



# Historic Preservation Commission

## Regular Meeting

335 South Broadway  
De Pere, WI 54115  
<http://www.de-pere.org>

### Agenda

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**Monday, August 17, 2020**

**6:00 PM**

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Pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes 19.84, Notice is hereby given to the public that a meeting of the **Historic Preservation Commission** of the City of De Pere will be held on **August 17, 2020 at 6:00 PM.**

**Due to the current public health emergency, the meeting will be held electronically and the public may attend this meeting electronically or telephonically by accessing either:**

Computer/smart phone accessing <https://www.gotomeet.me/DePere>  
**OR**

**You can also dial in using your phone.**

United States (Toll Free): [1 866 899 4679](tel:18668994679)

United States: [+1 \(312\) 757-3117](tel:+13127573117)

**Access Code:** 154-883-285

**THIS MEETING WILL NOT BE HELD IN PERSON.**

***This meeting may also be rebroadcast on Spectrum Cable Channel 4 and AT&T U-verse Channel 99 throughout the week and available on demand at [www.depere.tv](http://www.depere.tv).***

#### Call to Order

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of the minutes of the March 16, 2020 Historic Preservation Commission meeting.
3. Staff recommendation and possible action regarding nomination documentation for the proposed Mansion Street WWII Defense Homes Historic District.
4. Staff recommendation and possible action regarding nomination documentation for the proposed Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District.
5. Staff recommendation and possible action regarding the 2020 Local History & Historic Preservation Conference being held virtually on October 21-23, 2020.
6. Staff recommendation and possible action regarding the logo used on historic district street signage.
7. Future Agenda Items.

#### Adjournment

Any person wishing to attend this meeting, who, because of disability, requires special accommodations should contact the City Planner's office at 339-4043 by noon on the day of the meeting so that arrangements can be made.

\*Items with an asterisk require City Council approval.

Agenda Sent To:

Alderspersons  
City Administrator  
Mayor  
Department Heads  
TV, Newspapers & Radio Stations  
Kress Family Library  
De Pere Chamber of Commerce  
Joe De Rose, Wisconsin Historical Society  
Timothy Heggland



City of De Pere, Wisconsin

**Request For Historic Preservation Commission Action**

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**MEETING DATE:** August 17, 2020

**DEPARTMENT:** Planning

**FROM:** Kelly Barker

**SUBJECT:** Approval of the minutes of the March 16, 2020 Historic Preservation Commission meeting.

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**ATTACHMENTS:**

- HPC\_Mar2020\_Minutes\_Draft (PDF)



# Historic Preservation Commission

## Regular Meeting

335 South Broadway  
De Pere, WI 54115  
<http://www.de-pere.org>

### Draft Minutes

Monday, March 16, 2020

6:00 PM

#### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairperson Mike Fleck

| Attendee Name        | Title            | Status  | Arrived |
|----------------------|------------------|---------|---------|
| Scott Crevier        | Aldерperson      | Excused |         |
| Mike Fleck           | Chairperson      | Present |         |
| Gene Hackbarth       | Commissioner     | Present |         |
| Brian Netzel         | Vice Chairperson | Present |         |
| Sue Sands            | Commissioner     | Present |         |
| Adam Turriff         | Commissioner     | Present |         |
| Joanne Vomastic-Muka | Commissioner     | Excused |         |

Also present: City Planner Peter Schleinz.

- Approval of the minutes of the February 17, 2020 Historic Preservation Commission meeting.

|                  |                                          |
|------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>               |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Gene Hackbarth, Commissioner             |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Brian Netzel, Vice Chairperson           |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Fleck, Hackbarth, Netzel, Sands, Turriff |
| <b>EXCUSED:</b>  | Scott Crevier, Joanne Vomastic-Muka      |

- Discussion and possible action regarding the de-listing of 106 S. Broadway Street from the federal and state registers of historic places.

The property owner was notified via mail about the HPC meeting for de-listing. Gene Hackbarth made a motion, seconded by Adam Turriff, to de-list 106 S Broadway Street from the federal and state registers of historic places due to the fact that the building was demolished due to a fire in 2019. Upon vote, motion carried unanimously.

|                  |                                          |
|------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>               |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Gene Hackbarth, Commissioner             |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Adam Turriff, Commissioner               |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Fleck, Hackbarth, Netzel, Sands, Turriff |
| <b>EXCUSED:</b>  | Scott Crevier, Joanne Vomastic-Muka      |

- Discussion and possible action regarding the de-listing of 502 N. Wisconsin Street from the federal and state registers of historic places as a contributing structure.

The property owner was notified via mail about the HPC meeting for de-listing. Gene Hackbarth made a motion, seconded by Adam Turriff, to de-list 502 N Wisconsin Street from the federal and state registers of historic places due to the fact that the house was demolished in the summer of 2019 after years of sitting vacant. Upon vote, motion carried unanimously.

|                  |                                          |
|------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>               |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Gene Hackbarth, Commissioner             |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Adam Turriff, Commissioner               |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Fleck, Hackbarth, Netzel, Sands, Turriff |
| <b>EXCUSED:</b>  | Scott Crevier, Joanne Vomastic-Muka      |

5. Discussion and possible action regarding the de-listing of 520 N. Michigan Street from the federal and state registers of historic places as a contributing structure.

Gene Hackbarth explained that the reason for de-listing 520 N Michigan Street was due to remodeling done on the house, which included siding changes and porch design changes. He clarified that de-listing it means that it will no longer be considered a contributing structure in the district, but it would still remain in the historic district as a non-contributing structure. Adam Turriff added that the current owner did receive a letter regarding the de-listing but chose not to attend the meeting. Gene Hackbarth moved, seconded by Adam Turriff, to de-list the property. Upon vote, motion carried unanimously.

|                  |                                          |
|------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>               |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Gene Hackbarth, Commissioner             |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Adam Turriff, Commissioner               |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Fleck, Hackbarth, Netzel, Sands, Turriff |
| <b>EXCUSED:</b>  | Scott Crevier, Joanne Vomastic-Muka      |

6. Future Agenda Items.

Gene Hackbarth noted that it is very unlikely that the WPAC Conference scheduled for April 21, 2019 will be held. He noted that it will possibly be cancelled or rescheduled. He added that he will keep staff notified of any updates regarding the conference.

|                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>DISCUSSED</b> |
|----------------|------------------|

### Adjournment

Adam Turriff moved, seconded by Sue Sands, to adjourn the meeting at 6:16 PM. Upon vote, motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kelly Barker



## City of De Pere, Wisconsin

### Request For Historic Preservation Commission Action

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**MEETING DATE:** August 17, 2020

**DEPARTMENT:** Planning

**FROM:** Peter Schleinz

**SUBJECT:** Staff recommendation and possible action regarding nomination documentation for the proposed Mansion Street WWII Defense Homes Historic District.

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The purpose for this topic is to review the nomination documents that were completed in June 2020. The documents and photos were forwarded to WHS by the consultant, Mr. Timothy F. Heggland. A sample of the referenced project photos will be shown during the PowerPoint presentation for the meeting.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Accept the nomination documents and approve/support the forwarding of the nomination documents to WHS for consideration as a historic district in De Pere.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Mansion Street WWII Defense Homes Historic District nrform (DOC)

**United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

**historic name** Mansion Street WWII Defense Homes Historic District  
**other names/site number**

**2. Location**

|                            |                        |                     |                            |
|----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>street &amp; number</b> | 902-942 Mansion Street | N/A                 | <b>not for publication</b> |
| <b>city or town</b>        | De Pere                | N/A                 | <b>vicinity</b>            |
| <b>state</b> Wisconsin     | <b>code</b> WI         | <b>county</b> Brown | <b>code</b> 009            |
|                            |                        |                     | <b>zip code</b> 54115      |

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_ nationally \_ statewide X locally. ( \_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer - Wisconsin

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_ meets \_ does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( \_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Attachment: Mansion Street WWII Defense Homes Historic District nrform (9888 : Staff recommendation and possible action regarding

|                                                       |                  |           |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District | Brown County     | Wisconsin |
| Name of Property                                      | County and State |           |

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

\_\_\_ entered in the National Register.

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register.

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register.

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ removed from the National Register.

