HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT

FRIEDERICK KUBBERNUSS HOUSE
222 E. BURLEIGH STREET
MAY, 2004

HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT

I. NAME

Historic: Friederick Kubbernuss House

Common Name:

II. LOCATION

222 East Burleigh Street
Milwaukee, WI 53212

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Volkman's Subd in SE ¼ Sec 8-7-22
Block 1 LOTS 23- 24 & 25

Tax Key No

282-2723-121-3

III. CLASSIFICATION

Building

IV. OWNER: Dr. Brenda Noach-Ewing

ALDERMAN: Michael McGee, 6th Aldermanic District

NOMINATOR: Dr. Brenda Noach-Ewing

V. YEAR BUILT

c. 1857-1864[1]

ARCHITECT:

Not known

VI. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Friederick Kubbernuss House is a one-and-a-half-story, brick veneered, Italianate Style dwelling located at the northeast corner of E. Burleigh Street and N. Palmer Street approximately two and a half miles from the Central Business District. It is located in a residential area of middle class houses and duplexes built up mostly between 1903 to 1915 with a second wave of construction lasting from 1921 to 1928. Lot sizes are generally 30 feet by 120 feet in dimension. A noticeable diversity in lot configuration does exist, however, reflecting the numbers of small land holdings that were subdivided by a multitude of owners and developers. E. Burleigh Street formed the south border of Section 8 Town 7 North Range 22 East and has been an important thoroughfare through the area since the first settlement.

[1] Milwaukee County Register of Deeds

The Kubbernuss House sits on three lots that were partitioned out of the family's original 7-acre tract. Lot 23 is 30-feet by 120-feet in dimension and sits just to the east of the house. The house itself sits on Lot 24, 45-feet by 120-feet in dimension, and the post-war rear addition to the house sits in Lot 25 which measures 45-feet by 120-feet. The Kubbernuss House is sited at rear of Lot 24, giving it a deep setback from E. Burleigh Street. There is a side lot to the east enclosed by a chain link fence. The west side of the house is close to the public sidewalk and is separated from it by a narrow, raised, stone planting bed. The post-war rear addition is located along the Palmer Street frontage and the first story garage is accessed directly from the street. A rear yard is located behind the addition and the house.

The Italianate house is rectangular in shape with a side gabled asphalt shingled roof that is interrupted by a shallow pitch front gable centered on the front façade of the building. This main façade is symmetrically ordered below the gable with a center entrance flanked by pairs of tall, segmentally arched windows. A smaller arched window appears in the half story above the entrance. The windows feature flat brick frames with small corner corbels below the sills. A brick porch extends across three quarters of the façade and features battered brick piers, brick balustrade walls, concrete decking and brick knee walls flanking stairs at the center and east end of the building. This porch serves mostly as an open terrace at the front of the house and is roofed only above the entry and the window directly west of it. The shed roof rests on wood arches ornamented with keystones and is supported at the front by tapered Arts and Crafts/Bungalow style posts that stand atop brick piers. The brick balustrade features two lunette shaped openings embellished with keystones. Two matching lunettes are positioned in the base of the porch and serve to provide ventilation to an area that would ordinarily have wood shirting.

The house sits on a rubble stone foundation, which just barely shows above grade. A projecting brick water table delineates the basement from the main body of the house. Basement windows with segmental openings are visible on the west elevation, where they are boarded in, and on the east elevation.

The west elevation features two original windows in segmental openings on the first floor and two windows on the upper story set in rectangular openings. The first story windows resemble those on the front elevation but lack the brick enframements. The upper story windows replaced a large segmentally arched window in the gable end that was bricked in at an unknown date. One-over-one sashes appear in three of the windows while the fourth features a new nine-over-nine replacement window. What appears to be an original or very early storm window shows a two-over-four muntin arrangement, which may reflect the muntin pattern in the original prime windows.

A frame gabled ell addition was built onto the house flush with the west wall of the original brick veneered house. Its construction date is unknown but it was in place by the 1890's per fire insurance maps. The three rectangular windows are smaller that those on the main portion of the house and have one-over-one sash. The brick foundation, however, was seamlessly tied into the brick of the main house. This addition was aluminum sided in 1978 by the fourth owner Willie Mae Slater. Another gable-roofed addition was constructed on this elevation, attached to the gabled ell wing. This 30-foot by 26-foot addition does not match the rest of the house and consists of a concrete block base that houses a three car garage and upper level living space with three small slit-like windows in the facade. Its windowless north wall features a fireplace chimney that is clad with decorative stonework above the roofline. This addition was built in 1956 by the third owner Harry Gromacki.

The east elevation features two tall segmentally arched windows on the first story and a three-sided bay on the second. The height of the first story windows matches those on the main façade. New nine-over-nine replacement sash have recently been installed. The windows in the bay appear to be one-over-one sash and have aluminum storms. The boxy character of the bay and simple surfaces may indicate it was added to the house around the turn of the twentieth century.

The rear or north elevation is not easily visible from Burleigh Street. It features a number of small, one story, shed-like additions built onto the main house, the gabled ell and the 1963 addition.

Alterations have been discussed above and in no way diminish the overriding historic character of the house. In summary, these alterations include the construction of a frame gable ell wing at the rear (date unknown), closing in of a segmentally arched window in the gable end of the west façade (date unknown),

construction of the second story bay on the east elevation (date unknown), replacement of the original full length frame porch in 1915, the construction of a two story addition at the northwest corner of the house in 1956, the installation of aluminum siding to the gabled ell and 1956 addition in 1928 and the construction of several shed like structures at the rear (date unknown). Without further investigation at the site it is not known if scrolled brackets once graced the eaves as would have been common in the era that the house was built.

VII. SIGNIFICANCE

The Friederick Kubbernuss House is significant as the earliest documented extant house located in the Northeast Quarter of Section 8 Town 7 North Range 22 East in what was originally the Town of Milwaukee. Built between 1857 and 1864, it is a reminder that some of Milwaukee's densely built up neighborhoods once had a agricultural past with its own history and social heritage different from the urban experience. The Kubbernuss House is also significant as a fine and early example of the Italianate Style and serves as a visual landmark in its neighborhood.

