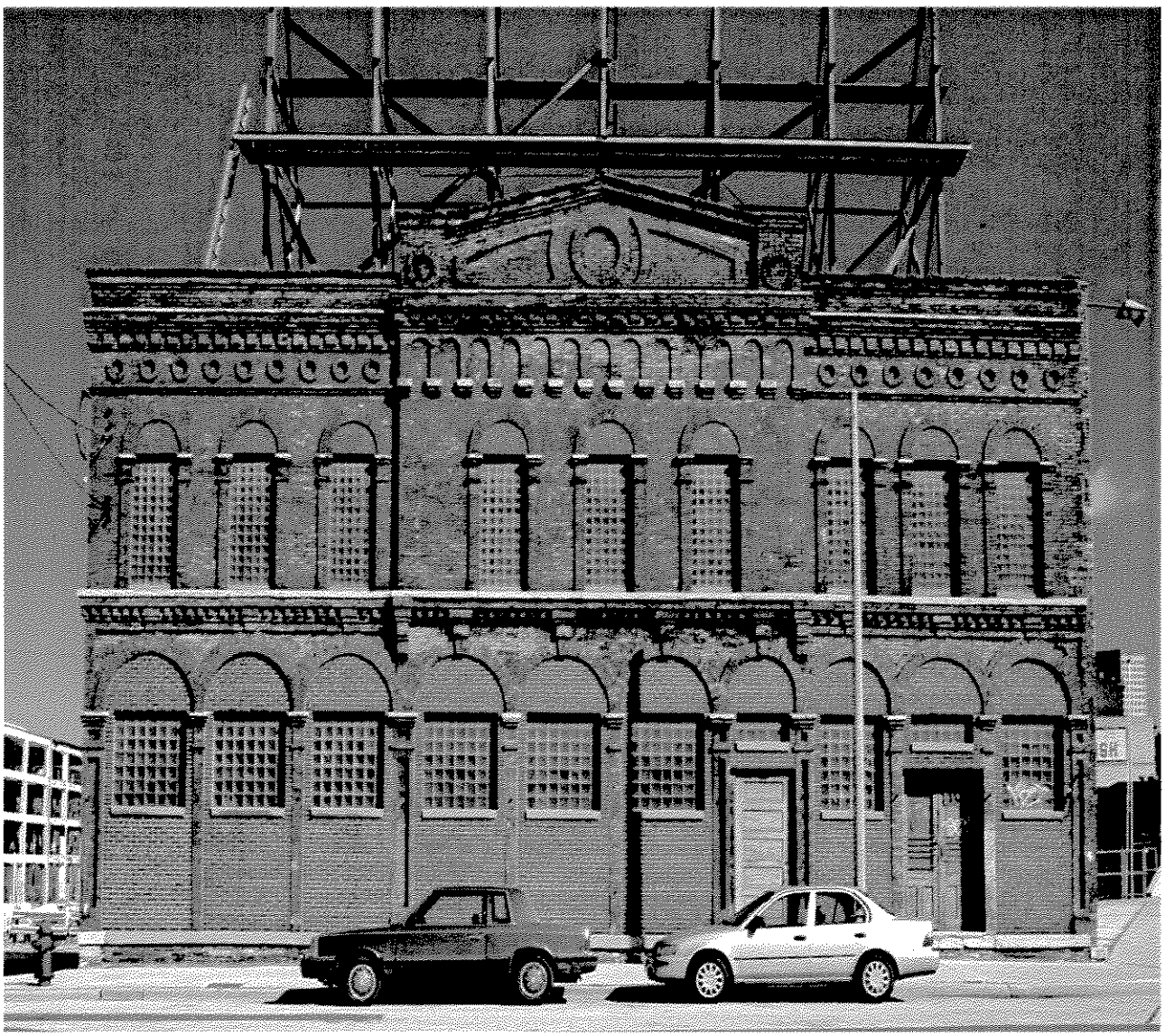
PERMANENT HISTORIC DESIGNATION
STUDY REPORT



J.L. BURNHAM BUILDING
100 E. SEEBOTH STREET
MAY, 2004

FINAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT

I. NAME

Historic: J. L. Burnham Building

Common Name: 100 East Seeboth

II. LOCATION

100-106 E. Seeboth Street
Milwaukee, WI 53204

Legal Description

Walker's Point in NE ¼ SEC 32-7-22
Block 2 Lot 2 & that part of Lot 1 COM W LI & 47.08' N of SW COR SD Lot 1
TH N 29 DEG 35 MIN 30 SEC E 108.73' to N LI SD Lot 1
TH W 53.75' To NW COR SD Lot 1
TH S 94.92' to BEG INCL RIPARIAN RIGHTS

Tax Key No.:

428-0210-100

12th Aldermanic District
Alderman James Witkowiak

III. CLASSIFICATION

Building

IV. OWNER

100 E. Seeboth LLC

NOMINATOR

Doug Quigley

V. YEAR BUILT

1871[1] (Deeds vol.123 p. 122, vol.122 p.373; Milwaukee Sentinel, November 3, 1871 4/1)

ARCHITECT

Unknown

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[1] Milwaukee County Register of Deeds, vol.123, p. 122; Milwaukee Sentinel, November 3, 1871, p. 4, col. 1

VI. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The J.L. Burnham Building is located in the southern part of the Central Business District, just south of the Historic Third Ward and adjacent to the Water Street Bridge. Historically this area was known as Walker's Point or the Fifth Ward. Burnham's two-story, flat roofed, solid masonry structure was built in 1871 and designed in the Italianate style. It is one of two structures on the property that share a common wall. The J.L. Burnham Building is located at the south end of the lot fronting E. Seeboth Street. At the north end of the lot and fronting S. First Place is the Hans Lochen & Son garage and warehouse, built in 1953. Both buildings together occupy almost all of the lot and there are no setbacks on the south and west for landscaping. There is a narrow strip of land along the rear or north wall of the property which serves as a small marina for boats. To the east is a small wedge of land bordering the approach to the Water Street bridge. It is used for parking.

