles tend to predominate the streetscape, probably due to the nearly endless variations in form and materials possible within that style. No matter what style, however, all the houses on the boulevard tend to be

more highly embellished, larger, and more distinctive than those on neighboring streets. Even the ubiquitous duplex here was developed to its maximum design potential, and many are downright luxurious featuring rooms for live-in servants as well as basement rathskellers with fireplaces and fine cabinetry.

Educational and religious institutions were also drawn to Sherman Boulevard as the neighborhood expanded. The large and handsome buildings they erected grace major intersections along the thoroughfare: today's Community Baptist Church of Greater Milwaukee at No. 2249 (aka 4311 West North Avenue) was built in 1924-25 for Sherman Boulevard Congregational Church and designed by Buemming & Guth; it was later occupied by Parkside Lutheran Church from the late 1930s to the early 1980s when the Community Baptist congregation acquired the building. The Lannon stone, ranch-style house-like building at 4242 West North Avenue was built in 1950 to house the Third church of Christ Scientist's Reading Room and is now a day care center for Community Baptist church. Greater Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church at No. 2479 was originally built for Immanuel Reformed Church in 1916 and was designed by Van Ryn and De Gelleke. Greater Mount Zion has occupied the building since 1992. Sherman Park Evangelical Lutheran at No. 2703 was created out of the merger of Mount Lebanon Lutheran Church and Hope Church. The present building replaced an earlier structure on the site and was designed by Velguth and Papenthien and completed in 1929. The Third Church of Christ, Scientist, now the Schrager Auction Gallery, at No. 2915 was designed by Frank Howend in 1924. Trinity Presbyterian Church at No. 3302 was built as a Lannon stone-clad Gothic Revival church in 1935; it was designed by Hugo Haeuser. The large, contemporary auditorium and classroom building was added in 1957, according to the designs of Harry A. Ollrogge. Washington High School at No. 2525 was designed by Van Ryn and De Gelleke and completed in 1914, before many of Sherman Boulevard's houses were even built. Townsend School, an elementary school at No. 3360, opened with four barracks in 1926. The present building, designed by School Board architect Guy E. Wiley, was begun in the fall of 1927.

That Sherman Boulevard remained a prestigious address after World War II can be seen in the number of infill houses and apartment buildings constructed along the thoroughfare during the 1950s. An aging building stock, changing social and economic conditions, deferred maintenance, absentee ownership, and a greater volume of traffic have all impacted the historic district, but the majority of the houses have been maintained in their original or near-original condition. Probably the most significant factor to negatively impact the boulevard was the proposed Park West freeway corridor and the uncertainty that it brought to the neighborhood. The State of Wisconsin, the City of Milwaukee, and Milwaukee County cut a wide swath between West North Avenue and West Meinecke Street through the city's west side extending all the way west from downtown to Sherman Boulevard for the construction of a freeway. It resulted in the razing of all of the houses in its path. On Sherman Boulevard, all of the houses were razed on the east side of the street from North Avenue to Meinecke, interrupting the streetscape of fine residences. Protests by west side residents halted the demolition at the east curb line of Sherman Boulevard, followed by a lengthy debate about the necessity of building this loop of the freeway system at all. Ultimately, the plan to build the freeway was abandoned, and most of the land has remained vacant ever since. A great deal of disinvestment occurred in the area during the ensuing decades as long-time residents passed away or moved out of the neighborhood and a succession of short-term occupants lived on the boulevard. More recently, two houses were removed in the 2200 block to make way for an expanded parking lot for Finny Library. One of the houses was razed, but the other was moved one-half block north to the 2300 block. Since that time, the neighborhood has stabilized and has attracted a new crop of dedicated owner-occupants, including many African-American families.

## **IX. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Sherman Boulevard Historic District be studied for possible designation as a City of Milwaukee Historic District as a result of its possible fulfillment of criteria e-1, e-5, e-6 and e-8 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 308-81(2)(e), 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. Nothing in these guidelines shall be construed to prevent ordinary maintenance or the restoration and/or replacement of documented original elements.

### A. Guideline for Rehabilitation

These guidelines are based upon those contained in Section 308-81(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

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. This includes parapets, pediments and cornices.