VIII. HISTORY

The Kubbernuss House is one of a number of early farmhouses that were identified in the 1979 reconnaissance survey of the historic buildings of the City of Milwaukee. These survivors from the distant past can tell us a lot about the early history of various neighborhoods and help to remind us of the early rural character of what is now a heavily built up urban landscape. Some houses like Villa Uhrig at 1727 N 34th St. that once fronted Lisbon Avenue (1853-54, locally designated October 7, 1997) were associated with gentleman's estates, rural residences that served as summer homes for the well-to-do with minimal farming or gardening carried out. Some estates were famous for their farm production as well as their aesthetics. The Cedars built by Charles James was celebrated for its gardens containing over 200 varieties of roses and hundreds of variety of tulips. It was also known as a productive farm with famous potatoes, plums and apples grown on the extensive acreage. James' house was depicted in a full-page illustration in the 1876 Illustrated Historical Atlas of Milwaukee County. James' house and gardens disappeared entirely when developers laid out Grant Boulevard in the early 20th century. Some owners had prominent houses that were high style examples of their type like the distinctive Italianate form of the Samuel Luscombe residence at 7709 W. Lisbon Avenue dating to c. 1854 or the Greek Revival house of Isaac Leister at 11142 W. Bradley Road (1855 locally designated December 6, 1983). Still others were modest examples, reflecting the modest incomes of their hard working owners. A number of these survive, most having undergone alterations over the decades. Many of these houses are tucked into residential blocks today but are distinguished from their later era neighbors by their size, scale and materials.

THE TOWN OF MILWAUKEE

The Town of Milwaukee was originally one of two legal entities created out of the County of Milwaukee. It occupied the portion of the county north of Greenfield Avenue while the Town of Lake occupied the south portion of the county. The concept of town government had been authorized by the Michigan Territorial legislature as early as 1827 but did not come into actual existence until the land sales brought an influx of settlers and investors into Wisconsin. The City of Milwaukee grew out of the southeast corner of the Town of Milwaukee between 1838 and 1846 while the territory west of 27th Street was divided into two towns of equal size, each 36 square miles, in 1840. The north town was called Granville while the south became Wauwatosa. The land east of 27th Street and north of the city of Milwaukee remained the Town of Milwaukee. The City of Milwaukee eventually expanded north and west to claim more of the Town of Milwaukee but other municipalities like Shorewood, Whitefish Bay, River Hills and Glendale were eventually created out of the remainder of the old township.

Town governments were a subdivision of the county, established by state constitution in 1848. Town governments provided "all residents of the territory and state a means of managing on a democratic basis those very local governmental activities of a housekeeping nature as would be inappropriately dealt with by the county or the state-the building of roads and bridges, the maintenance of order through a system of constables and justices of the peace, the assessing of property and collection of taxes by an assessor and a treasurer, and the

conduct of elections and keeping of records by a clerk"[2] Town governments were also responsible for creating schools and taxing for their support.

The township was originally surveyed in early 1835 and the land (outside of the settlement of Milwaukee) went to some 25 purchasers at the land sales held in Green Bay on September 4, 1835. Records from the town begin with the first meeting of the Township at the home of G. Mathias on April 7, 1846. Forty votes were cast in a subsequent election and taxes for the year amounted to $670.53. It was said that the Township contained more broken land in proportion to its area that any other in the county. Steep bluffs marked the shore of Lake Michigan and the Milwaukee River meandered through the territory creating a valley that was 50 to 100 feet below the high lands of the township. There was much fertile soil although some was poor. The population in the township grew from 1,349 in 1850 to 3,567 by 1875, an equivalent of 153 persons per square mile. Taxable wealth likewise grew from $110,187 in 1849 to $719, 535 in 1875. Agriculture was the primary occupation with wheat and oat crops leading production followed by corn, barley, and rye. In 1875 the community contained 647 horses, 1,118 cattle, 247 sheep and 424 swine.[3]

The Southeast Quarter of Section 8, the area in which the Kubbernuss house is located, went through a number of owners before we can associate a resident family with the nominated property. Hiram Burdick received a patent to the original 160 acres on August 10, 1837.[4] John W. Pixley acquired the east half of the quarter section, or 80 acres, on April 15, 1846 and again through tax redemption on April 15, 1849.[5] James L. Brown acquired 40 acres at the southeast corner of the southeast quarter on May 17, 1855 and these were deeded to Alexander Mitchell on October 2, 1863.[6] These individuals were investor owners known for their real estate holdings as well as other business ventures.

THE KUBBERNUSS FAMILY

Friederick Kubbernuss purchased a 3-acre plot from Mitchell on July 17, 1864 for $600.[7] There is reference in the legal description to the plot "beginning at a farm on the East Side line..." so there is evidence that farming was underway in the area. The particular 3-acre tract purchased by Kubbernuss may have been chosen for the fact that it was already under cultivation or that a dwelling stood on the grounds or possibly both. It was common for investor-owned property to have been leased out to tenant farmers and sometimes these leases are included in deeds although we have no record in this instance. These tenants sometimes lived on the property or adjacent to it. The extant Italianate house at 222 E. Burleigh St. may, therefore, have been built by James L. Brown or Alexander Mitchell for a tenant farmer. The simple form of the house, its rubble stone foundation below the brick veneer, the segmentally arched windows and the turned walnut baluster at the interior stair are consistent with houses built in the late 1850's and early 1860's. The original porch that once extended across the façade might have given other clues to dating the structure but it was removed in the early 20th century. The Town Of Milwaukee tax rolls are likely inconclusive. The value of the assessments fluctuated from $184.80 in 1867 to $925 in 1868 only to drop again to $294 in 1869. We may never know the exact date that the house was built.