The surrounding neighborhood to the west consists of nineteenth and early twentieth century masonry commercial buildings in the Italianate, Queen Anne or vernacular styles. In recognition of their importance as the original commercial district of Walker's Point and because of their architectural significance, the area was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 30, 1987. The neighborhood to the east consists mostly of early twentieth century factory or warehouse buildings. Existing buildings are being converted to condominiums and a new condominium development occupies the riverbank on the east side of the Water Street Bridge. The block in which the J.L. Burnham Building is located was once occupied by three structures and conformed to the standard rectangular shape. In 1950 the city altered the approach to the Water Street Bridge and removed most of a block along South First Street and clipped off the east end of the block in which the Burnham Building sits. The two easternmost buildings were razed and now the Burnham Block, along with the Hans Lochen & Son garage, are the only buildings in the block bordered by South First Place, East Seeboth Street, the Milwaukee River and Ferry Street/South First Street.

The J.L. Burnham Building is a classic and irreplaceable example of a now rare Italianate form of commercial building. Italianate buildings, popular in Milwaukee from the 1850s through the mid-1880s are characterized by their flat, rectangular and generally simple wall surfaces whose window and door openings and cornices receive the majority of embellishment. The facades tend to be symmetrical with emphasis placed on the center bay by way of a projecting pavilion, prominent corbelling and pediment. Windows and doors are set into rounded openings framed by lavish brick or sheet metal surrounds, quite a departure from the earlier Federal Style that featured flat, rectangular and generally unadorned openings. Italianate commercial buildings were most often built with rectangular storefronts but could also feature an arcaded storefront where one or more doors were set into the arched openings, allowing for an opening up of the façade to showcase goods and merchandise. This latter type often did not survive as most were remodeled to allow for the installation of the large plate glass windows that, once technologically possible, were popular among retailers.

The J.L. Burnham Building is a remarkable and rare local survivor of the latter doorfront style of Italianate commercial building. The main façade fronts south onto Seeboth Street and is the most articulated. Framework for a large billboard still sits atop the roof but there is no signage at the present time. The west elevation continues the same architectural features but has sustained alterations. The east elevation is a blank cream brick, former party wall that is partially covered by a billboard sign. Two additional billboard signs are located on the rooftop. The north elevation is blank and originally abutted a grain warehouse, then freight warehouse. Those earlier structures were replaced by the one-story Hans Lochen & Son garage and warehouse referred to above.

In the tradition of the Italianate style, the J.L. Burnham Building's main façade consists of flat planar walls with window and door openings set into projecting arches and detailed with pilasters and keystones. The first and second stories are delineated from each other by a change in the scale of the openings and by a prominent brick cornice with corbelled dentils. A similar cornice crowns the top of the building and is further enriched with a frieze of rondels and topped by a simple parapet wall and pediment.

The Seeboth façade is divided into three bays. Each bay features three arched openings per story, larger on the first and narrower on the second story. The east bay is slightly narrower than the other two. Historic photos indicate that entry doors were located in the center opening of each bay on the first story. The symmetry is altered slightly in the center bay by the addition of a fourth opening. Fire insurance maps indicate that it was used to access the upper floor. Characteristic of the Italianate commercial building is the prominence given to the center bay. It projects out slightly from the main block of the building and is crowned with a boxy pediment and embellished by arcuated corbelling at the cornice.

The west elevation like the main façade is divided into three bays with the centermost bay emphasized by its projection from the façade and its use of arcuated corbelling at the cornice line. Historic photos show that a triangular pediment once crowned this bay. Historic photos also show that three large door-like openings were located in the center bay on the first story and three tall, narrow four-over-four sash windows were located on the second. The south end bay featured a single arched opening on the second story and a single large opening on the first. Fire insurance maps indicate that there was a wooden exterior staircase here and its location can still be seen from faint markings on the wall. The north end bay had three arched openings of unequal size on the second story and one large opening on the first. The main façade's beltcourse that divides the first and second stories wraps around the building to this west elevation but does not continue beyond the south bay. This is most likely due to the landing needed for the staircase mentioned above.

There have been alterations to the building but most changes are reversible. On the main façade the arched window and door openings have been filled in with brick and glass block. Both surviving entrances have been modified. The center of the easternmost bay features a double leaf door with 1880s era hardware and it appears to be the same door shown in a 1938 photo of the building. A five-panel door is set into the narrow opening of the centermost bay and is of early vintage if not original to the building. Remarkably, all the intricate brick corbelling, cornice, pediment and stone sills and impost blocks survive, a testament to the fine masonry work and skilled craftsmen of the era.

On the west elevation the ground floor arched openings have all been bricked up. Two of the arched openings in the center bay have been replaced with a large wooden double leaf service door with a pulley for loading and unloading freight. Permit records show that this alteration took place in 1938 under the ownership of Hans Lochen & Son. Noticeably absent in this center bay is the pediment that once crowned the center bay. There are no permit records to document its removal. The north bay of this west façade shows that the three arched openings of the second story have been bricked in and that a small rectangular door has been cut into one of them. The same thing happened to the large arched opening on the first story of this bay. Again, no permit records document the alterations to the openings. Historic photos from 1938 and 1950 show the building intact, however, so we know that the alterations date from sometime after 1950.

VII. SIGNIFICANCE

The J. L. Burnham Building is significant as Milwaukee's best-preserved example of an early Italianate style commercial building. Its remarkable masonry work is a testament to its brickmaker owner and the tradesmen who built it and displays exceptionally fine detail in its pilasters, corbelling and cornice. The pressed cream brick was an expensive material in its day, costlier than common brick. In the hands of master craftsmen here, the cream brick achieved a plasticity that almost contradicts the hard-edged material. The round arches, arcuated frieze, panel effects in the pediment and delicate rondels appear to have been carved from stone rather than built of brick. Such details were difficult to achieve in their day and would be so today. This form of Italianate would vanish in the wake of sheet metal ornament that was easier to install.

The J.L. Burnham Building is also remarkable as one of only three known surviving Milwaukee examples of the arcaded storefront, a type that was supplanted by the more common rectangular storefront that had large plate glass windows. The ability of opening up the ground floor through a series of doorfronts is a feature that is experiencing a local revival now among restaurateurs and it is important that we preserve the J.L. Burnham Building as a reference for new construction. Although Italianate commercial buildings survive in limited numbers in Milwaukee, there are no other examples of the early Italianate type that is represented by the J.L. Burnham Building and few that have remained as intact.

The J.L. Burnham Block is also significant as a pivotal building within the South First and Second Streets National Register Historic District. Its location anchors the northeast portion of the district and is a visual tie to the Historic Third Ward. Likewise it is the oldest known all cream brick commercial building to survive along the downtown waterways and helps to tangibly preserve the character of an era when shipping and maritime activities were once a significant part of the city's economy.