\_\_\_ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

#### 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(check as many boxes as apply)

X private  
public-local  
public-State  
public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

X building(s)  
district  
structure  
site  
object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

|              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| contributing | noncontributing |
| 14           | 0 buildings     |
|              | sites           |
|              | structures      |
|              | objects         |
| 14           | 0 total         |

**Name of related multiple property listing:**

(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources**

**previously listed in the National Register**

0

#### 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

#### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/Side Gabled

OTHER/Front Gabled

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls Weatherboard

Vinyl

roof ASPHALT

other Wood

#### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
Name of Property

Brown  
County and State

Wisconsin

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

### Period of Significance

1941-1942

### Significant Dates

N/A

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Standard Lumber Yards, Inc.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District      Brown      Wisconsin  
 Name of Property      County and State

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

### Primary location of additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State Agency
  - Federal Agency
  - X Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: White Pillars Museum  
De Pere, Wisconsin

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 3.41 acres

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1    16    416185    4921500  
       Zone    Easting        Northing

2    \_\_\_\_\_  
       Zone    Easting        Northing

3    \_\_\_\_\_  
       Zone    Easting        Northing

4    \_\_\_\_\_  
       Zone    Easting        Northing

☐ See Continuation Sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

## 11. Form Prepared By

|                            |                        |              |    |                  |               |
|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------|----|------------------|---------------|
| <b>name/title</b>          | Timothy F. Heggland    |              |    | <b>date</b>      | June 11, 2020 |
| <b>organization</b>        |                        |              |    | <b>telephone</b> | 608-795-2650  |
| <b>street &amp; number</b> | 6391 Hillsandwood Road |              |    | <b>zip code</b>  | 53560         |
| <b>city or town</b>        | Mazomanie              | <b>state</b> | WI |                  |               |

|                                                       |                  |           |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District | Brown            | Wisconsin |
| Name of Property                                      | County and State |           |

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

**Maps**                      A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
                                  A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**            Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional Items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

|                            |                               |                  |  |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|--|
| <b>name/title</b>          | Various. See separate sheets. | <b>date</b>      |  |
| <b>organization</b>        |                               | <b>telephone</b> |  |
| <b>street &amp; number</b> |                               | <b>zip code</b>  |  |
| <b>city or town</b>        | <b>state</b> WI               |                  |  |

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 1

**Description:**

The Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District is a residential district comprised of 14 small single-family residences and it is situated on the east side of the city of De Pere.<sup>1</sup> The district was platted in 1941 as the Thrifty Homes Addition by Edward Vercauteren of De Pere, who was then the manager of the De Pere branch of Standard Lumber Yards, Inc., a Green Bay firm. The district consists of all the buildings that are located on both the north and south-facing sides of the one-block-long east-west-running Mansion Street, and while lots in the district have a variety of shapes, most are rectilinear and measure from 110 to 120-feet-deep and are 60-feet-wide. All the houses in the district were built between 1941 and 1942 in the early years of World War II, and they were either sold or rented exclusively to workers employed in various Green Bay-area defense-related industries. These mostly one-story-tall houses are all representative examples of either the Front Gabled or Side Gabled Subtypes of the Minimal Traditional Style that Virginia and Lee McAlester identified in their book *A Field Guide to American Houses*, and all but two of them were built by local contractors affiliated with Standard Lumber Yards, Inc.<sup>2</sup> Houses in the district have nearly square floor plans and are small in size, being approximately 28-feet-wide by 26-feet-deep. All but one of them are one story in height, all but one have a side-gabled form and a gable roof whose ridgeline runs east-west, and all of them are believed to have originally been clad in narrow wood clapboards although all but one of them have now been resided with modern materials. The sources of the designs of the district's houses are unknown but they were most likely adapted from standard plans that were available in numerous catalogs of the time, some of which would certainly have been on display at Standard Lumber Yards, Inc.'s offices in either Green Bay or De Pere. These designs are now popularly known as "Cape Cod" houses because of their similarity to early Colonial period houses in New England, but they were actually derived from designs first promoted by the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) during the Great Depression.

The district is bounded by Merrill Street to the north, South Erie Street to the west, Jordan Road to the east, and Atrium Court to the south, and Mansion Street opens onto South Erie Street to the west and onto Jordan Road to the east. In addition, the district is also located one block to the southwest of the extensive grounds associated with today's Dickinson Elementary School and De Pere High School, both of which are very large Contemporary Style buildings that were built in the years after WWII. When the district was first platted in 1941, however, the new plat was situated on what was still rural land that was located on the eastern edge of the city of De Pere, and the land to the north, south, and east of the district was still open and undeveloped and it would remain so until the late 1940s and early

<sup>1</sup> The population of De Pere was 23,800 in 2010. De Pere is located just south of the city of Green Bay, the Brown County seat, whose population in 2010 was 104,057.

<sup>2</sup> McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984, p. 478. See also: McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013, pp. 586-595, for a greatly enlarged discussion of this style.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 2

1950s. Today, the district is surrounded by a much larger residential neighborhood that consists of older houses to the north and west and contemporary or still newer houses to the south and southeast.

The platting of the land that became the Thrifty Homes Subdivision also resulted in the construction of Mansion Street as well, which today is paved with concrete and is edged with concrete curbs and gutters. Land in the district is flat and the lots in the district are edged by wide grassed parkways and concrete sidewalks. The district's houses face onto Mansion Street and their facades respect a uniform setback from the street. Paved paths lead up to the main entrances of almost every house in the district, paved driveways typically edge one side of each lot, and many of these driveways also access one of the district's numerous free-standing garages.<sup>3</sup> Both the houses and the lots in the district are well maintained and are in very good condition, these lots almost all have front yards that feature mown lawns, and many of the houses are also edged with decorative shrubs and flower plantings. What distinguishes the houses in the district from the other single-family neighborhood houses that surround them is primarily the uniformity of their design and their development history. Most of the surrounding plats in this neighborhood contain houses and small apartment buildings that are similar or somewhat larger in size, but these buildings were built one at a time for the most part, they represent a wide variety of styles and vernacular forms, and they were built both before and after the houses in the district were built. The district, on the other hand, exhibits a uniform, planned appearance, and while the small size of its houses makes it a good fit in the larger surrounding neighborhood, the district is also markedly different in appearance from the neighborhood that surrounds it and it clearly evolved in a very different way.

**Inventory:**

The following inventory lists every building in the district along with the names of the original owners, the construction date, the address, and the resource's contributing ( C ) or non-contributing ( NC ) status. The abbreviations given below for architectural styles are the same abbreviations used by the Wisconsin Historical Society's Division of Historic Preservation. These are as follows:

FG = Front Gable  
SG = Side Gable

|   |     |                |                                                                          |      |    |
|---|-----|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|----|
| C | 902 | Mansion Street | Ralph Belanger Speculative House/<br>Alton & Irene Dickey House          | 1941 | SG |
| C | 903 | Mansion Street | Edward Vercauteren Speculative House/<br>Norbert & Margaret Berken House | 1941 | SG |
| C | 908 | Mansion Street | Ralph Belanger Speculative House/<br>Gerald A. & Beatrice Lasee House    | 1941 | SG |

<sup>3</sup> These garages were all built after the houses themselves were completed and they represent the efforts of individual property owners.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 3

|   |     |                |                                                                         |      |    |
|---|-----|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|----|
| C | 909 | Mansion Street | Standard Lumber Yards, Inc. House/<br>Anthony & Viola Bangert House     | 1941 | SG |
| C | 914 | Mansion Street | Standard Lumber Yards, Inc. House                                       | 1942 | SG |
| C | 915 | Mansion Street | Edward A. & Marie Vercauteren House                                     | 1941 | SG |
| C | 920 | Mansion Street | Standard Lumber Yards, Inc. House                                       | 1942 | SG |
| C | 921 | Mansion Street | Standard Lumber Yards, Inc. House                                       | 1941 | SG |
| C | 927 | Mansion Street | Standard Lumber Yards, Inc. House/<br>Arthur & Viola Blahnik House      | 1941 | FG |
| C | 928 | Mansion Street | Standard Lumber Yards, Inc. House/<br>Marvin & Arlene Hockers House     | 1942 | SG |
| C | 932 | Mansion Street | Standard Lumber Yards, Inc. House/<br>Lester & Genevieve Joslin House   | 1942 | SG |
| C | 937 | Mansion Street | Standard Lumber Yards, Inc. House/<br>Bjorn & Eva Rae Christenson House | 1941 | SG |
| C | 938 | Mansion Street | Standard Lumber Yards, Inc. House/<br>Clyde & Mildred Campbell House    | 1942 | SG |
| C | 942 | Mansion Street | Standard Lumber Yards, Inc. House/<br>Elmer & Evelyn Snow House         | 1942 | SG |
|   |     |                |                                                                         |      |    |

All fourteen of these houses have full basements that have concrete block walls and cement floors, their first stories originally contained a living room, a kitchen/dining area, a bathroom, and two bedrooms, and every house also had an attic space as well. As noted above, all of these houses were originally sided in narrow wood clapboards, although only one, 942 Mansion Street, still retains its original siding today, and all of these houses originally had asphalt-shingled gable roofs as well and this is still true today. In addition, all of these houses originally had eight-over-eight-light double hung wood sash windows as well, although again, only one, 942 Mansion Street, still retains its original windows today. Floors in the interior were made from maple and wood trim sets were placed around the doors and windows in the interior of these houses.