Kubbernuss expanded his holdings in three subsequent purchases, each of which were long narrow parcels parallel to his original tract and lying to the east. A one-acre purchase was made from Alexander Mitchell for $200 on July 17, 1865, followed by another one-acre parcel on January 3, 1866 for $200. The final two-acre piece was acquired on February 1, 1867 for $200 and brought Kubbernuss' holdings to the east boundary of the quarter section at Richards Street. This extended period of acquisition might have been due to Kubbernuss' modest financial condition although topological concerns such as leveling hilly land or filling in a wetlands might also been a factor. The seven-acre tract would remain part of the Kubbernuss holding through 1889.

Research to date has not disclosed much information about the Kubbernuss family. By 1876 they were the second largest property owners in the southeast corner of the southeast quarter section after Ferdinand Kuehn

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[2] Frederick I. Olson, "City Expansion and Suburban Spread: Settlements and Governments in Milwaukee County," in Ralph M. Aderman, editor, Trading Post to Metropolis, Milwaukee County's First 150 Years (Oconomowoc, Wisconsin: Milwaukee County Historical Society, 1987), p. 16-17.
[3] Illustrated Historical Atlas of Milwaukee County, Wisconsin (Chicago: H. Belden & Co., 1876), p. 13.
[4] Deeds, vol. 30, p. 484.
[5] Ibid., vol. 27, p. 175.
[6] Ibid., vol. 47, p. 327 and vol. 78, p. 63.
[7] Ibid., vol. 84, p. 496.

with 10 acres. Neighbors held smaller plots that ranged from 1.5 acres to 5.5 acres. By the time of the nation's centennial as well, there were some ten dwellings in the southeast corner as well fronting on Burleigh Street (the south boundary of the quarter section), today's N. 2nd Street (the north-south midline of the quarter section), and Concordia Avenue (the east-west midline of the quarter section). From deeds we know Friederick's wife was named Sophia. An 1886 city directory listing showed an Albert Kubbernuss on the premises as a laborer and he presumably was a son. Kubbernuss appears to have been of German ethnicity as were a majority of residents of the Town of Milwaukee. Most were engaged in farming although there were other occupations represented as well including carpenters, coopers, saloonkeepers and blacksmith. In Section 8 of the Town of Milwaukee most owners were listed as "gardeners" rather than "farmers" and this classification probably differentiated those who raised wheat and oats and other export crops from those who had truck gardens and delivered produce to local markets. Unfortunately, Kubbernuss is not included in the residents profiled in the 1876 Illustrated Historical Atlas so we do not know at this time what crops he raised.[8]

In the 1870's and 1880's Milwaukee's urban development continued northward and the city gradually annexed portions of the old Town of Milwaukee. By the late 1880's the city limits had reached to Burleigh Street and development pressures probably led Kubbernuss to sell his land. George and Andrew Koch purchased the seven acres on April 15, 1889 for $14,000 just after the plat was recorded at the courthouse on April 5, 1889.[9] They subdivided the land under the name Volkman's Subdivision and today's Palmer Street was originally called Volkman Place. The subdivision was divided into two blocks. The land between Richards Street and Palmer Street became Block 1 and featured 40 full lots and two fractional lots, most of which measured approximately 30 feet by 120 feet. The property around the Kubbernuss house was divided into larger parcels, Lot 24 measuring 45 feet by 120 feet and Lot 25 measuring 45 feet by 120 feet. It is likely that barns or outbuildings occupied Lot 25 which ran behind the Kubbernuss house. New house construction began soon afterward in Block 1 with the first four houses built as early as 1890. Several more dwellings were constructed by 1895. Little construction took place in the late 1890's but resumed again in 1904. Most of the land around the old Kubbernuss house was built up by 1912 with a few later additions to 1921.

Block 2 of the new subdivision consisted of land between Palmer and N. Bluhm's Place (a narrow alley-like right of way between Palmer and N. Achilles) that was divided into 20 lots each 30 feet by 120 feet. House construction did not begin in Block 2 until 1901 and the final house was built in 1924.

THE KOCH FAMILY

The developers of the subdivision, Andrew and George Koch, were from a prominent family in the Brewer's Hill neighborhood and lived in a house located between 1942 and 1948 N. Palmer Street (razed) across from today's Palmer Elementary School. The patriarch of the family was John Koch who ran a flour and feed business at today's 2044-2048 N. King Dr. (razed in the early 1950s). John died on June 12, 1896. His widow Augusta continued the family business for a short while before it was sold. John's son Andrew worked for the family business and then became a lithographer and lithographic engraver. John's son George served as bookkeeper and clerk for his father's business then became the cashier and later vice president of the West Side Bank. He is known for constructing the notable "Lion House" on Highland Boulevard. Brother Edward V. Koch was an architect who later became head of the building inspection department for the City of Milwaukee.

The city directories in 1889 show Andrew Koch moving to "Williamsburg," an unincorporated community located near the intersection of today's King Drive and Burleigh Street. Williamsburg was in the vicinity of the Kubbernuss property that he recently purchased. By 1891 Andrew was listed as living in the former Kubbernuss house. By 1892 he had moved up the block to a new residence, probably today's 3140 N. Palmer Street. He then lived briefly on 1st Street and in 1894 had his brother Edward V. Koch design a large frame house east of the Kubernuss house on two lots addressed at 238 E. Burleigh Street. He continued to live at this address until his death at age 39 on September 6, 1899. His widow Josephine and children Arthur, Gertrude, Walter, Norma, and Nerona stayed on the premises and moved away sometime between 1910 and 1921.

Brother Edward V. Koch likewise lived briefly in the Town of Milwaukee in 1890, possibly the old Kubbernuss house, and is shown at a house on E. Volkman Place (Palmer Street) two north of the corner of Burleigh Street

[8] Illustrated Historical Atlas, pp. 13, 46.
[9] Deeds, vol. 232, p. 610, Plats vol. 12, page 38.

in 1891. This house was probably built on speculation with the intention of selling it to a permanent owner as Edward moved to today's 2125 N. 4th Street in 1892.

It is not known at this time if brothers George and Andrew Koch had other investments in addition to the Kubbernuss tract.