VIII. HISTORY

Overview

The Burnham Block was one of a series of fine brick commercial buildings that began to fill in the lots adjacent to the Milwaukee River in what was then the heart of Walker's Point. One of the city's original three settlements, Walker's Point received its name because it was a narrow finger or ridge of land that rose above the marshy flats south of the confluence of the Milwaukee and Menomonee Rivers. It was here that George Walker had built his cabin and warehouse and gave his settlement its name. Walker's Point did not establish itself as quickly as the settlement started by Solomon Juneau, on the east bank of the Milwaukee River, or Byron Kilbourn's settlement on the west bank of the Milwaukee River. The significant expanse of swampland surrounding the point and a problem registering the Walker's Point Plat created problems in attracting permanent residents and businesses to the area. In the 1846 Census Juneau's and Kilbourn's settlements accounted for 90% of Milwaukee's population and all but 2% of the businesses and industries, implying that Walker's Point had experienced little growth or commercial development. (South First and Second Streets NR Nomination, Section 8, Page 4)

Public infrastructure was to eventually give Walker's Point a boost. Among the earliest of the public improvements to be constructed was the bridge that connected today's North Plankinton Avenue and South Second Street. It was built in 1838 by Byron Kilbourn but actually did little to settle people in Walker's Point since its main objective was to funnel immigrants from the Chicago Road into Kilbourntown. It did serve to give the area visibility, however. In the mid-1840's a wooden swing bridge was constructed between the Point and bustling Water Street in the Third Ward and further

served to stimulate efforts at resolving land claim issues and promoting such infrastructure improvements as filling in marsh lands.

The 1850s saw Walker's Point come into its own as platting was completed, title to the land was cleared and a number of railway companies terminated their tracks in the district. The Green Bay Milwaukee & Chicago Railway ended its tracks at the southeast corner of Florida and Barclay Streets in 1851 and the predecessor to the Chicago & North Western Railway set up a temporary depot on Florida Street before 1854. These early rail lines eventually extended their tracks northward as the swamplands were filled in during the remainder of the decade. These lines brought with them the necessity of loading and unloading goods and the activity soon generated the beginnings of a commercial district. It has been said that the village at Walker's Point might never have developed had it not been for the rail lines. Within a relatively short time period South Ferry Street (at the bridge) and South First Street were built up and development extended west to Second Street and south to Florida Street. Lithographs and maps indicate numerous frame and brick buildings mostly in vernacular, Federal Style or Greek Revival design. Grain warehouses were constructed along the riverbanks and were among the largest and most expensive building type in the pre-Civil War era.

One of the most significant events to influence development was the construction of the Chicago Milwaukee & St. Paul (later known as the Milwaukee Road) depot at the north end of South Second Street in 1866. Because of its location and the fact that the Chicago Milwaukee & St. Paul did not have a line completed to Chicago, the Chicago & North Western Railway joined its tracks to the depot and the station came to be called Union Depot.

To quote from the South First and Second Streets National Register nomination:

> *Union Depot was Milwaukee's first major train station. It was a long, two-story frame structure of utilitarian design that extended along the west side of South Second Street for a block-and-a-half from Seeboth Street. [The 100 block of South Second Street today]. Located in the heart of the original Walker's Point business district, it made the fledgling community an important commercial center. Union Depot served as Milwaukee's primary rail center until 1872 when the Chicago Milwaukee & St. Paul established its own line to Chicago and the rival Chicago & Northwestern [sic] was forced to move out of the depot and build its own station at the end of East Wisconsin Avenue on the lakefront. (South First and Second Streets National Register Nomination Item 8 Page 6)*
>
> *The railroads significantly encouraged commercial activity in Walker's Point and the business district around the station grew in response to the increased traffic. Buildings were built not only to accommodate the production and storage of goods to be shipped by rail, but a substantial retail and service sector evolved to meet the day to day needs of the immediate neighborhood. By the end of the 1850s there was a solid commercial fabric of mixed business uses along First and Second Streets, and on the cross streets as far south as Florida Street. The business district housed four primary activities: retail, service, light manufacturing and processing. The retail was by far the largest and there were shops that sold clothing, shoes, millinery, dry goods, hardware, jewelry, groceries and liquor. With the railroads came traveling salesmen and other travelers in need of temporary food and lodging. To meet their needs, service businesses such as hotels, barber shop[s], saloons and restaurants were established. Also located in the area were a significant number of artisans and craftsmen who operated small metal products businesses including brass and iron foundries, a bell foundry and numerous tinmakers and*

sheet metal goods makers. The iron foundries were among the first to be established in the city. The agricultural products processors were engaged in tanning, meat packing, brewing, liquor distilling and cigar making. (South First and Second Streets National Register Nomination Item number 8 Pages 6-7)

It was during the Civil War that economic growth led to the expansion and rebuilding of Milwaukee's business districts. The vernacular frame structures that marked the pioneer era were substantially replaced with larger, taller, masonry buildings having high style architectural features. Some of this transformation was the result of new building codes that required more fireproof structures in the wake of numerous fires that caused financial loss and business disruption. Some of this transformation was the result of business owners needing additional space and also wanting to express their prosperity. Examples of business owners in the Walker's Point commercial district include meat packer Robert Kretschmar (157-159 South First Street), grocer Francis Holzinger (149-153 South First Street), liquor rectifier Emil Schneider (131 South First Street, Brass Light Gallery today), and hardware merchants Maschauer and Frankfurth (213-219 South Second Street). These businesses were established before the Civil War and their original modest store buildings were replaced with the present three-story Italianate structures. (South First and Second Streets National Register Nomination Item number 8 Page 7) Investment properties were also built in the district, a sure sign of a good business climate. The prominent four-story Italianate building at 170 South Second Street is an example of one of these new investment properties. Financed by J.L.'s brickmaker brother, George Burnham, the fine structure featured cast iron pilasters and a prominent cornice and received a lot of attention in the press when it was built in 1873. Its first tenant was the hardware firm of John Nazro & Co. and a later occupant was the Edward Ascherman cigar works. The papers commended the building's design and made much of the fact that the land had been a swampy wasteland just a few short years earlier.