These fourteen houses consist of five models, four of which have a side-gabled one-story-tall form and one of which has a front-gabled one-and-one-half-story-tall form.<sup>4</sup> These models and the district examples of each are described and listed below.

**Model A. 902, 914, 928 Mansion Street**

This side-gabled model has a nearly square 28-foot-wide by 26-foot-deep plan and its main façade has an uninterrupted eave that spans the width of the façade. This facade is symmetrical in design and three-bay-wide and an entrance door placed in the center bay, while the two flanking bays each contain a flat-arched window opening. The two side elevations are both two-bays-wide and whichever

<sup>4</sup> These model designations are the author's.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 4

side elevation faces a driveway has a window opening in the bay closest to the street and a side door opening in the rear bay, while the symmetrically designed two-bay-wide side elevation opposite features two separate, identical window openings.

Model B. 920, 932, 938 Mansion Street

This side-gabled, nearly square plan model measures 24-feet-wide by 28-feet-deep and its main façade is symmetrical in design and three-bay-wide and an entrance door is placed in the center bay, while the two flanking bays each contain a flat-arched window opening. The only difference between this facade and the main façade of the Model A is that this model has a slightly projecting gablet placed above the main entrance door.<sup>5</sup> The two side elevations of this model are also both two-bays-wide and whichever side elevation faces a driveway has a paired window opening in the bay that is located closest to the street and a side door opening in the rear bay, while the symmetrically designed two-bay-wide side elevation opposite features two separate, identical window openings.

Model C. 908, 909, 921, 942 Mansion Street

This side-gabled, nearly square plan model also measures 24-feet-wide by 28-feet-deep, its main façade is symmetrical in design and three-bay-wide, and its main entrance door is placed in its center bay, while the two flanking bays each contain a flat-arched window opening. The only difference between this facade and that of Model A and B is that the main entrance door of this model is sheltered by a projecting gable-roofed open entrance porch.<sup>6</sup> Whichever side elevation of this model faces a driveway is three-bays-wide and has a small window opening in the bay that is located closest to the street, a side door opening in the middle bay, and a single larger window opening in the rear bay, while the symmetrically designed two-bay-wide side elevation opposite features two separate, identical window openings.

Model D. 903, 915, 937 Mansion Street

This side-gabled, nearly square plan model measures 26-feet-wide by 24-feet-deep, but unlike Model's A, B, and C, this one has a three-bay-wide main façade that is asymmetrical in design and which is dominated by a forward-projecting, gable-roofed, one-story-tall ell that measures 3-feet-deep by 16-

<sup>5</sup> The center bay of the main façade of 938 Mansion Street has a gablet surmounting it as described above, but in addition, this entire bay now projects out about one foot from the main wall surface of the facade. This is the only example of this model that is so treated, and it may be the result of a later remodeling.

<sup>6</sup> The entrance porches of 908, 909, and 921 Mansion Street are all identical in width and size and it is believed that that of 909 is the only one that still retains its original (square) wooden supporting posts. The porch associated with 942 Mansion Street differs from the other examples both because it is wider than the other three and because its porch roof is supported by two *pairs* of wooden posts rather than the two single posts that support the roofs of the others.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 5

feet-wide.<sup>7</sup> This ell is two-bays-wide and the main entrance door to the house occupies the ell's center bay while a flat-arched window opening is placed either to the left or to the right of the door, depending on the placement of the ell on the façade. The façade's third bay consists of another flat-arched window opening and this opening is located on the main wall surface of the façade adjacent to the ell.

Like the other three models listed above, one of the two side elevations of each example of this model is two-bays-wide and symmetrical in design and features two separate, identical window openings. The opposite side elevation of 915 Mansion Street, however, is three-bays-wide and has a small window opening in the bay that is located closest to the street, a side door opening in the middle bay, and a single larger window opening in the rear bay. The original configurations of the opposite side elevations of the other two examples of this model are not known because a small, slightly later gable-roofed one-story-tall wing has been attached to each of these elevations.

**Model E. 927 Mansion Street**

This nearly square plan model measures 26-feet-wide by 28-feet-deep, but unlike the other models, this one has a front-gabled form and a main facade that is four-bays-wide and asymmetrical in design. This facade is dominated by a forward-projecting, gable-roofed, one-story-tall, three-bay-wide ell that measures 3-feet-deep by 20-feet-wide and the main entrance door to the house occupies the ell's center bay while a flat-arched paired window opening is placed to the right of the door and a much smaller flat-arched single window opening is placed to the left of it. The façade's fourth bay consists of another flat-arched window opening and this opening is located on the main wall surface of the façade to the left of the ell.

The west-facing side elevation of this house is three-bays-wide and features a smaller window in the center bay that is flanked on either side by a larger window, while its east-facing side elevation is now mostly covered by a slightly later one-story-tall gable-roofed wing. This house has now been resided in narrow gauge vinyl clapboards

**Integrity:**

Generally speaking, the houses in the district retain a high degree of integrity in so far as their basic form is concerned. The most frequently encountered alteration that has been made to these houses has been the slightly later construction of a small, side-gabled, one-story-tall wing on one side of some of these houses (903, 927, 937, 938, and 942 Mansion Street), but none of these additions have been large enough to compromise the essential integrity of the original house. In addition, although historic

<sup>7</sup> 903 Mansion Street was the first house built in the district and it differs from the other two district examples of this model in that it is slightly larger, measuring 30-feet-wide by 24-feet-deep.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
 De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 6

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De Pere assessor's records for the district show that all of the district's houses were originally clad in narrow wood clapboards, all but one of these houses (942) have now been resided and many have also had their original windows replaced with more modern ones. That this has happened is not surprising. It needs to be remembered that these houses were built to occupy a place at the lower end of the De Pere housing market's price range. Eventually, maintaining the original exterior cladding put a strain on the budgets of many of the district's homeowners and this made the supposed cost advantages of residing and replacing original windows with more energy efficient ones attractive. Nevertheless, the houses in the district continue to be well maintained and they are highly valued today because this is one of the few neighborhoods in the city where houses are still affordable for first time home buyers. The NR significance of the district is based on its historic development rather than on the design and integrity of the individual resources it contains and the overall integrity of the district and its ability to convey what is significant about its history is still unchanged.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 1

**Significance:**

When the United States was suddenly plunged into war late in December of 1941, many aspects of the normal life of its citizens underwent a radical change. Within a short period of time the federal government assumed control of many aspects of ordinary life that had previously been looked after by the nation's private economy. Rationing of basic commodities such as gasoline, meat, sugar, rubber, and building supplies was introduced and agencies whose mission was to reallocate such commodities were created. In the process, many communities throughout the nation experienced great social changes, and in some cases, they were changed physically as well when the nation's manufacturing resources were repurposed and expanded to meet the needs of the new war economy. The story of the creation of the Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District is a good representative example of how wartime necessity resulted in the construction of new housing that served the immediate needs of the war economy and also proved to be a long-term civic asset once the war ended. The 14 small one-story-tall single-family houses in the Mansion Street district comprise the largest part of the Thrifty Homes Addition to the City of De Pere, which was platted in April of 1941. Those responsible for creating the new plat were Anton and Mary Van Gruensven, the owners of the land, and their son-in-law, Edward Vercauteren, the manager of the De Pere yard of the Standard Lumber Yards, Inc., who took advantage of new Federal financing and rules regarding the allocation of building materials to build a small neighborhood of privately funded housing that was intentionally created to provide housing for families engaged in defense work in Green Bay area industries. The district's first two houses were built in 1941 by Ralph P. Belanger, a local contractor, but the rest were built in 1941 and 1942 by Vercauteren's Standard Lumber Yards, which subcontracted the construction work to local contractors that the firm did business with. The resulting district is the only new suburb that was built in De Pere during WWII and it contains the only buildings in that city that were built specifically to house defense industry workers and to aid the war effort. Fortunately, this district is still very intact today, and it continues to be a vital part of the larger residential neighborhood that surrounds it.

The Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District was first identified as a potentially eligible historic district under National Register (NR) Criterion A (History) in the Historical and Architectural Resources Survey of the City of De Pere, which was undertaken in 2017.<sup>8</sup> This survey found that the district was potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under NRHP Criterion A (history) at the local level of significance. Research was then undertaken to assess the potential for nominating the district to the NRHP utilizing the NR significance area of Community Planning and Development, a theme that is also identified in the State of Wisconsin's Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP). This research centered on evaluating

<sup>8</sup> Heritage Research, Ltd. *Historical and Architectural Resources Survey, City of De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin*. De Pere, 2017.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 2

the resources within the district utilizing the Patterns of Community Development subsection of the Planning and Landscape Architecture Theme of the CRMP.<sup>9</sup> This research also centered on evaluating the resources within the district utilizing the context developed by the National Park Service in a National Register Bulletin entitled *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation For the National Register of Historic Places*.<sup>10</sup> The results of this research is detailed below and shows that the Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District is locally significant under NR Criterion A as an historically significant collection of single family residences that together constitute a well-defined and visually distinct geographic and historic entity within the boundaries of the city of De Pere, and whose period of significance spans the years from 1941-1942, this being the period during which all the houses in the district were built.

**Community Planning and Development:**

The National Register of Historic Places has recently published a National Register Bulletin entitled *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation For the National Register of Historic Places*. This bulletin, which was developed in tandem with a national multiple property listing entitled "Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States, 1830-1960, MPS," was intended to develop a nationwide context within which to evaluate and nominate residential historic districts and other suburban resources to the National Register of Historic Places. The Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District NRHP nomination has utilized this context and the nomination itself has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines that are found in the Documentation and Registration section of this bulletin.

In 1940, the land that would subsequently become the Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District was owned by Anton and Mary Van Gruensven and it was still open land at this time. Anton Van Gruensven (1868-1944) was born in Holland and he was seven years old when he emigrated to this country and to De Pere with his family in 1875. Van Gruensven subsequently became a mason and he pursued his trade in De Pere until he retired in 1939.<sup>11</sup> In 1891, Van Gruensven married Mary Menne and together the couple had seven children, one of whom, Marie Van Gruensven, subsequently married Edward Vercauteren, another native of De Pere. Edward Vercauteren (1902-1946), was one of eleven children born to John Vercauteren and his wife. John Vercauteren (1873-1940) was born in Belgium and came to De Pere with his family in 1879 when he was six years old. Educated in De Pere, Vercauteren spent his life in the lumber business and at the

<sup>9</sup> Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*. Madison: Division of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.

<sup>10</sup> Ames, David L. and Linda Flint McClelland. *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation For the National Register of Historic Places*. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, 2002.

<sup>11</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, May 17, 1944, p. 7. Obituary of Anton Van Gruensven.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 3

time of his death he was the manager of the De Pere Lumber and Fuel Co., a branch of Standard Lumber Yards, Inc., of Green Bay, which had retail lumber yards in both De Pere and Green Bay at that time.<sup>12</sup> His son, Edward, joined his father in the lumber business after graduating from Nicolet High School in De Pere and the Green Bay Business College and he was the manager of Standard Lumber Yard's De Pere yard when his father died in 1940 and by 1943 was the secretary-treasurer of the parent company.<sup>13</sup>

While the actual story of how Edward Vercauteren and Anton Van Gruensven, his father-in-law, came to plat the undeveloped land that Van Gruensven owned on the east side of De Pere is not known, it seems likely that they were motivated by opportunities arising out of changes that were being made to Federal housing policy, which changes were themselves being motivated in part by evolving Federal plans that were being made to prepare the nation for possible wartime status.

The advent of a Federal housing policy was an outgrowth of the catastrophic effect that the Great Depression had had on the nation's housing industry and on the nation's homeowners.

When the Roosevelt Administration began in 1933, home foreclosures were occurring at the rate of 1,000 per day. Through the emergency Home Owner's Loan Corporation, established by law June 13, 1933, the Federal government forestalled the avalanche of foreclosures and began to stabilize real estate values. For the first time, home owners were able to secure home loans that were fully amortized over the length of the loan—in this case 15 years at five percent interest. Although the short-lived program lasted only three years, it was considered a success economically and set an important precedent for the use of long-term, low-interest amortized home mortgages, which would a year later become the foundation of the FHA mortgage insurance program.

The creation of a permanent, national program of mutual mortgage insurance, under Title II of the National housing Act of 1934 signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on June 27, 1934, revolutionized home financing and set in motion a series of events that effectively broadened home ownership. The FHA was authorized to provide Federal insurance for privately financed mortgages for homes, housing subdivisions, and rental housing. Throughout the development of standards, as well as its review and approval of properties for mortgage insurance, the FHA institutionalized principles for both neighborhood planning and small house design.

<sup>12</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, March 9, 1940, p. 6. Obituary of John Vercauteren.

<sup>13</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, July 29, 1946, p. 8. Obituary of Edward Vercauteren.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 4

The Federal government insured loans granted by private lending institutions for as much as 80 percent of a property's value. Mortgages were to be fully amortized through monthly payments extending over twenty years. Interest rates were to be relatively low, not exceeding six percent at the time, and required down payments were set at 20 percent of the cost of a home. Amendments to the act in 1938 allowed Federal mortgage payments up to 25 years.<sup>14</sup>

Meetings were subsequently held by Federal and State officials throughout the country to explain what the effects of the 1938 amendment to the Federal insurance plan would be to persons involved in the building industry and one such meeting was held in Green Bay on February 26, 1940. Among the 100 people in the audience "were building contractors bankers, supply firm dealers, persons directly or indirectly connected with the building industry and others interested from a private viewpoint."<sup>15</sup> While it is not known if either John or Edward Vercauteren were in the audience for this meeting, it would be surprising if at least one of them had not been there. In any event, Anton Van Gruensven and Edward Vercauteren appear to have understood the advantages this plan provided to builders and developers because by December of that same year their new Thrifty Homes Addition plat had been planned and mapped, and on December 30, 1940, it was presented to the De Pere Common Council for approval. The plat was not officially recorded until April 30, 1941, however, because the land had to be rezoned first.<sup>16</sup> In the meantime, new actions were being taken at the Federal level that made it imperative that Van Gruensven and Vercauteren's new plat be developed quickly.

As the nation moved gradually towards a war footing, planners in the Federal government realized that going to war meant that a radical restructuring of the American economy would be necessary and this realization led to a wave of new legislation that was designed to bolster the country's industrial production and alleviate difficulties and problems that might arise. Among these potential problems was the necessity of having adequate workers housing located near to centers of industrial production and especially those areas where large-scale expansion could be expected due to wartime needs. This resulted in, among other things, an expansion of the National Housing Act, the aim of which was to help builders and developers create new housing units to house essential workers in a wartime setting when both materials and manpower would need to be prioritized.

<sup>14</sup> Ames, David L. and Linda Flint McClelland. *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation For the National Register of Historic Places*. 31.

<sup>15</sup> "Details of Mortgage Plan Are Explained." *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, February 27, 1940, p. 6

<sup>16</sup> "Street Closing Hearing June 2." *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, May 14, 1941, p. 27. See also: "Council Proceedings." *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, May 15, 1941, p. 8. The Thrifty Homes Addition also included six home sites located just to the north of the district that face onto Merrill Street and Jordan Road, but these sites were developed separately on an individual basis and were not part of the World War II defense housing effort.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 5

The addition of Title VI to the National Housing Act on March 28, 1941, created a program of Defense Housing Insurance, targeting rental housing in areas designated critical for defense and defense production.<sup>17</sup>

Areas designated by the government as being a “critical defense housing area” were ones in which an acute housing shortage existed or impended and where it was in the interest of the national welfare and war effort to lessen or improve this shortage. The practical outcome of this designation was that builders who engaged in the construction of “private defense housing” within a critical defense area would be given preference and would be allocated building materials that would otherwise be denied them. It also meant that the FHA would guarantee the financing of such projects provided that the housing units were sold or rented to defense workers, with the principal restrictions on the construction of single family houses being that the cost, including the land, financing charges, land improvements, and the building, could not exceed \$6000.00 per unit and the only materials that could be used were approved ones not on the defense housing critical list, ones that were plentiful enough to not need a preference listing.

Just three months after the Title VI amendment was enacted, the Green Bay area (which included De Pere) was declared a critical defense area by the Roosevelt administration.

Approval of Green Bay as a defense area, making it eligible for Federal Housing Administration loans under section 603 of title six of that act, opens the way for more building here, it was explained today by interested persons. Title six provides that purchasers are not required to make the usual 10 percent down payment. Building may be done either to sell or rent. ...

There is no requirement that the mortgagor be the owner and occupant. Consequently, an operative builder may be the mortgagor and the amount of the mortgage may be in an amount not to exceed 90 per cent of the appraised value as of the date the mortgage is accepted for insurance. ...