THE NEIDNER FAMILY

The Herman O. Neidner family moved into the Kubbernuss house in 1892 and would become the family to own the house the longest. The deed that shows their purchase of the house on Lot 24 is not recorded at the courthouse. Herman acquired the narrow 30-foot lot to the east, Lot 23, for $900 on July 1, 1899. He then acquired the large lot to the north, Lot 25, in two transactions for $457 on July 5, 1907 and October 26, 1907.[10] Later references to barns in the permits imply that there might have been structures on those premises that survived from the Kubbernuss's.

Herman O. Neidner was born into a successful family in Milwaukee on July 26, 1857. His father, likewise named Herman O. Neidner, was a native of Saxony, Germany and his mother was Theresa Wolf. The senior Neidner moved to the United States and first located in Philadelphia where he continued his craft of carpet weaving and became foreman of the largest weaving company in that city. He then relocated to Milwaukee, establishing a weaving factory on Water Street and eventually moved his business to Chicago.

Son Herman O. Neidner was educated in the local public schools and at Engelman's Academy as well as the Spencerian Business College. From 1873 to 1876 he studied marble sculpting with the Milwaukee firm Davidson & Sons then spent a year tending bar out east and became interested in laying floor tile as a result of an acquaintance with English workmen in New York City. Herman followed up his interest in tile by spending a year with Shoppers & Watson in Philadelphia where he not only learned more about laying different kinds of tile but also how tile was manufactured. After perfecting his skills Herman returned to Milwaukee in 1882 and worked for Matthews Brothers, the prominent interior architecture and furniture-making firm, until 1889. It is believed that Matthews Brothers worked on the Elizabeth Plankinton mansion and the John Lendrum Mitchell mansion Meadowmere during these years so Neidner would have gained significant experience in these two important commissions.

Neidner began his own business, Neidner and Durner, with Herbert F. Durner around 1892. City directories list their business as tile setters and floor and wall tile contractors. In 1900 the business was restructured as H. Neidner & Co. and city directories list mantels, grates and tiles as available. Over the years the business was located at a variety of locations from W. Wisconsin Avenue (1893) to the University Building on Broadway (1894) to Milwaukee Street (1896-1901) then E. Wells (Meinecke Building, 1902-1922). A biography in Watrous' Memoirs of Milwaukee County indicates that Neidner carried over 20,000 feet of tile, had 14 employees and was one of only 5 such businesses in Milwaukee at the time.[11] "Mr. Neidner fills contracts all over the state, and his artistic ability has become so well known that he is called upon to design and execute many fine and difficult pieces of work."[12]

Henry O. Neidner married Henrietta Wittig on November 2, 1884 and their family consisted of children Tillie (Mathilda) who worked as a stenographer in the family business, Lena (Magdalena) who worked as a stenographer at the Germania Building, Herbert who by 1909 worked as a manager of a fruit farm in Washington State, Urban a clerk and later tile setter, Theresa a clerk, Alma a telephone operator, Edmund a tile setter and later head of the family company, and William a machinist and later tile setter. There is a discrepancy between Watrous' account that lists the family with seven children and what appears in the city directories. Watrous mentions children Francis and Ollie who do not show up in the city directories but the directories show eight children without the two mentioned above.

The Neidners must have prized their property at the northeast corner of Burleigh and Palmer for its spacious character in what was developing into a densely built up neighborhood. On the whole, they made some changes to the property but kept the house in nearly original condition. On May 7, 1915 Herman Neidner took

[10] Deeds, vol. 444, p. 453 and vol. 547, p. 552 and vol. 567, p. 547.
[11] Jerome A. Watrous, ed. Memoirs of Milwaukee County (Madison: Western Historical Association, 1909), vol. 2, pp. 900-901.
[12] Ibid., p. 901.

out a permit to rebuild the front porch for $125. Fire insurance maps show that a full-length frame porch had once extended across the Burleigh Street façade. Neidner's new porch was built on a brick and concrete foundation and featured a terrace at the east end of the façade with a shed-roofed portion sheltering the front door. It was probably considered more "modern" at the time because of its tapered wood posts and brick piers that reflect the arts and crafts/bungalow style that was popular in the early twentieth century. Slight scarring in the brick on the façade shows where the roof of the original porch was once located. Surprisingly, the interior of the house, viewed on April 28, 2004, shows no evidence of Neidner's skill in tile work. There is no fireplace mantel and the floors
and the one bathroom viewed all lack evidence of tile or terrazzo work. Millwork around doors and windows in most of the first floor rooms appears to date from the 1920's although the room immediately west of the entrance has earlier window casings.

Neidner made improvements to one or more outbuildings on his property but there is a discrepancy between permits records and fire insurance maps as to their locations. The large lot to the rear, Lot 25, as mentioned earlier, was acquired by the Neidners in 1907. On June 12, 1907 Herman Neidner took out a permit to construct a 14 by 18 by 12-foot addition to a barn on that lot. The Sanborn Fire insurance map from 1894 updated to 1909, shows a one and a half story frame carriage barn but it is, however, located on Lot 23 to the east of the house instead of at the rear.[13] The 1907 permit may have had the location in error or perhaps the barn was moved from the rear to the side lot and then expanded. In July of 1912 Neidner had a gasoline tank installed, evidence of his owning an automobile. A permit was later taken out in on June 3' 1921 to modify an existing barn by erecting a brick foundation and using it for a garage and storage. The $270 project was completed by June 23rd per inspector's notes. The Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows a frame building for autos built at the east end of Lot 25 behind the house, with several one-story sheds attached.[14] It is not known if this barn/garage was accessed directly from the alley or from a drive coming off Burleigh. Again, it is not clear if this structure was inadvertently left off the earlier fire insurance map or if it represents the barn shown but moved from Lot 23 and altered.

By the late 1920's most of the Neidner children had left the premises and Henrietta disappears from the directories around 1930. Herman and his daughter Magdalena were the last two living at the house. By the 1930's Herman was in his 80's and his son Edmund was heading up the business. Around 1937 the company split into two entities. The Neidner Co. (later Neidner Tile) was run by one of the former officers, J .G. Schlitz, and remained at the 909/923 North Water Street address that had housed the company since 1923. Edmund Neidner headed up E.C. Neidner Tile & Terrazzo with offices out of his home at 3431 N. Frederick Street. The latter business continued through around 1941 while Neidner Tile Co. remained in business through 1960. The block on Water Street was later razed for urban renewal and today is the site of the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts. Joseph and Warren Schlitz later resumed the business as Neidner Schlitz Tile Company at 1740 W. Silver Spring Dr. in the early 1970's.