After the Chicago and North Western relocated to the east end of Wisconsin Avenue in the 1870s, the character of the district began to change, an evolution that accelerated after the Chicago Milwaukee & St. Paul relocated its depot to the Fourth Ward south of today's Zeidler Park in the mid-1880's. Walker's Point retail shifted to South Fifth and South Sixth Streets along National Avenue. The original district became home to more light manufacturers, wholesalers and warehousing. Ever larger buildings went up to accommodate warehouse functions such as the Milwaukee Cold Storage Co. (1892, 100 South Second Street) and the Lindsay Bros. Agricultural Implements Building (1892, 126 South Second Street). Warehousing and light manufacturing have characterized the area through most of the twentieth century. In recent years taverns and nightclubs have moved into the neighborhood and the success of the neighboring Historic Third Ward has led to interest in condo conversions and other businesses.

J. L. Burnham and the Burnham Building

It was in the prosperous early 1870's that the J.L. Burnham Block was constructed at today's 100 E. Seeboth Street. The location was an advantageous one. The building replaced part of an 1850's warehouse/grain elevator built by Daniel Newhall that was known by a variety of names including the Newhall Badger Warehouse. The 120-foot by 50-foot brick structure was four stories high and boasted three hoppers [some sources say four elevators] and scales for loading vessels. It was said to be capable of housing 160,000 bushels of wheat above the first story. (Milwaukee Sentinel 1854 March 10 2/8, March 11 2/5, April 19 2/5, August 26 2/6, October 11 2/6) Its exact appearance is not known at this time but it had sustained a number of fires over the years and rebuilding or repairs may have altered its original appearance.

The Milwaukee Sentinel reported on October 13, 1870 that the warehouse would be demolished for new stores. One of these buildings, the subject of this nomination, would be erected by J.L.

Burnham, and the other by D.G. Rogers. (Milwaukee Sentinel October 13, 1870 4/1) The location was a good one. Anchoring the east end of the block and sitting right next to the bridge was the famous Axtell House. William Axtell had built the four story brick Italianate style building in 1860 to house stores and offices. The upper floors were remodeled into a hotel in 1872, probably due to business generated by the new Union Depot a block away. The business flourished until 1890. It was said to have been popular with traveling salesmen. (Milwaukee Sentinel November 14, 1872 4/1, Unidentified Clipping Milwaukee County Historical Society May 25, 1950) In the twentieth century the building housed a men's clothing factory and retail store.

The history of the J.L. Burnham Building is closely linked to the life of Jonathan L. Burnham. J.L. and his brother George pioneered brick manufacturing in Milwaukee and by the 1870's had established their own separate businesses. In addition to supplying brick for most of the early masonry buildings in the city they also built commercial blocks like the one at 100 E. Seeboth for personal investments. There are a number of references in the Sentinel Index that indicate the two constructed business blocks or factories throughout the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s in addition to paving streets and building sewers and buying up real estate. J.L. in particular is associated with the construction of the J.L. Burnham Block on National Avenue, a brick block on Third Street and another on today's South Second Street. Other business ventures included the purchase of schooners and scows and interests in a livery business. Various members of the family also held seats in the State Legislature or on the local school board or served as officers of local clubs and delegates to political conventions.

Jonathan L. Burnham's history below and information about brick making is taken from the National Register Nomination for the J.L. Burnham Block 97-911 West National Avenue:

> *Burnham was born in Plattsburgh, New York on March 13, 1818. (Conard vol II p. 324) His only brother, George, was 2 years older and their father, Andrus, was a brick maker. Burnham had a limited formal education because he quit the public school in Plattsburgh at the age of 14 in 1832 to work for 3 years as a cook on an Erie Canal flatboat. At about the same time, his brother George also quit school to work in the brickmaking trade. It is not known what Burnham did after working on the canal boats, but his family eventually moved to Buffalo and his brother George worked there as a brickmaker. It is possible that J.L. Burnham also worked in the brickmaking trade. In July of 1843 the Burnham brothers left Buffalo to settle in Milwaukee. Their parents also left Buffalo and settled on a farm near Waupun, Wisconsin.*
>
> *Upon his arrival in Milwaukee, J.L. Burnham bought an 80-acre parcel of land in the city and started a taxi service with a team of horses and a wagon. He chauffeured passengers from ships and boats on the lakefront to settlement sites inland. In the spring of 1844, Burnham and his brother began making bricks on land leased from James H. Rogers, another brickmaker, in the Menomonee River Valley near North 18th Street. (Flower 1881 History p. 1507) The Burnhams reportedly lost $1,000 their first year in operation, but their business grew steadily after that and in 1848 they purchased their own land in the Menomonee Valley near South 12th and West Bruce Streets.*
>
> *Milwaukee's first brickyard had begun operating in 1835 or 1836. Nelson,[sic] Olin, one of the city's early settlers, claimed in 1895 that he had established a brickyard in 1835, but another reliable reference credits Benoni W. Finch with opening the first brickyard in 1836 at the foot of North 14th Street. (Zimmermann) In the early years, the plentiful and inexpensive wood available for building lessened the demand for brick. In 1840 the total expenditure for brick in Milwaukee was a mere $500. (Zimmerman) The yellow color of the brick also might have hindered its early*

acceptance by settlers accustomed to red brick. The first brickmakers actually expected red brick to result from firing the red-brown Milwaukee clay, but an unusually high content of calcium and magnesium in the clay gave the brick a unique soft yellow color instead. (Zimmermann) The cream brick, as it was soon known, grew in popularity in Milwaukee and in other cities and the increased demand brought a flood of new brickmakers to the business.

The earliest brickmaking process in Milwaukee was crude and required considerable hand work. Horses turned a large wheel in the circular pit that mixed and tempered clay and sand. Then the pliable mixture was packed by hand into molds so that it could be fired in kilns for a period of a week or more. J.L. Burnham, his brother George, and one of their employees identified only as Mr. Martin, revolutionized the brickmaking process by inventing the first operable brickmaking machine in the U.S. that tempered the clay and packed it into molds. (Conard p. 324) The machine was patented by Martin and Burnham. The brickmaking apparatus allowed the Burnhams to make their product faster and cheaper than their competitors enabling a greater number of people to purchase a product that previously had only been affordable by the more affluent.

The Burnhams had their machine manufactured and they sold them for $1,000 each, reportedly earning a large profit. Other brickmakers later patented different machines.