#### 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) Consider retaining the paint on previously painted masonry surfaces. Removal of paint could cause irreversible damage to the masonry. If it is decided to remove the paint from masonry surfaces, use the gentlest method possible. Under Wisconsin state law, sandblasting or other abrasive cleaning methods are not permitted on historic buildings.
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) 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.
- (v) Repair or replace deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible in appearance. Avoid

- using new material that is inappropriate in appearance or will give the building a look different from the original appearance.
- (vi) Repair stucco with a stucco mixture duplicating the original as closely as possible in appearance and texture.

b. Wood and Metal

- (i) Retain original material, whenever possible. Avoid the removal of architectural features that are an essential part of the building's character and appearance.
- (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. The use of vinyl or aluminum over wood siding is generally not permitted.

c. Terra Cotta

- (i) Unpainted terra cotta should not be painted or covered. Avoid painting or covering naturally glazed or finished terra cotta. This is historically incorrect and could cause irreversible damage if it was decided to remove the paint at a later date.
- (ii) Clean terra cotta only when necessary to halt deterioration and with the gentlest method available. Sandblasting terra cotta is prohibited. This method of cleaning destroys the material.
- (iii) Repair or replace deteriorated terra cotta with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible. Pre-cast tinted concrete or cast fiberglass are acceptable replacement materials as long as it is finished with a coating to resemble the original appearance. Avoid using new material that is inappropriate or does not resemble the original.

3. Windows and Doors

- a. Retain existing window and door openings that are visible from the public right-of-way. Retain the present configuration of panes, sash, sills, architraves, hoods, doors and hardware, except as necessary to restore to the original condition. Avoid making additional openings or changes in the principle elevations by enlarging or reducing window or door sizes. Avoid changing the size or configuration of windowpanes or sash. Avoid discarding original windows, 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 aluminum storm and screen window combinations. Avoid the filling in or covering of openings with materials like glass block or the installation of fake shutters that are not in proportion to the openings or that are historically out of character the building. Avoid using modern

style window units, such as with 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. The installation of glass block in basement windows visible from the street is generally not permitted.

4. Trim and Ornamentation

There shall be no changes to the existing trim or ornamentation except as necessary to restore the building to its original condition. The historic architectural fabric includes turned and carved wood trim, all terra cotta ornament, all pressed metal elements including the cornices, pediments and oriels, and all carved and cast stonework. Replacement features shall match the original member in scale, design, color and material.

5. Additions

Make additions that harmonize with the existing building architecturally. Avoid making additions that are unsympathetic to the original structure and visually intrude upon the principle elevations. To the greatest extent possible, additions should be made to the rear of the building.

6. Non-Historic Additions

Alterations to non-historic buildings or non-historic portions of buildings shall be made in such a way as to be as sympathetic as possible to the historic building or neighboring buildings. If possible, alterations to these structures should seek to lessen the adverse impact of the non-historic addition or building on the historic components of the district.

B. Guidelines for Streetscapes

The visual character of the streetscapes in the district is maintained by the general consistency of the Sherman Boulevard block face in terms of scale, siting and density. This has resulted in a cohesive building stock with few intrusions that detract from the district's historic character.

1. Maintain the height, scale, mass and materials established by the buildings along Sherman Boulevard in the district and the traditional setback and density of these block faces. Avoid introducing elements that are incompatible in terms of siting, materials, height or scale.
2. Use traditional landscaping, fencing, signage, paving and street lighting that is compatible with the character and period of the district. Avoid introducing landscape features, fencing, street lighting or signage that are inappropriate to the character of the district.

C. Guidelines for New Construction

It is important that additional new construction be designed so as to harmonize with the character of the district.

1. Siting

New construction along Sherman Boulevard must reflect the traditional siting of buildings in the district. This includes setbacks, spacing between buildings, and the orientation of openings to the street and neighboring 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 must be compatible with the design of the structure.

3. Form

The massing of new construction in close proximity to historic structures must be compatible with the neighboring buildings. The profiles of roofs and building elements that project and recede from the main block must express the same continuity established by the historic structures.

4. Materials

The building materials that are adjacent to historic buildings and visible from the public right-of-way should be consistent with the colors, textures, proportions, and combinations of cladding materials used in the district. The physical composition of the materials may be different from that of the historic materials, but the same appearance should be maintained.

#### D. 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 308-81 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.

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 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 give 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).

G. Fire Escapes

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

H. 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.