Herman Neidner deeded the property at 222 E. Burleigh to his daughter Magdalena in 1934 and died on July 20, 1948 just short of his 91st birthday.[15] Magdalena stayed on the premises until 1950 when she sold the house to Harry and Jean Gromacki.[16] Magdalena later lived at a variety of apartments including 4454 N. Cramer Street in Shorewood, 4514 N. Wilson Dr., 6917 W. Congress and lastly at 4142 N. 91st Street in the early 1970s.

THE GROMACKI FAMILY

New owner Harry Gromacki worked for the H. & G. Amusement Company and it was under his ownership that the most significant changes were made to the property. He remodeled a bathroom in the house in late 1951 and built a new 31.5 by 21 foot garage for $1200 on the site of the Neidner garage on Lot 25 in 1952. Sanborn maps show that the structure was also used for the repair of "music machines," perhaps jukeboxes. More plumbing fixtures were replaced in 1953. In 1963 the Gromacki's constructed a 30.8 by 26 foot two-story addition to the north west corner of the house at a cost of $5,000. The first floor was used as garage space while the second floor consisted of a den and dining room. This project was completed in June of 1957. The

[13] Sanborn Insurance Maps of Milwaukee, Wisconsin (New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Company, 1894), updated to 1909, vol. 4 p. 441.
[14] Sanborn Insurance Maps of Milwaukee, Wisconsin (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1910), updated to 1926, vol. 8, p. 896.
[15] Deeds, vol. 1255, p. 306 and vol. 1400, p. 615.
[16] Ibid., vol. 2816, p. 201.

addition was designed in a contemporary fashion and no attempt was made to match the scale, fenestration or materials of the original house. The Gromacki's subsequently enlarged the kitchen in 1957 with a one-story 24.7 by 6.6 foot addition which shows up as a appendage at the east side rear of the building. The house sustained fire damage to the floor joists flooring and framing around the chimney in 1960 but was repaired. In 1963 they converted the building into a duplex and were going to add a third living unit in 1964 but changed their minds.

MRS. WILLIE MAE SLATER

The Gromackis subsequently sold 222 E. Burleigh for $17,000 to Mrs. Willie Mae Slater on land contract on January 7, 1965 and then moved to Greenwood Road. Mrs. Slater investigated converting the residence into a nursing home before entering into the land contract but cancelled the permit. Mrs. Slater fulfilled the land contract in 1972.[17] During her ownership Willie Mae Slater added aluminum siding (1978) to the original rear frame addition and the upper portion of the 1956 Gromacki addition. She also demolished (1983) the now-condemned 32 by 20-foot garage/workshop built by the Gromacki's in 1952. There is also record of various electrical permits being taken out, including orders to remove old knob and tube wiring that was located in the attic.

The current owners indicate that there were ten bedrooms in the building when they acquired it in 1996. Permit records indicate that Mrs. Slater had operated a rooming house on the premises during the 1980's and maybe as early as the late 1970's so additional partition walls had been erected on the interior. Beginning in 1987, the Board of Zoning Appeals granted special use for the rooming house and reviewed the case every two to three years. Occupancy was for seven roomers and one family. A later occupancy permit in 1998 by the current owner referred to the premises as having been used as a half way house or residential facility. Willie Mae Slater eventually lost the house in tax foreclosure in 1995.[18]

DR. BRENDA NOACH-EWING

The current owner and nominator of the building is Dr. Brenda Noach-Ewing purchased 222 E. Burleigh from the City of Milwaukee on January 1, 1996 under the name Kingdom Worship Ministries.[19] Since owning the property, Dr. Noach-Ewing and her husband Charles Ewing have worked mostly on the interior of the house, removing extra partition walls to return rooms to their original size, remodeling the kitchen and bathroom and redecorating. They have recently replaced a number of the wood windows on the house, replaced the front door and given the exterior a fresh coat of paint.

SOURCES

City of Milwaukee Vital Statistics.

Illustrated Historical Atlas of Milwaukee County, Wisconsin. Chicago: H. Belden Co., 1876.

Milwaukee City Directories.

Milwaukee County Register of Deeds.

Olson, Frederick I. "City Expansion and Suburban Spread: Settlements and Governments in Milwaukee County." Trading Post to Metropolis, Milwaukee County's First 150 Years. Edited by Ralph M. Aderman. Oconomowoc, Wisconsin: Milwaukee County Historical Society, 1987.

Sanborn Insurance Maps of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Company and Sanborn Map Company, 1894, 1910.

Town of Lake Assessment Records.

[17] Ibid., reel 228, image 1561, and reel 240, image 2320, and reel 703, image 1163.
[18] Ibid., reel 3615, image 1010.
[19] Ibid., reel 3809, image 1142

Watrous, Jerome A., ed. Memoirs of Milwaukee County. Madison: Western Historical Association, 1909.

IX. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Friederick Kubbernuss House at 222 E. Burleigh Street be given historic designation as a City of Milwaukee Historic Structure as a result of its fulfillment of criteria e-1 e-5 and e-9 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 308-81(2)(e) of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances.

e-1. Its exemplification of the development of the cultural, economic, social or historic heritage of the City of Milwaukee, State of Wisconsin or of the United States.

Rationale: The Kubbernuss House is the oldest extant house documented in the Southeast Quarter of Section 8 Town 7 Range 22 and dates between 1857 and 1864. It is a rare survivor from the period when the surrounding area in the Town of Milwaukee was once a thriving agricultural region with numerous farmers and gardeners that supplied the growing metropolis of Milwaukee. It is an important cultural artifact that helps us interpret the lifestyle of a rural family that built a modest yet forward looking and stylish house out of locally manufactured cream color brick.

e-5. Its embodiment of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen.