Clay deposits throughout the Milwaukee area produced cream brick, but the clay could be removed easiest from the steep banks of the Menomonee River Valley where the Burnham's yard was located. The brickmakers used a strip mine technique to remove clay from the banks, and, as a result, the valley was widened considerably. Generally top soil was removed to a depth of about three or four feet. The stratum of clay consisted of an upper, reddish-colored layer and lower grayish blue layer. In some areas the usable clay layer was as deep as forty feet.

The clay was usually blended in a proportion of one blue to four red. The brick were classified in two categories: common and pressed. The pressed brick were the most expensive, selling for about $12.00 per thousand in 1853 from the Burnham yards, while the common brick sold for half that amount. (Milwaukee Sentinel September 28, 1853) The pressed brick were molded under pressure and after firing they were uniform in size and color and had very smooth faces and sharp square corners. The common brick were not subject to great pressure before firing and they were very porous, had blunt corners and their sizes and colors tended to vary.

The Burnham brickyard soon became Milwaukee's largest. In 1853 they manufactured six million brick, two million of which was exported to Chicago and Michigan. (Milwaukee Sentinel September 28, 1853) In 1865 the Burnham brothers ended their partnership by what was described as "mutual consent." (Conard p. 324) They divided the valley site and each continued on his own. J.L. Burnham eventually brought his sons into the business and the name of the firm became J.L. Burnham and Sons, Brickmakers. They made brick at scattered sites throughout the valley and by the early 1890's the firm made about ten million brick annually and their plant and equipment was valued at approximately $1.2 million. J.L. Burnham's brickyard was smaller than his brother's. According to 1881 statistics, George Burnham employed 200 men and produced fifteen million brick annually. (Flower 1881 History p. 1507) J.L. Burnham employed only about 100 men and his yard consisted of about 150 acres.

Brickmaking was not the only business that helped to make J.L. Burnham a very wealthy man. The foundations of his real estate empire were the 80 acres he bought in 1843 for $400 which eventually increased in value to about $10,000 per acre. His real estate holdings, largely concentrated on the south side, were among the most extensive of any Milwaukeean of his day. He developed a number of his lots with commercial buildings constructed of brick from his yard, including the Burnham Block at 907-911 West National Avenue. Burnham is also said to have sold vacant land to industrial and commercial buyers with the understanding that they build on them with material from his brickyard, thus profiting both from real estate speculation and brick sales. Burnham's diverse business interests did not end with real estate speculation and brickmaking, because the 1865 city directory also listed his occupation as produce merchant. (National Register Nomination Section 8 page 3)

The brickyards that he and his brother started continued to be operated by their descendants. In 1905, there were two Burnham brick companies listed in the city directory: "Burnham Brick and Supply," operated by John F. Burnham and "Burnham Brothers, Brick Manufacturers," operated by John Q. Burnham. In 1909 John F. became the president of both companies and in 1910 he apparently merged or reduced them into one company, called "Burnham Brothers Brick Company." The firm disappeared from the city directory after 1929. (National Register Nomination Section 8 page 4)

Burnham's ties to the business community were strong due to his numerous ventures and he was also well-respected among his peers During the bank riot of 1861 hundreds of disgruntled laborers who had been paid in worthless bank notes stormed Alexander Mitchell's bank. Mitchell avoided disaster by packing up all of the deposits and securities and giving them to J.L. Burnham for safekeeping. Burnham took the bank's assets onto a Lake Michigan steamer and returned with the valuables when the panic had subsided. (Conard p. 325)

J.L. Burnham was in his early 50s when he purchased the property at today's 100 E. Seeboth Street from Daniel Newhall for $12,000 on August 5, 1871. (Deeds vol. 123 p. 122) Newhall had acquired the property in 1853 for $10,000 and built a grain warehouse on the site which he leased to Edward L. Button. (Deeds vol.52 p. 190) The property was subsequently sold to Isaac Tenny Branch (Burnham's father or brother-in-law) on April 25, 1856. Edward D. Holton acquired the premises on September 8, 1857 which included the "warehouse thereon and all the fixtures of machinery therein." (Deeds vol. 52 p. 190 and vol. 59 p. 168)

Holton lost the property and a sheriff's sale was held on May 7, 1862 with John H. Van Dyke purchasing the property for a mere $8,000. Two years later Van Dyke sold the property back to Newhall's wife on October 13, 1864. Daniel Newhall's financial footing was precarious at best and the Sentinel Index follows the highs and lows of his career for several decades. Following reports of fire damage in August of 1869, the Milwaukee Sentinel reported in October of 1870 that the warehouse would be razed for commercial buildings. By the time J.L Burnham entered the scene ten months later, a lease had been entered into between the seller and James Ryan, giving the latter use of the warehouse from June 1, 1871 through June 1, 1876. Whether this lease was terminated by Burnham is not recorded in the deeds but it is evident that Newhall's warehouse/grain elevator remained on the site after the sale. (Deeds vol. 123 p. 122)

Burnham's intention to quickly construct a building on his property is evident in the agreement drafted on October 23, 1871 between himself and the property owner to the east, D.G. Rogers. The agreement spells out that Burnham owned all of Lot 2 on the block and Rogers owned the west 1/3rd

of Lot 1 and that the two properties adjoin and the owners were about to build brick buildings on their parcels. It was mutually agreed that the 'partition' wall (party wall) would be laid on the line that divided the lots and that it would not exceed 20 inches in width and the cost would be shared equally under the condition that the new buildings would be constructed right away. If only one of the parties would build, he would be responsible for the entire cost of the wall's construction. Both parties were to share the costs of rebuilding or repair and the agreement was to be a perpetual covenant running with the land. (Deeds vol. 122 p. 373)

The buildings were quickly erected. Roger's Block was a one bay Italianate Style structure with elaborate sheet metal cornice and rectangular storefront on the first story. It extended back to the river. Burnham's building was three bays wide with a distinctive brick parapet and arcaded first floor storefront. We do not know the builder or architect of Burnham's building at this time. It occupied only the south portion of the lot due to the existence of Newhall's warehouse along the river. The new buildings were almost lost soon after their completion. The Sentinel reported that "Ryan's Marine Elevator" burned the night of February 13, 1872 and that the wheat and barley in the building were insured but that machinery and fixtures worth $2,000 were lost. The Axtel Building at the east end of the block suffered $500 damage from the fire and affected businesses in the building including a dance hall and daguerrean gallery on the third floor, offices on the second floor and a clothing store, grocery, showcase manufacturer and a cigar manufactory on the first floor. D.G. Roger's damage amounted to $500 but his tenants are not documented. Burnham's losses amounted to $9,000 and included damage to the elevator and "stores in front." His tenants are not mentioned. The description of the fire leads to the conclusion that the warehouse was a total loss although that is not specifically mentioned in the article. (Milwaukee Sentinel February 14, 1872 4/2)