Eligible properties—those covered by the mortgage—must be located in an area in which the president finds an acute shortage of housing, or in which a shortage impends that would impede national defense activities. By his action Saturday, the president so classified Green Bay.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Ames, David L. and Linda Flint McClelland. *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation For the National Register of Historic Places*. 31.

<sup>18</sup> “More Building Expected Here.” *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, June 24, 1941, p. 17.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 6

A week after this article appeared, work on constructing Mansion Street began and work also began on readying the lots that faced onto it for sale, these lots being the ones that constitute the Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District.

The new Thrifty Homes Addition was located in what was then the southeastern corner of the city of De Pere and the land that was located to the west of the new plat consisted of a large residential neighborhood that had evolved in a piecemeal fashion over time and which contained primarily single-family residences that had been built from as early as 1870 up until 1940. Preparing the new lots for sale was not difficult, though, because in 1941, the land on which the new plat was being developed and also all the land to the north, south, and southwest of it was still flat, open land for the most part and was devoted to agricultural pursuits. Fortunately for the developers, access to the new addition was relatively easy for the public because the site of the plat was bounded at both ends by the already existing north-south-running S. Erie Street and the northwest-southeast-running Jordan Road, both of which were well traveled concrete roads. Also advantageous was the fact that De Pere's modern new east side high school was located just six blocks to the northwest of the plat on Merrill Street, which thoroughfare runs across the north edge of the plat.

It appears that initially, most of the work involved in creating the new plat and pushing it forward fell to Edward Vercauteren. At first, the lots in the plat were owned by Anton and Marie Van Gruensven, but soon afterwards they transferred ownership to Edward and Mary Vercauteren.<sup>19</sup> Sales were then initially handled directly by Edward Vercauteren, who sold two lots to local contractor Ralph P. Belanger, who promptly built speculative houses on each lot (902 and 908 Mansion Street), while Vercauteren himself built a speculative house on a third lot (903 Mansion Street) that was quickly sold to Norbert Berken, a machinist at De Pere Motors.<sup>20</sup> Subsequent sales, however, were handled through Vercauteren's Standard Lumber Yards, Inc., to whom Vercauteren transferred ownership of most of the remaining lots in the plat in early 1942.<sup>21</sup> The exact nature of the financial relationship between Vercauteren and Standard Lumber Yards, Inc., of which he was both the De Pere yard's manager and the company's secretary-treasurer, is not clear but even before Vercauteren had sold the first three lots in the plat, Standard Lumber Yards, Inc. was already advertising the special benefits to be had by working with it to those who were thinking of building at that time. The Standard Yard's first defense-related ad appeared in the local newspaper early in July of 1941 and its headline read: "Now! National Defense Gives You Your Greatest Home Building Opportunity!" The ad then went on to say:

<sup>19</sup> "Real Estate Transfers." *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, July 24, 1941, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> "Many Homes Built Here During 1941." *De Pere Journal-Democrat*, September 18, 1941, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> "Real Estate Transfers." *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, April 28, 1942, p. 12.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 7

Green Bay is in the authorized DEFENSE AREA. What does this mean to the people who are still undecided about building their own home? It means just this ... never before, perhaps never again, will it be as easy to have the home you have always wanted. Its an opportunity that cannot be overlooked. Under the new National Defense setup financing could never have been made simpler, materials will cause no difficulties since defense area homes all have priority rights, increased wages will give you that extra amount you've always needed. So why wait? STANDARD LUMBER YARDS and its reliable contractors have the complete organization that will have you in your home in less than sixty days ... just give us the go signal.<sup>22</sup>

By September, the first three homes had been completed in the district at 902, 903, and 908 Mansion Street.

Also on the east side, three homes have been completed on Mansion street, two by R. P. Belanger and one by Ed Vercauteren. Mansion street is part of the new Thrifty Homes addition in the V between highway 32 and county trunk X.<sup>23</sup>

All three of these houses and almost all of the other houses that were built in the plat afterwards were built on a speculative basis. While most of these houses found buyers immediately, the others were rented at first and continued to be owned by Standard Lumber Yards, Inc. until they were finally purchased. That this was so was definitely not due to any lack of effort on the part of Standard Lumber Yards, Inc. to bring themselves and their expertise to the attention of the home-buying public. At first, the company's ads touted the firm's expertise in building FHA approved homes, and they reflected some of the new optimism that accompanied the end of the Great Depression.

FHA building was designed to help you ... you who with your family have always wanted to have a home of your own. Thousands of Americans are using this sound, simple, economical method of construction ... you can too.

STANDARD LUMBER YARDS INC., is ready to help you. It has government regulated building sites, it has approved plans, it has cut through red tape to get the required FHA approvals. All this combined with an especially trained staff, [and] reliable contractors is reason enough that STANDARD be your choice to build your FHA home.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, July 3, 1941, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> "Many Homes Built Here During 1941." *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, September 18, 1941, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, October 4, 1941, p. 3.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 8

As the nation edged closer to war and as concerns about the possibility of materials restrictions became more real, however, Standard's ads took on a different tone.

Going into production immediately are ten new homes built by STANDARD LUMBER YARDS INC. Without government priorities their building would have been almost impossible. STANDARD was the first to recognize the importance of FHA building. When national defense stepped into the picture STANDARD was quick to realize the necessity of protecting their interests so they immediately investigated defense construction and priorities control.

Today, STANDARD stands alone as the only local lumber and millwork company with a priorities rating from the U.S. government. To you, who are planning to build, to our contractors who have accepted building contracts, we say, assure yourselves before you start that the completion of your home is a certainty by selecting a company with a government priorities rating ... and that means in this locality, STANDARD LUMBER YARDS INC.<sup>25</sup>

One month later, though, and just a week after the attack on Pearl Harbor and the declaration of war that followed, Standard's advertising began specifically targeting defense workers, housing for whom had now become a national priority.

Your job, is it in anyway connected with defense work? Do you want to own your own home? If your answer is yes to both of these questions Standard Lumber Yards Inc. can show you the way.

As a defense worker you are qualified to build or buy a home under \$6000 in this area and take advantage of our Priority rating and liberal financing that assures quick ownership of your home. Standard Lumber Yards Inc., through its associate contractors already has twenty defense homes under construction that will be ready shortly for your inspection.<sup>26</sup>

By the end of 1941, eight houses had been completed in the district, seven of which were on the north side of the street and one on the south side, and by the end of 1942 the remaining six had been completed as well.<sup>27</sup> The principal contractor for the defense worker homes that were built in the Thrifty Homes Addition was Vercauteren Brothers and Associates, which presumably was an outfit

<sup>25</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, November 15, 1941, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, December 13, 1941, p. 3. Standard Lumber's Green Bay yard also had buildings under construction in two locations in Green Bay as well, but the Thrifty Homes Addition was the only place in De Pere where this kind of work was being undertaken.

<sup>27</sup> Tax Rolls, City of De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin. 1941, 1942.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 9

that was created especially for that purpose by Edward Vercauteren and which included one or more of his four brothers as partners in addition to other non-family members as their associates.

By the end of World War II, nine of the district's house had found purchasers, while five remained unsold and were rented out to defense workers by the owner, Standard Lumber Yards, Inc. By the end of 1946, though, the other five had also been sold, thanks to the lifting of the preferential restrictions that favored defense workers as owners, and they have remained in individual ownership ever since. Among the original homeowners was Edward Vercauteren himself, who built the house at 915 Mansion Street for himself and his wife, Marie. Unfortunately, while Vercauteren saw the Thrifty Homes Addition to completion, he died in 1946 at the age of 44, after living there for just four years. Nevertheless, his role in creating what today is the Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District was considered a newsworthy event even at the time of his death and was referred to in his obituary, which, after describing his associations with the Standard Lumber Yards,, Inc., noted that: "Several years ago, he developed one of the city's largest home building projects in Mansion street."<sup>28</sup> In so doing, Vercauteren created work and profit for his partners, much needed housing for the war effort, and a small but historically significant addition to De Pere's residential infrastructure that is still a valuable asset to the city today.