Rationale: The Kubbernuss House is a good example and an early example of the Italianate Style applied to a modest farmhouse from the mid 19th century. Other farmhouses contemporary to the Kubbernuss House were still being built in the older Federal or Greek Revival style, such as the Isaac Leister House c. 1855 at 1142 W. Bradley Road (locally designated December 6, 1983). The scale of the Kubernuss House shows the transition away from the more cubic form of the Federal Style and Greek Revival toward the more vertically oriented structures of the mid-to-late 19th century. The façade displays the center gable commonly associated with the style as well as tall segmentally arched windows framed in brick on the front, east and west elevations. The name of the builder or mason is now lost to history but he evidently was familiar with the changing architectural scene in which the Italianate Style was to take center stage for the next two decades.

e-9. Its unique location as a singular physical characteristic which represents an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community or the city of Milwaukee.

Rationale: The Kubbernuss House stands out from the other houses in its neighborhood by virtue of its style and setting. Passersby often question whether the building was used as a clubhouse or for other public purposes given its siting. The deep and atypical setback from the street and the brick construction in a neighborhood of mostly frame buildings make the house a visual landmark in its neighborhood.

X. PRESERVATION GUIDELINES

The following preservation guidelines represent the principal 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.

Note: These preservation guidelines apply only to the historic Kubbernuss House and its original frame addition but not to the two-story addition built onto the rear in 1956. This latter addition does not follow the scale, fenestration or proportions of the historic building.

A. Roofs

Retain the gable roof shape. Skylights or dormers are discouraged but may be allowed if they are not visible from the street or public right of way. Avoid making changes to the roof shape which would alter the building height, roofline or pitch. If replacement is necessary, duplicate the appearance of the original roofing as closely as possible. No additions, penthouses, or projecting structures will be allowed to the roof

B. Materials

1. Masonry

a. Unpainted brick, terra cotta, or stone should not be painted or covered. Avoid painting or covering natural terra cotta or stone. 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. See the masonry chapter in As Good As New for an explanation on why the proper mortar mix is crucial in making lasting repairs that will not contribute to the deterioration of the masonry. Replaced mortar joints should be tooled to match the style of the original. The use of a mortar mix containing all Portland cement is prohibited since the hardness of the material will damage the brick.

c. The present building is constructed of Cream City Brick and has been painted. It may be repainted or cleaned to return the brick to its natural appearance. Clean masonry only when necessary to halt deterioration and with the gentlest method possible. Sandblasting, high pressure water blasting or the use of other abrasives (cocoa shells, walnut shells, glass beads, baking soda, etc.) is not allowed. 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 (size, scale, color) 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. The brick

moulds around the windows and doors and original soffit material are crucial in dating the house and are to be retained.

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 new materials that do not duplicate the appearance of the original materials. Covering wood trim with aluminum or vinyl is not permitted.

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. Use storm windows or protective glazing which have glazing configurations similar to the prime windows and which obscure the prime windows as little as possible. Two rectangular window openings have been substituted for a central segmental window opening on the second story of the west façade. These windows may remain but restoration of the original window would also be permissible.

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 and material of the original window sash or door. Avoid using inappropriate sash and door replacements. Avoid the filling-in or covering of openings with inappropriate materials such as glass block or concrete block. Avoid using modern style window units, such as horizontal sliding sash or casements, in place of double-hung sash or the substitution of units with glazing configurations not appropriate to the style of the building. Vinyl or metal clad prime window units are not permitted. Glass block basement windows are not permitted, except on elevations where they will not be visible from the street. At the current time the owners have just replaced early or original windows with nine-over-nine sash that have applied muntins. A return to a more historic muntin pattern (four-over-four or two-over-four) would be allowed in the future. There are existing storm windows that reflect the early glazing pattern of the windows. They should be retained to use as templates for future window restoration. A new metal front door has recently been installed. Any future replacement can be based on examples in As Good As New and Living With History.

3. Steel bar security doors and window guards are generally not allowed. If permitted, the doors or grates shall be of the simplest design and installed so as to be as unobtrusive as possible.

D. Trim and Ornamentation

There should be no changes to the existing trim or ornamentation except as necessary to restore the building to its original condition. Replacement features shall match the original member in scale, design, color and appearance.

E. Additions

No additions will be permitted on the south (front), elevation as this would destroy the character of the building. Any other addition requires the approval of the Commission. Ideally an addition should either compliment or have a neutral effect upon the historic character of the building. The commission will review the compatibility of the addition with the historic house and consider the following details: window size and placement, scale, design, materials, roof configuration,

height and the degree to which the addition impacts the principal elevations of the house.

F. Signs/Exterior Lighting

The installation of any permanent exterior sign or light fixture shall require the approval of the Commission. Approval will be based on the compatibility of the proposed sign or light with the historic and architectural character of the building. Plastic internally illuminated box signs are not permitted.

G. Site Features

New plant materials, paving, fencing, entry posts and gates, landscape lighting or accessory structures such as garden sheds shall be compatible with the historic architectural character of the building.

H. Guidelines for New Construction

It is important that new construction be designed to be as sympathetic as possible with the character of the structure.

1. Siting

New construction must respect the historic siting of the building. It should be accomplished so as to maintain the appearance of the building from the street as a freestanding structure.

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 close proximity to a historic building must be compatible to and sympathetic with the design of the commercial building.

3. Form

The massing of the new construction must be compatible with the goal of maintaining the integrity of the house as a distinct, freestanding structure. The profiles of roofs and building elements that project and receded from the main block should express the same continuity established by the historic building if they are in close proximity to it.