We do know the earliest tenants of the Burnham Building, however, from the Maximum Tariff of Rates Adopted by the Milwaukee Board of Fire Underwriters, 1872 and 1873. The east storefront, addressed as 262 South Water Street, housed retail grocer W. D. Giesman. The center storefront, addressed as 264 South Water Street, was occupied as a saloon run by Fritz Calies. The west storefront, addressed as 266 South Water Street, was occupied by the grocery and provisions business of Lewis and Bosustow. The upper floor had offices. The business climate must have been a volatile one as a succession of tenants is documented through the city directories over the decades.

Giesman occupied the premises through 1877 when the Sentinel Index lists him as filing bankruptcy. The later tenants of 262 are not known until 1883 when a saloon comes to occupy the space. Known saloon keepers include Edward L. Troost (1883-1885), James Gunning & Frank Gartland (1886), Charles Evenby (1889-1890), Theodore J. Consaul & Frank J. Berberich (1892-1895), Frank Berberich (1896-c. 1901).

The saloon located in 264 became a permanent fixture of the building. Fritz Calies was followed by William Weimer & Martin Machold (1874-1875), Hiram L. Gilmore & Louis Becker (1877), Hiram L. Gilmore (1878-1884), Gustav Weidner (1887), Thomas Burns (1892-1894, 1896-1897), and Mrs. Annie Burns (1898-1908).

After Lewis and Bosustow's tenancy, the westernmost storefront at 266 was later occupied by Edward B. Simpson & Co. from 1874-1882. Simpson was a lumber commission merchant or broker who later moved to the Axtell Building. Sharing his premises was lumber inspector Joseph J. Wallace (1878-1882). For one year barber Louis Holzhauer was also listed at this address. Interestingly, this portion of the Burnham Building also would also house a saloon beginning in 1884 when Mary A. Turville was barkeeper. She was succeeded by William Slattery (1885-1887, 1911-1913), Patrick J. Lillis (1888), John Rack (1889-1896), William Murphy (1897-c. 1902)

Although portions of the second floor of the Burnham Building may have originally been designed for offices some of the space was used for living quarters right from the start. The saloon keepers of 264 all lived above their business. Once 262 was converted into a tavern, its barkeepers lived upstairs as well. When William Slattery took over 266 he also lived upstairs and ran a boarding house there. At this time it is not known why in the 1880's three separate saloons were operating on the premises under the management of three separate proprietors. Business listings in the city directories show numerous other saloons operating in the vicinity, including three across the street and one in the Rogers Building next door.

J.L. Burnham died on September 24, 1891 and the E. Seeboth property, in addition to other real estate and 240 acres in Marathon County, went to his daughter Annie L. Towne. It appeared that Annie L. Towne continued leasing the building to saloonkeepers and she even entered into a five-year lease with the Pabst Brewing Company beginning April 30, 1907. (Deeds vol. 547 p. 396)

As mentioned above the old original commercial area of Walker's Point shifted away from service and retail by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as small manufacturing plants and warehousing became predominant in the area. With the coming of prohibition and the closing of saloons other uses were found for the Burnham Building. Harry O. Smith Co. came to occupy 262 and 264 from 1918 through 1927. It manufactured patterns, jigs, dies and fixtures. C.W. McNally Co., plumbers and steamfitters, occupied 266 from 1920 through 1930. Edde Manufacturing Co. occupied the east two thirds of the building for the storage of auto accessories from 1930 through 1934/1935. A survey by city inspectors in 1933 indicated that the second floor was vacant and used for storage. (Milwaukee Permit Records April 14, 1933) After a period of vacancy, the building was sold to Hans Lochen & Son Inc., a warehousing business, on September 19, 1938. (Deeds vol. 1327 p, 611) At the time of the sale photos and fire insurance maps show a rather ramshackle ironclad freight warehouse located behind the storefronts.

Hans Lochen & Son were responsible for most of the alterations now visible on the building. They cut in the large opening in the west wall of the building in 1938 and added an elevator in 1940. They also constructed a new one-story garage and warehouse building at the rear that took the place of the old warehouse sheds in 1953. It appears that Hans Lochen used the Burnham Building for storage through at least 1949. Thereafter the building was listed as vacant in the directories. After 1959 the building is not listed at all.

Probably the most dramatic change to the environment of the Burnham Building came in 1950. To alleviate a sharp turn from the bridge to South First Street, the city removed nearly an entire block of buildings to allow for a gentle curve. The new roadway required the demolition of the Axtell House and the Rogers Block, leaving the blank party wall of the Burnham Building as the east façade of the building.

Members of the Lochen family and their business partners, later R.L. Lochen Realty Co., retained ownership of the J.L. Burnham Building into the 1980's. An option to purchase the building was secured by Kent T. Wakefield in November 1982. The Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District obtained an easement on the property for the construction, operation, repair and reconstruction of an interceptor sewer tunnel in December 1983. A land contract was entered into by custard purveyor Karl Kopp on July 9, 1984 and he was conveyed the deed to the property in fulfillment of the land contract on August 8, 1988. In December of 2002, the property was conveyed to a developer 100 E Seeboth LLC. Recent articles in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and ads in periodicals like the Milwaukee Magazine (February 2004) report the owner's intentions to build a contemporary style condominium building on the site.

As part of the preservation department's intensive survey of the Central Business District in 1985-1986, the J.L. Burnham Building along with its neighbors in the 100 to 200 blocks of South First and Second Streets were identified as historically and architecturally significant. The district was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 30, 1987. The Burnham Building is a pivotal building within the district and anchors the northeast corner of the district.

THE ITALIANATE STYLE

The Italianate style was a form of design that swept the country in the 1850's when Milwaukee was experiencing its first boom in commercial construction. It was most popular from the 1850s through the early 1880s although modest forms of the style continued to be constructed in neighborhood commercial areas into the 1890s. The Italianate style was versatile and offered a never ending variety of embellishments and provided a welcome change to the rectilinear Federal and Greek Revival styles.