**Summary**

The successful completion of Edward Vercauteren's new Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District project resulted in a new up-to-date addition to De Pere's east side residential neighborhood and it was the only suburban development to be completed in De Pere during WWII. That it was built the way it was was due to the demands placed on the housing industry by World War II, which placed great limitations both on the availability of building materials and on the labor force that was available to build residential houses in the nation during the war. That the district exists at all is due to the demands that were placed upon cities like De Pere during the war. Once the war began, the sudden need for more housing in areas that were critical to war production forced all levels of government to come together and find solutions to the problem. Some solutions, such as encouraging owners of large homes to convert all or part of them into apartments for defense workers, were temporary measures. Others, such as allowing private developers like Edward Vercauteren to build new privately-owned housing units specifically to house defense workers, permanently altered the communities in which these units were built. The Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District is eligible for listing in the NRHP because it is the most concrete visible evidence of De Pere's efforts to solve the defense housing crisis caused by World War II. In De Pere, as in most communities, the municipal government's efforts to solve the defense housing crisis consisted

<sup>28</sup> "Edward Vercauteren Dies In Hospital." *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, July 29, 1946, p. 8. Obituary of Edward Vercauteren.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 10

primarily of smoothing the way for private developers who wanted to create new housing units and it was left to the developers themselves to identify sites where such projects were to take place. This kind of ad hoc community planning was forced on cities by the needs of the war's planners and in many places, what was built was meant to be temporary. The houses that were built on Mansion Street to solve the short-term defense workers housing crisis, though, have been of lasting value to the De Pere community and to the east side residential neighborhood of the city in particular, and this district is also the earliest component of the housing boom that was to transform De Pere and much of the rest of the nation after the war ended.

**Architecture:**

All but one of the fourteen houses that were built in 1941-1942 in the Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District are one-story-tall examples of the Side Gabled Subtype of the Minimal Traditional Style that Virginia and Lee McAlester identified in their book *A Field Guide to American Houses*, and all but two of them were built by the Standard Lumber Yards, Inc. firm, whose yards were located in the adjoining cities of Green Bay and De Pere, Wisconsin. The McAlesters defined examples of this style as having the following characteristics:

Low-or intermediate-pitched roof, more often gabled; small house, generally one-story in height; roof eaves usually have little or no overhang; double hung windows, typically multi-pane or 1/1; minimal amounts of added architectural detail; rarely had dormers.<sup>29</sup>

The most commonly found subtype of this style is the Side-Gabled Roof Subtype (commonly called "Cape Cod"). All but one of the houses in the district are examples of this subtype, which the McAlesters defined as follows:

Although many examples are symmetrical, in keeping with the original folk form, there was much experimentation with asymmetrical variations, including varied window placement and small porches or carports; some had an extra half-story finished under the roof. Two-story side-gabled examples are found, but those would not be called Cape Cod, a term properly confined to the one-story form.<sup>30</sup>

The designs of these houses were in large part a response to design parameters that had been adopted by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) during the Great Depression.

<sup>29</sup> McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. 587.

<sup>30</sup> McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. 587.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 11

Through its approval of properties for mortgage insurance and the publication of housing and subdivision standards, the FHA instituted a national program that would regulate home building practices for many decades. House designs, first published in FHA's *Principles of Planning Small Houses* (1936), were updated periodically. Circulars, such as *Property Standards*, *Recent Developments in Building Construction*, and *Modern Housing*, addressed issues of prefabrication methods and materials, housing standards, and principles of design.

The five FHA house types that appeared in *Planning Small Houses* in 1936 offered "a range in comfort of living," and in succession a "slightly increasing accommodation." Illustrated by floor plans and simple elevations, each type was void of nonessential spaces, picturesque features, and unnecessary items that would add to their cost, following FHA's principle for "providing maximum accommodation within a minimum of means." Houses could be built in a variety of materials, including wood, brick, concrete block, shingles, stucco, or stone. To increase domestic efficiency, new labor saving technologies were introduced: kitchens were equipped with modern appliances, and the utility room's integrated mechanical system replaced the basement furnace of earlier homes.

The simplest FHA design became known in the building industry as the "FHA minimum house." Measuring 534 square feet and having no basement, House A was a one-story, two-bedroom house designed for a family of three adults or two adults and two children. A small kitchen and larger multipurpose living room extended across the front of the house, while two bedrooms and a bathroom were located off a small hallway at the back of the house. The slightly larger House B provided 624 square feet of living space and had more lasting appeal.<sup>31</sup>

No information regarding the source of the designs that were used to build the houses in the Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District has been found but these simple designs could have been found in any number of trade catalogs and FHA publications that would have been readily available to lumberyards of the period, including Standard Lumber Yards, Inc., and building them would have been well within the capabilities of any local carpenter contractor. The district's houses differed from the FHA's Models A and B, however, in being somewhat larger. Most of them measured approximately 28-feet-wide by 26-feet-deep and had some 728 square feet of living space, although the interior space was still arranged in the same way as the FHA models, there being a living room and a kitchen-dining room in the front and two bedrooms and a single bathroom in the back. In addition, all of the district's houses also have full basements as well.

<sup>31</sup> Ames, David L. and Linda Flint McClelland. *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation For the National Register of Historic Places*. 61-62.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 12

Fortunately, houses like the ones in the district were ideally suited to the needs of the emerging wartime economy; they contained enough space to house a family of four, they were easy to build, required no new skills on the part of the builders, and used materials that were not essential to the war effort or that were in short supply.

The Minimal Traditional house was “the little house that could.” It was the small house that could be built with FHA-insured loans in the midst of the Great Depression between 1935 and 1940; the house that could be built quickly to accommodate millions of relocating World War II production plant workers (1941-1945); and the house that could be built rapidly during the late 1940s in large post-World War II developments (1946-1949).<sup>32</sup>

The house in the district are good representative examples of “the little house that could” and they continue to serve their original purpose successfully today, 78 years after the last one was built.

**Preservation Activity:**

The City of De Pere’s Historic Preservation Commission has long been active in educating owners of historic resources in De Pere as to the importance and value of historic preservation, including acting as the sponsor of this nomination.

**Archeological Potential**

The extent of any archeological remains in the district is conjectural at this time. No information regarding possible prehistoric remains in this area was found in the course of this research. Furthermore, it is likely that many remains of pre-European cultures that may once have been located within the district would have been greatly disturbed by the farming and building activities associated with the subsequent development of the area. It is possible, however, that archaeological remains associated with the Euro-American farms that were once located within the district boundaries are still extant. Maps and historic photos that would help locate these remains exist, but these remains are also likely to have been disturbed by the post-World War II building activity in the district.

**Acknowledgment**

This project has been funded with the assistance of a grant-in-aid from the Park Service, US. Department of the Interior, under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended. Historic Preservation grants-in-aid are administered in Wisconsin in conjunction with the National Register of Historic Places program by the Division of Historic Preservation of the Wisconsin

<sup>32</sup> McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. 588.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 13

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Historical Society. However, the contents and opinions contained in this nomination do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the National Park Service or the Wisconsin Historical Society.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
 National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**

**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
 De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 9 Page 1

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**Major Bibliographical References:**

Ames, David L. and Linda Flint McClelland. *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation For the National Register of Historic Places*. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, 2002.

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Heritage Research, Ltd. *Historical and Architectural Resources Survey, City of De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin*. De Pere, 2017.

McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013.

Wyatt, Barbara (ed.). *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin: Vols. 1-3, A Manual for Historic Properties*. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1987.

Newspapers

*De Pere Journal-Democrat* (various issues).

*Green Bay Press-Gazette* (various issues).

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 10 Page 1

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**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The district boundaries begin at a point on the east curb line of S. Erie Street that also corresponds to the NW corner of the lot associated with 903 Mansion Street. The line then continues SSE along said east curb line to a point that corresponds to the SW corner of the lot associated with 903 Mansion Street. The line then continues SSE across Mansion Street to a point on said east curb line of S. Erie Street that corresponds to the NW corner of the lot associated with 902 Mansion Street. The line then continues south along said east curb line to a point that corresponds to the SW corner of the lot associated with 902 Mansion Street. The line then turns 75° and continues SE along the rear lot lines of the lots associated with 902, 908, 914, 920, 928, 932 and 938 Mansion Street to a point that corresponds to the SE corner of the lot associated with 938 Mansion Street. The line then turns and continues N along the east lot line of said 938 Mansion Street to a point that corresponds to the SW corner of the lot associated with 942 Mansion Street. The line then turns 75° and continues in an ENE direction along the southerly lot line of the lot associated with 942 Mansion Street until reaching a point on the north-east-facing curb line of Jordan Road that corresponds to the SE corner of said 942 Mansion Street. The line then turns 90° and continues NW along the north-east-facing curb line of Jordan Road to the NE corner of the lot associated with 942 Mansion Street. The line then continues NW across Mansion Street to a point on said north-east-facing curb line that corresponds to the SE corner of the lot associated with 937 Mansion Street. The line then continues NE along said north-east-facing curb line to a point that corresponds to the NE corner of the lot associated with 937 Mansion Street. The line then turns 90° and continues SW along the side lot line of the lot associated with 937 Mansion Street to the NW corner of said lot. The line then turns 75° and continues NW along the rear lot line of 927 Mansion Street and a short portion of the rear lot line of the lot associated with 921 Mansion Street, then turns 25° and continues in a WNW direction along the rear lot lines of the lots associated with 921, 915, 909, and 903 Mansion Street to the POB. These boundaries enclose 3.41 acres of land.