4. Materials

The building materials which are visible from the public right-of-way and in close proximity to the house should be consistent with the colors, textures, proportions, and combinations of cladding materials used on the building. 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 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, 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 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

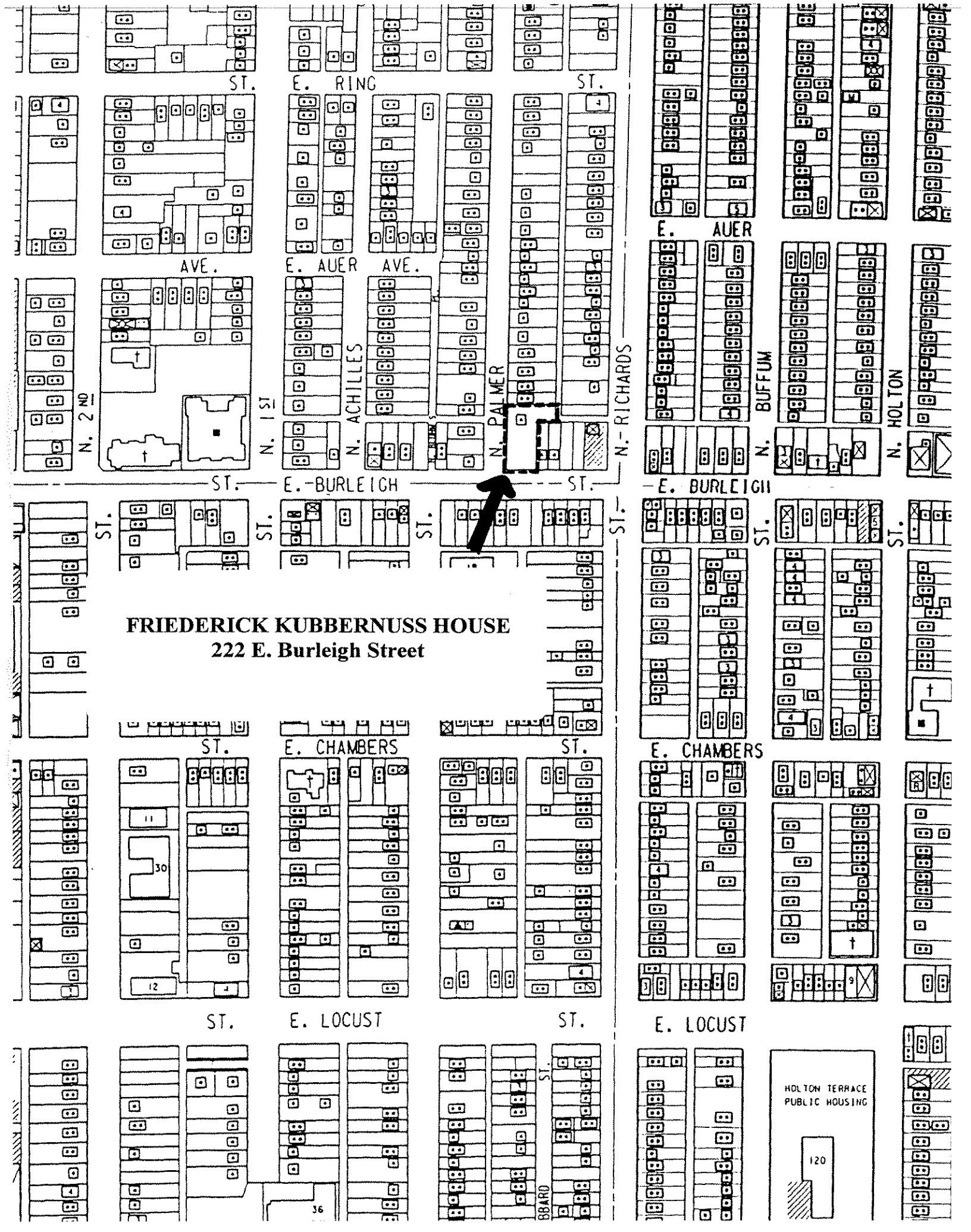
   Consideration will be given to whether or not the building contributes to the neighborhood and the general street appearance and has a positive effect on other buildings in the area.

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.