"The Italianate style was a Victorian era adaptation of motifs drawn from the late Romanesque architecture of fourteenth and fifteenth century northern Italy, in particular, as well as the more classically inspired high Renaissance architecture of sixteenth and seventeenth century Italy in general. " (Good For Business p. 14) The style had first appeared in the United States in the 1840's following developments in England and became popular after the construction of the A.T. Stewart Store in New York from the mid-1840s.

The style is characterized by flat wall surfaces that are punctuated by symmetrically arranged openings for doors and windows, often round or segmental in shape. The ornate treatment of these openings is common to the style and often includes highly articulated lintels or hood moldings. Special attention is given to emphasize the center bay of the building. Architectural elements were inventively combined. "Some buildings were designed with a greater preponderance of rounded Romanesque form, such as arched windows with curved hood mounds and corbel table friezes, to achieve a vaguely late medieval "Lombard" look while others were dressed up with the more angular features of the later Italian Renaissance including windows with shelf-like caps and wide overhanging cornices with massive brackets to achieve a more classical "Roman" appearance. Both of these varieties, and all manner of combinations in between, were considered to be Italianate...Pilasters, belt courses and corbel tables add to the compartmentalized effect of the facades. The buildings are usually crowned with ornate, projecting, bracketed cornices, sometimes with a pediment for added vertical emphasis." (Good For Business p.14)

The J.L. Burnham Building is an amazingly intact exact example of an early form of Italianate commercial building. In general the early Italianate presents a somewhat flatter façade with windows and doors that are framed by masonry pilasters, hood molds, cornices and the like. The effect is more linear and medieval Lombardesque than later examples that have more robust and detailed embellishments, often executed in sheet metal. The skill required to construct corbelled cornices, friezes, and arched openings as well as ornamental features meant that only the most experienced masons would be hired for this type of job. It would be difficult today to replicate the craftsmanship found in the J.L. Burnham Building. The arcaded storefront openings on the ground floor are some of the few to survive in the city and are likewise typical of design that was popular more in the 1860's. The Burnham Building's design belies its construction date of 1871 and is possibly the result of showcasing the owner's business, tying into the style of the nearby buildings or perhaps a reflection of the skills of the designer or contractor whose name is now lost to us.

IX. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the J.L. Burnham Building at 100 East Seeboth Street be given interim 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 J.L. Burnham Building is an important survivor from the early period of Walker's Point development. The solid masonry structure is a remarkably intact example of the use of locally manufactured, cream colored brick and one of a dwindling stock of such structures. The large brickyards of J.L. Burnham and his brother George were important industries in their day. The cream colored brick was so extensively used that Milwaukee earned the nickname Cream City of the Lakes. Millions of brick were shipped across the country and to Europe where customers appreciated the novel pale yellow color. The cream brick, to paraphrase Schlitz's ad campaign of later decades, "made Milwaukee famous". By the early twentieth century the clay fields had been depleted and popular taste demanded more traditional colored brick. The manufacture of cream brick ceased by the 1920's. Redevelopment and neglect have claimed the diminishing number of these masonry structures that once gave Milwaukee its distinctive character. To commemorate Milwaukee's unique contribution to the field of construction, the Wisconsin Historical Society erected a historic marker about Milwaukee's cream brick in the Walker's Point area in 2002.

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

Rationale
The J.L. Burnham Building is an outstanding and intact example of an early form of the Italianate commercial style. The exclusive use of brick, for everything from pilasters to cornice, was popular in the 1850's and 1860's before the advent of affordable sheet metal detail. The arcaded storefront system was also popular in these same decades though not exclusively used by merchants and building owners. The Burnham Building's deference to an older form of the Italianate is not known at this time. It may have been a way to showcase the owner's brick business and the artistry needed to create embellishment, a play of light and shade, in a single medium. It may have also been an attempt to complement the Axtell House at the other corner of the block. Built in 1860, the Axtell featured an arcaded first story and pedimented parapets.

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 Burnham Building is a visual landmark in its southside location. Since 1950 when the city removed most of the block of buildings located between South Ferry Street, South First Street, East Seeboth Street and East Pittsburgh Avenue, the Burnham Building has crowned the vista of all who drive north along South First Street. The Burnham Building also anchors the northeast corner of the South First and Second

Streets National Register Historic District. Loss of this building could jeopardize the east portion of the district and result in the loss of investment tax credits for the owners of those properties. The Burnham Building likewise is the oldest known surviving solid cream brick building along the downtown waterways. Its preservation allows a tangible reference back to the era when the riverbanks were lined with docks and cargo vessels and buildings of this scale and detail serviced the bustling maritime economy.

X. PRESERVATION GUIDELINES

The following preservation guidelines have been modeled after the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines and are compatible with programs that provide façade grants and income tax credits for rehabilitation or restoration work that is sensitive to historic buildings. The guidelines are intended to assist property owners in proper maintenance techniques and are not meant to prevent or inhibit the ordinary maintenance of the building.

The preservation guidelines apply only to the historic J.L. Burnham Building and not to the garage/warehouse structure at the back of the property that was built by Hans Lochen & Son in 1953. The Historic Preservation Commission has no objection to the demolition of this garage/warehouse building and its replacement with a new structure. The Commission does reserve the right to review any connectors that would join this new construction to the J.L. Burnham Building to ensure the preservation of historic features of the original building.

A. Roofs

Retain the roof shape. Skylights that are not visible from the street or public right of way are allowed. Avoid making changes to the roof shape that would alter the building's height, roofline or pitch. If replacement is necessary, duplicate the appearance of the original roofing material as closely as possible. No penthouses or projecting structures will be allowed on the roof.

B. Materials

1. Masonry

a. Unpainted brick, terra cotta, or stone should not be painted or covered with substitute siding. 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 chapters in As Good As New and Good for Business 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.

c. The present building is currently painted or stained and may be repainted or stained 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 water pressure blasting or the use of other abrasive materials (cocoa shells, walnut shells, glass beads, baking soda, etc.) is not allowed. This method of cleaning erodes the surface of the material and accelerates the accumulation of dirt and 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 or was unavailable when the building was constructed.