**Boundary Justification:**

The district boundaries enclose all the land that has historically been associated with the district's resources.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section photos Page 1

Items a-d are the same for photos 1 – 16.

Photo 1

- a) Mansion Street WWII Defense Housing Historic District
- b) De Pere, Brown County, WI
- c) Timothy F. Heggland, April 1, 2020
- d) Wisconsin Historical Society
- e) 902 Mansion St., View looking SW
- f) Photo 1 of 16

Photo 10

- e) 928 Mansion St., View looking S
- f) Photo 10 of 16

Photo 2

- e) 903 Mansion St., View looking NNE
- f) Photo 2 of 16

Photo 11

- e) 932 Mansion St., View looking S
- f) Photo 11 of 16

Photo 3

- e) 908 Mansion St., View looking SW
- f) Photo 3 of 16

Photo 12

- e) 937 Mansion St., View looking NE
- f) Photo 12 of 16

Photo 4

- e) 909 Mansion St., View looking NNE
- f) Photo 4 of 16

Photo 13

- e) 938 Mansion St., View looking SW
- f) Photo 13 of 16

Photo 5

- e) 914 Mansion St., View looking S
- f) Photo 5 of 16

Photo 14

- e) 942 Mansion St., View looking S
- f) Photo 14 of 16

Photo 6

- e) 915 Mansion St., View looking NNE
- f) Photo 6 of 16

Photo 15

- e) General View of Mansion St., View looking W
- f) Photo 15 of 16

Photo 7

- e) 920 Mansion St., View looking S
- f) Photo 7 of 16

Photo 16

- e) General View of Mansion St., View looking E
- f) Photo 16 of 16

Photo 8

- e) 921 Mansion St., View looking N
- f) Photo 8 of 16

Photos 1, 5 & 10 are of Model A.

Photos 7, 11 & 13 are of Model B.

Photos 3, 4, 8, & 14 are of Model C.

Photos 2, 6, & 12 are of Model D.

Photo 9 is a Model E.

Photo 9

- e) 927 Mansion St., View looking NE
- f) Photo 9 of 16

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section figures Page 1

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\_\_\_Insert Figures

\_\_\_End Figures

Attachment: Mansion Street WWII Defense Homes Historic District nrform (9888 : Staff recommendation and possible action regarding



## City of De Pere, Wisconsin

### Request For Historic Preservation Commission Action

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**MEETING DATE:** August 17, 2020

**DEPARTMENT:** Planning

**FROM:** Peter Schleinz

**SUBJECT:** Staff recommendation and possible action regarding nomination documentation for the proposed Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District.

---

The purpose for this topic is to review the nomination documents that were completed in July 2020. The documents and photos were forwarded to WHS by the consultant, Mr. Timothy F. Heggland. A sample of the referenced project photos will be shown during the PowerPoint presentation for the meeting.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Accept the nomination documents and approve/support the forwarding of the nomination documents to WHS for consideration as a historic district in De Pere.

#### ATTACHMENTS:

- Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District NR Form (DOC)

**United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

**historic name** Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
**other names/site number**

**2. Location**

|                            |                                                                |                     |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>street &amp; number</b> | 800-868 East St. Francis Road<br>802-879 West St. Francis Road | N/A                 | <b>not for publication</b> |
| <b>city or town</b>        |                                                                | N/A                 | <b>vicinity</b>            |
| <b>state</b> Wisconsin     | <b>code</b> WI                                                 | <b>county</b> Brown | <b>code</b> 009            |
|                            |                                                                |                     | <b>zip code</b> 54115      |

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_ nationally \_ statewide X locally. (\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer - Wisconsin

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_ meets \_ does not meet the National Register criteria.  
(\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

|                                         |                  |           |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District | Brown            | Wisconsin |
| Name of Property                        | County and State |           |

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

\_\_\_ entered in the National Register.

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register.

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register.

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ removed from the National Register.

\_\_\_ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

#### 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(check as many boxes as apply)

X private  
public-local  
public-State  
public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

X building(s)  
district  
structure  
site  
object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

|              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| contributing | noncontributing |
| 35           | 0 buildings     |
|              | sites           |
|              | structures      |
|              | objects         |
| 35           | 0 total         |

**Name of related multiple property listing:**

(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources**

**previously listed in the National Register**

0

#### 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

#### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

STONE

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD

#### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
Name of Property

Brown  
County and State

Wisconsin

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

### Period of Significance

1953-1957

### Significant Dates

N/A

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Smet, Robert H.  
Rowland, Robert L.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

|                                         |                  |           |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District | Brown            | Wisconsin |
| Name of Property                        | County and State |           |

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

**Primary location of additional data:**

- X State Historic Preservation Office  
 \_ Other State Agency  
 \_ Federal Agency  
 X Local government  
 \_ University  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Name of repository: White Pillars Museum  
 De Pere, WI

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 15.3 acres

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

|   |      |         |          |
|---|------|---------|----------|
| 1 | 16   | 416620  | 4923050  |
|   | Zone | Easting | Northing |

|   |      |         |          |
|---|------|---------|----------|
| 2 | 16   | 416800  | 4922960  |
|   | Zone | Easting | Northing |

|   |      |         |          |
|---|------|---------|----------|
| 3 | 16   | 416660  | 4922680  |
|   | Zone | Easting | Northing |

|   |      |         |          |
|---|------|---------|----------|
| 4 | 16   | 416480  | 4922780  |
|   | Zone | Easting | Northing |

☐ See Continuation Sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

|                      |
|----------------------|
| 11. Form Prepared By |
|----------------------|

|                 |                                |       |    |                        |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|-------|----|------------------------|
| name/title      | Timothy F. Heggland/Consultant |       |    |                        |
| organization    |                                |       |    | Date July 23, 2020     |
| street & number | 6391 Hillsandwood Road         |       |    | telephone 608-795-2650 |
| city or town    | Mazomanie                      | state | WI | zip code 53560         |

|                                         |                  |           |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District | Brown            | Wisconsin |
| Name of Property                        | County and State |           |

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

**Maps**                      A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
                                  A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**            Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional Items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

|                            |                            |                  |               |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| <b>name/title</b>          | Various. See Separate List | <b>Date</b>      | July 23, 2020 |
| <b>organization</b>        |                            | <b>telephone</b> |               |
| <b>street &amp; number</b> |                            | <b>zip code</b>  |               |
| <b>city or town</b>        | <b>state</b> WI            |                  |               |

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 1

**Description:**

The Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District is a highly intact residential district containing 35 single-family residences and it is located on the north edge of the city of De Pere.<sup>1</sup> This district comprises the whole of the Daviswood Plat, which was established by the Morton E. Davis family in 1952, and this plat is rectilinear in shape and was originally divided into 36 lots that are arrayed around a U-shaped drive.<sup>2</sup> The northeast-southwest-running easternmost arm of this drive is known as E. St. Francis Rd., the equally long northeast-southwest-running westernmost arm is known as W. St. Francis Rd., and both of these arms intersect with each other at the northern end of the plat and open onto and intersect with the northwest-southeast-running Ridgeway Blvd. at the southern end. Lots in the district vary in size and in plan but most of them are rectilinear in plan and all of them are at least 100-feet-wide by 137-feet deep. All the houses in the district were built between 1953 and 1957, and they were mostly custom built for persons who were members of the city of De Pere and the city of Green Bay's managerial, entrepreneurial, and professional elite. All but one of these houses are one-story-tall and all but one are fine, highly intact representative examples of the various subtypes of the Ranch Style that Virginia Savage McAlester identified in her book *A Field Guide to American Houses*, the single partially two-story-tall exception being an example of what McAlester calls the Contemporary Style.<sup>3</sup> These houses were all built by local contractors and some of their designs were probably derived from published plans and were built on a speculative basis, but most of them were custom-built for their first owners and nineteen of them were built by De Pere contractor Robert H. Smet, who also designed his houses as well.