FRIEDERICK KUBBERNUSS HOUSE
222 E. Burleigh Street
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E. RING
ST.
AVE.
E. AUER
AVE.
E. AUER
N. 2ND
N. 1ST
N. ACHILLES
N. PALMER
N. RICHARDS
N. BUFFUM
N. HOLTON
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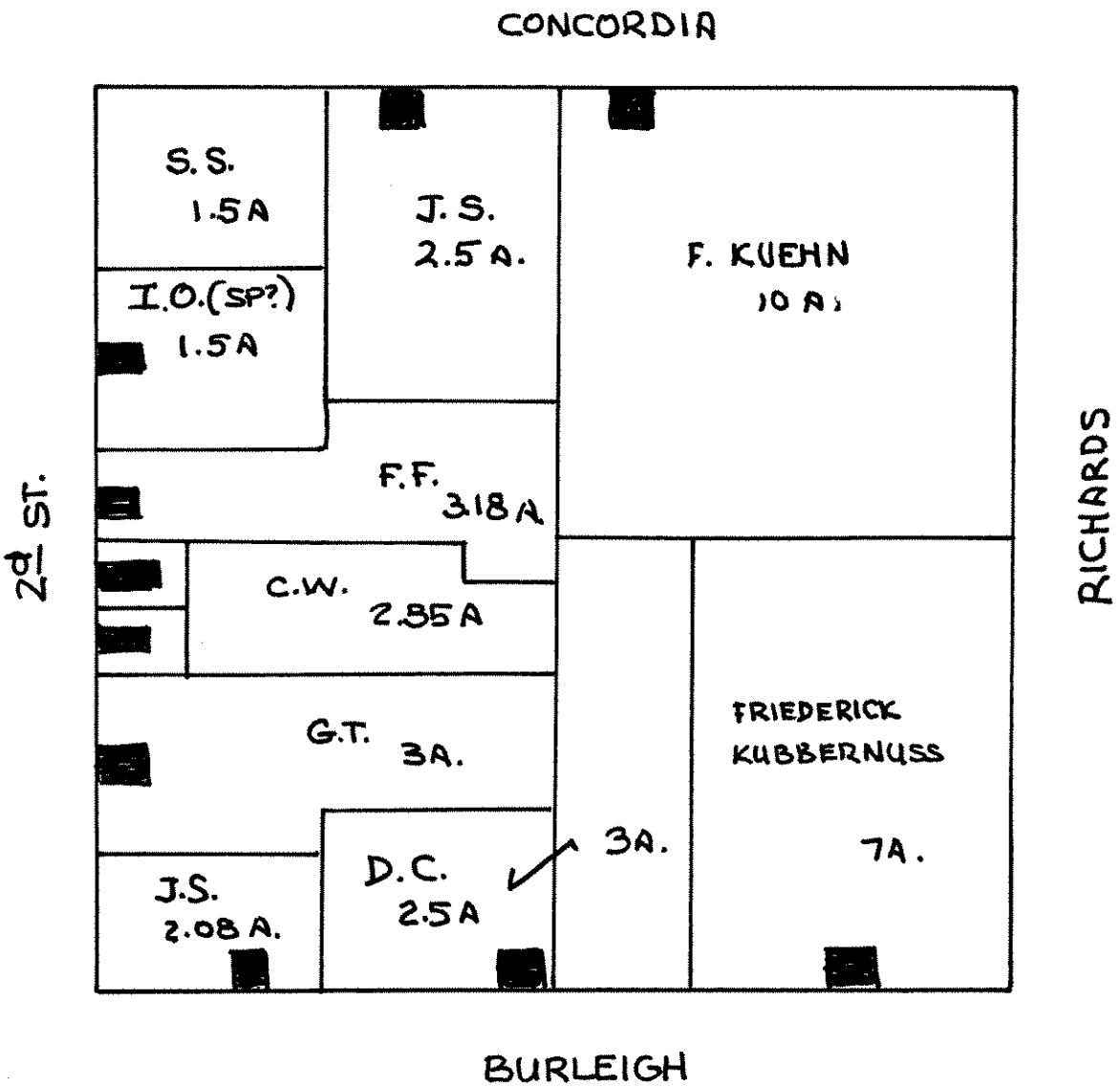
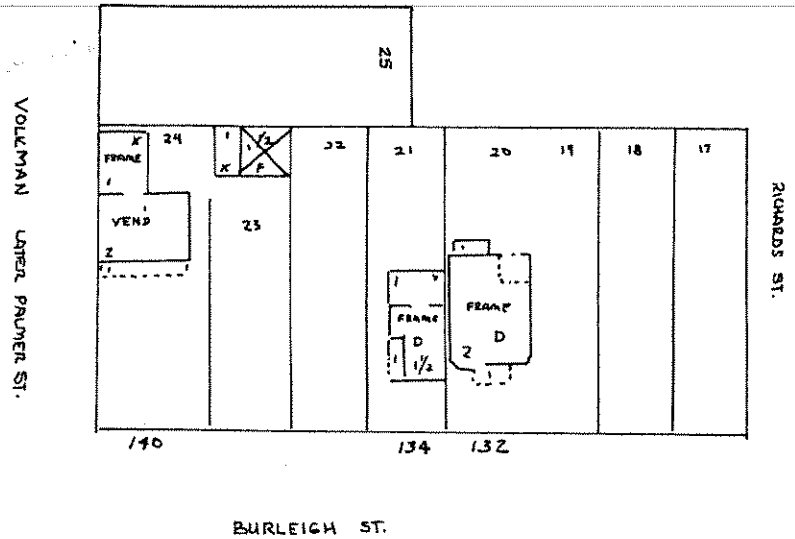
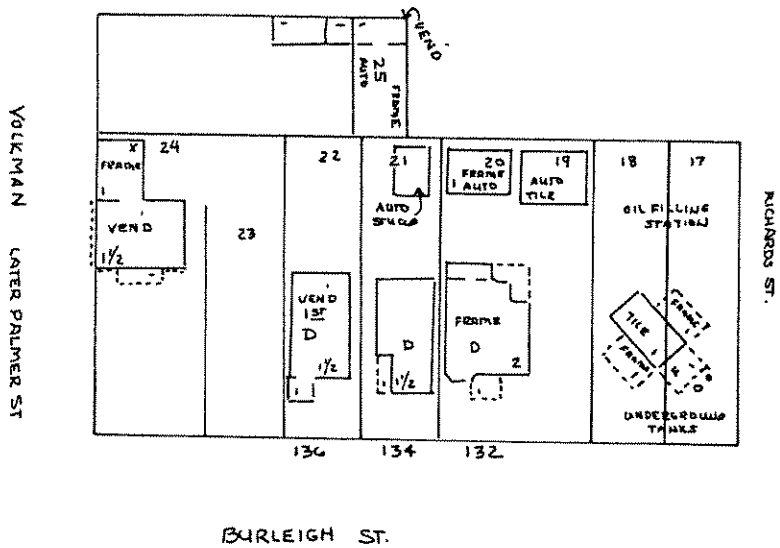


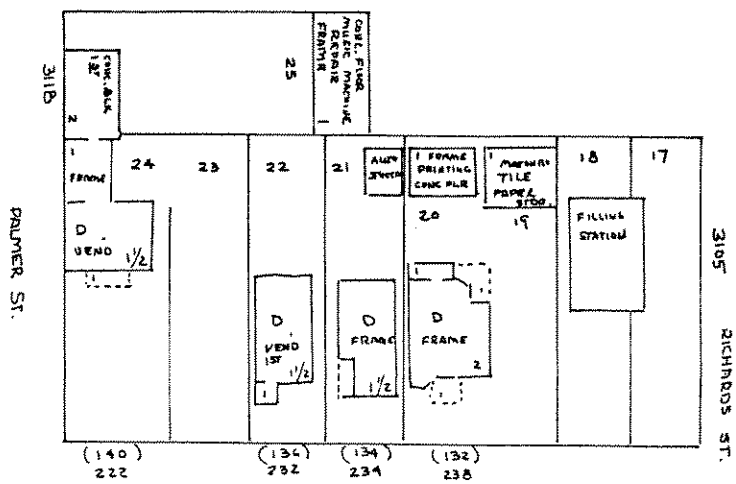
Illustrated Historical Atlas
of
Milwaukee County Wisconsin
1876
Southeast portion of Southeast Quarter
Section 8 Town 7 Range 22 East



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map
1894–1909



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map
1910-1926



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map
1910-1958