2. Wood/Metal

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

b. 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. Replacement windows should be modeled after the original windows located on the west elevation of the building. Retain existing round arched window and door openings, as they are an essential part of the building's Italianate style. Avoid making 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. New window openings may be permitted if they respect the size, placement and details of the originals. 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. Replacement doors should be modeled after the door in the east bay of the front façade.

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.

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.

4. Balconies are not allowed on the south or west elevations.

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

Additions will be permitted with the approval of the Historic Preservation Commission. New construction must respect the historic character of the original building and must not cover up, or obscure, or adversely impact the principal elevations of the historic building. Ideally, an addition should complement or have a neutral effect on the historic building.

F. Signs/Exterior Lighting

The removal of the rooftop billboard framing and the billboard at the east elevation of the building is permitted but not required. The installation of any permanent exterior sign or light fixture shall require the approval of the Commission. Signage is not to be placed over architectural features. Signs are to be installed through existing mortar joints and not through brick or stone. 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, or accessory structures shall be compatible with the historic architectural character of the building if visible from the public right of way.

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. It is desirable that new construction should appear visually distinct from the historic building.

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 (major building divisions, building components)

Any new construction must retain the sight lines of the historic building.

3. Form

The massing of the new construction must be compatible with the goal of maintaining the integrity of the historic building as a freestanding structure.

4. Materials

The physical composition of materials used for a connector may be different from that of the historic materials on the historic building.

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.

Note: The Historic Preservation Commission has no objection to the demolition of the 1953 garage/warehouse addition to the Burnham Building. The Commission does reserve the right to review any connectors that would be built onto the historic building. Similar guidelines have been drafted for St. Mary's Hospital, the University Club of Milwaukee and the Old Coast Guard Station.

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

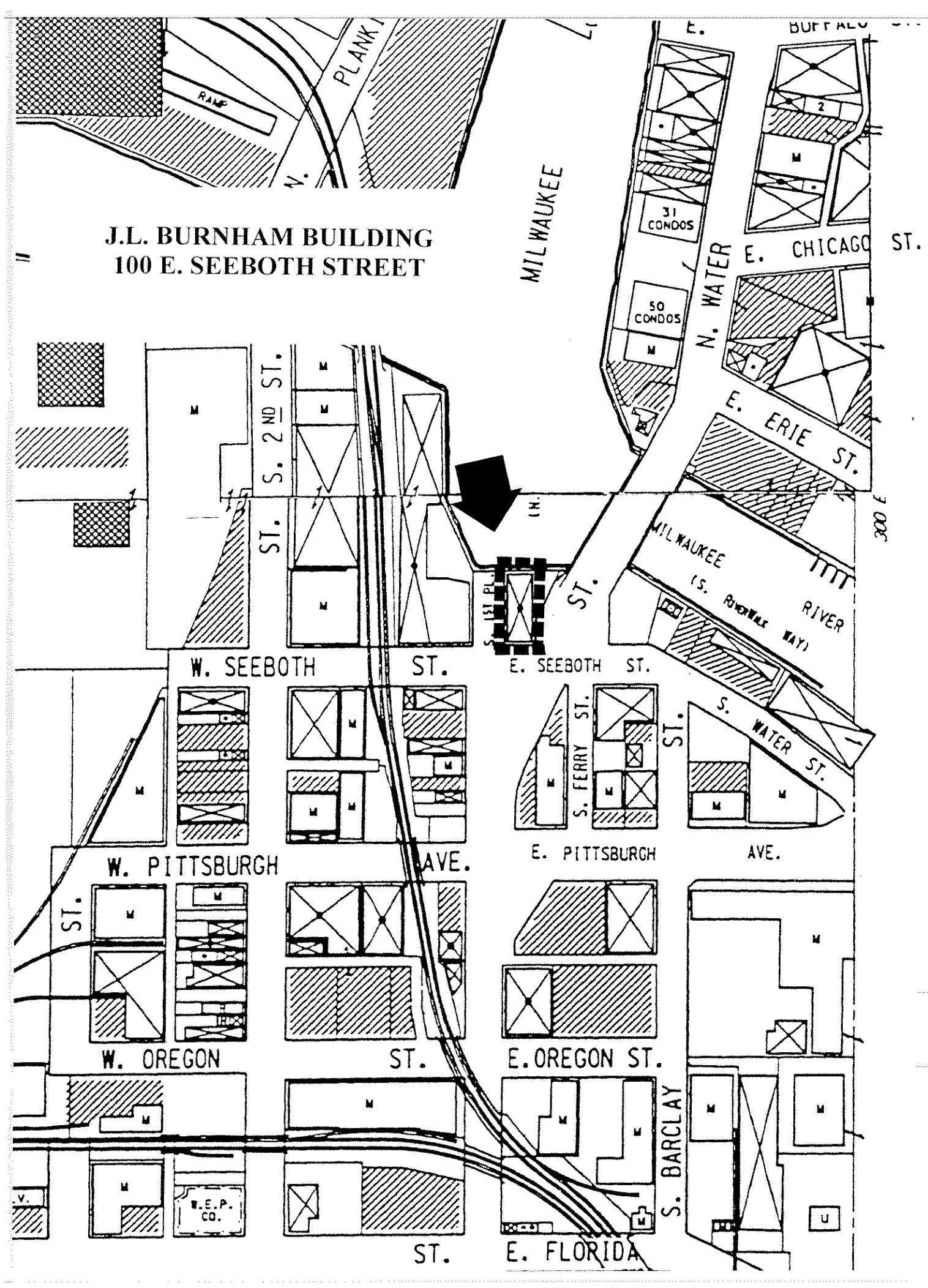
Consideration will be given to whether or not the building contributes to the neighborhood and the general street appearance and has a positive effect on other buildings in the area.

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.


J.L. BURNHAM BUILDING
100 E. SEEBOTH STREET
MILWAUKEE
N. WATER
E. CHICAGO ST.
31 CONDOS
50 CONDOS
E. ERIE ST.
S. 2ND ST.
W. SEEBOTH ST.
E. SEEBOTH ST.
MILWAUKEE RIVER
(S. RIVERWALK WAY)
S. WATER ST.
S. FERRY ST.
W. PITTSBURGH AVE.
E. PITTSBURGH AVE.
W. OREGON ST.
E. OREGON ST.
S. BARCLAY
E. FLORIDA ST.
W.E.P. CO.