The houses in the district have varied floor plans but most are essentially rectilinear in shape and their ground stories contain anywhere from 1900 to 2500 square feet of living space, which typically includes a living room with fireplace, a dining room, a kitchen, three bedrooms, a large bathroom, and very often a basement play room with a second fireplace and a second bathroom. Basements have poured concrete walls and floors and most, but not all, are full basements. All of the houses in the district were required by deed covenant to have an attached garage and in practice these turned out to be two-car garages that typically add at least another 500 square feet to the overall square footage of these houses. Exterior claddings vary, but all but two or three of these houses are clad either completely or mostly in either brick or stone veneer, with the exceptions being clad completely or mostly in vertical board siding. Chimney masses are generally large and are often treated in Wrightian Style fashion as prominent design features, with several district houses having more than one chimney mass.

<sup>1</sup> The population of De Pere was 23,800 in 2010. De Pere is located just south of the city of Green Bay, the Brown County seat, whose population in 2010 was 104,057.

<sup>2</sup> 868 E. St. Francis Rd. has two lots associated with it, so the district's 35 houses do, in fact, sit on 36 lots.

<sup>3</sup> McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013, pp. 598-609, for a greatly enlarged discussion of the Ranch Style and pp. 629-646 for the Contemporary Style. See also: McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984, pp. 478-480.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 2

Land in the district is flat, streets in the district are paved with concrete and are edged with concrete curbs and gutters, and the lots in the district are given over to mown lawns and are well-landscaped.<sup>4</sup> Ornamental shrubs and flowers are found in abundance surrounding these houses and their lots are shaded by a mixture of deciduous and coniferous trees, some of which were already in existence and mature when the plat was first developed. The district's houses face onto both E. and W. St. Francis Rd. and their facades respect a uniform setback from the street. Paved paths lead up to the main entrances of every house but most of these pathways start from the paved driveways that access each house's automobile garage and only seven of the district's houses also have separate paved pathways that lead up to the house from the street.

The district is bounded by the older Urbandale Second Addition plat to the west, Ridgeway Blvd. to the south, the later Daviswood II plat to the east, and the spacious grounds of St. Norbert Abbey to the north. When the district was first platted in 1952, however, the new plat was situated on what was still rural land that was located on the northern edge of the city of De Pere, and the land to the north, southeast, and east of the district was still open and undeveloped. Today, the district is surrounded by a much larger residential neighborhood that consists of older houses to the west and southwest, contemporary or newer houses to the south, southeast, and east, and the large grounds of St. Norbert Abbey, built in 1959/1963, to the north.

Most of the houses in the district are larger than houses of comparable age located in the neighboring residential area and other houses built in De Pere during the period of significance. What distinguishes the houses in the district from the houses that surround them is primarily their size, their high degree of integrity, and the high quality of their design and construction. Many of the houses in the areas that lie adjacent to the district to the south and east are of similar vintage and are also examples of the Ranch Style but the houses in the district are both larger than those in the adjacent areas and they have more iconic designs.

**Inventory:**

The following inventory lists every building in the district along with the names of the original owners, the construction date, the address, and the resource's contributing ( C ) or non-contributing ( NC ) status. The abbreviations given below for the architectural styles that are found in the district are the same abbreviation used by the Wisconsin Historical Society's Division of Historic Preservation. These are as follows:

CON = Contemporary Style  
RA = Ranch Style

<sup>4</sup> There are no sidewalks in the district.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 3

|   |     |                    |                                      |      |     |
|---|-----|--------------------|--------------------------------------|------|-----|
| C | 800 | E. St. Francis Rd. | Glen & Ethel Macaux House            | 1955 | RA  |
| C | 805 | E. St. Francis Rd. | Gerald & Agnes Hermesen House        | 1954 | RA  |
| C | 814 | E. St. Francis Rd. | Willard & Marian Jones House         | 1955 | RA  |
| C | 815 | E. St. Francis Rd. | Clarence & Thelma Albert House       | 1954 | RA  |
| C | 822 | E. St. Francis Rd. | Howard & Nathalie House              | 1955 | RA  |
| C | 823 | E. St. Francis Rd. | Fred & Dorothy Lindner House         | 1954 | RA  |
| C | 832 | E. St. Francis Rd. | Frederick & Elizabeth Kress House    | 1955 | RA  |
| C | 833 | E. St. Francis Rd. | Francis E. & Virginia Dykstra House  | 1956 | RA  |
| C | 842 | E. St. Francis Rd. | John & Elaine Holloway House         | 1954 | RA  |
| C | 843 | E. St. Francis Rd. | Sylvester & Florence Jansen House    | 1955 | RA  |
| C | 848 | E. St. Francis Rd. | Henry & Betty Goelzer House          | 1954 | RA  |
| C | 849 | E. St. Francis Rd. | Charles & Margery Foster House       | 1954 | RA  |
| C | 857 | E. St. Francis Rd. | Thomas & Carol Burgess House         | 1954 | RA  |
| C | 858 | E. St. Francis Rd. | Fred & Marion Will House             | 1956 | RA  |
| C | 863 | E. St. Francis Rd. | Frederick W. & Helen Miller House    | 1954 | RA  |
| C | 868 | E. St. Francis Rd. | Morton Davis Jr. House               | 1953 | RA  |
| C | 802 | W. St. Francis Rd. | Robert & Marie Quigley House         | 1955 | RA  |
| C | 803 | W. St. Francis Rd. | Dr. Carleton & Dorothy Bolles House  | 1954 | RA  |
| C | 812 | W. St. Francis Rd. | Charles & Martha Trayser House       | 1953 | RA  |
| C | 813 | W. St. Francis Rd. | Leon R. & Lorraine DuChateau House   | 1953 | RA  |
| C | 820 | W. St. Francis Rd. | Dell & Frances McCoy House           | 1953 | RA  |
| C | 821 | W. St. Francis Rd. | Philip & Betty McNulty House         | 1953 | RA  |
| C | 830 | W. St. Francis Rd. | John C. & Helen Whitney House        | 1956 | RA  |
| C | 831 | W. St. Francis Rd. | Sigward & Harriet Anderson House     | 1954 | RA  |
| C | 840 | W. St. Francis Rd. | Alfred & Mae Callahan House          | 1956 | RA  |
| C | 841 | W. St. Francis Rd. | Roy & Agnes Behling House            | 1955 | RA  |
| C | 846 | W. St. Francis Rd. | Thomas & Evelyn Lutsey House         | 1954 | RA  |
| C | 847 | W. St. Francis Rd. | Hugo & Dolores Cuene House           | 1953 | RA  |
| C | 854 | W. St. Francis Rd. | William & Elsie Bodart House         | 1953 | RA  |
| C | 855 | W. St. Francis Rd. | Donald & Ruth Macco House            | 1955 | RA  |
| C | 860 | W. St. Francis Rd. | Richard & Violet Overmier House      | 1954 | RA  |
| C | 861 | W. St. Francis Rd. | Vernon & Beatrice Kussow House       | 1953 | RA  |
| C | 867 | W. St. Francis Rd. | Dr. Bernard & Louise Waldkirch House | 1957 | CON |
| C | 873 | W. St. Francis Rd. | Herbert & Mary Trudell House         | 1955 | RA  |
| C | 879 | W. St. Francis Rd. | Irving & Evelyn Reeke House          | 1954 | RA  |
|   |     |                    |                                      |      |     |

**Ranch Style**

In her book *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Virginia Savage McAlester defined the Ranch Style as follows:

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 4

Identifying Features: Broad one-story shape; usually built low to ground; low-pitched roof without dormers; commonly with moderate to wide roof overhang; front entry usually located off-center and sheltered under main roof of house; garage typically attached to main façade (faces front, side, or rear); a large picture window generally present; asymmetrical façade.<sup>5</sup>

McAlester then goes on to identify four principal subtypes of the Ranch Style and what follows are lists of the best representative examples of each subtype that are found in the district. These lists include the building's address, first owner name, date of construction, and AHI Number.<sup>6</sup>

Hipped Roof Subtype:

About 10 percent of one-story Ranch houses have a simple hipped roof with a long ridge running parallel to the front façade. These are more common in rural areas and neighborhoods of smaller houses. Very occasionally, as in the side-gabled subtype, a large example with broadly angled wings occurs.<sup>7</sup>

|             |                         |                                |                   |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| AHI# 233676 | 823 E. St. Francis Road | Fred & Dorothy Lindner House   | 1954 <sup>8</sup> |
| AHI# 233682 | 849 E. St. Francis Road | Charles & Margery Foster House | 1954 <sup>9</sup> |

Cross-Hipped Roof Subtype:

About 40 percent of one-story Ranch houses have a cross-hipped roof. Typically these are one-story houses with a long roof ridge running parallel to the front façade with a single hipped extension. Occasionally a second hipped front extension is also present.

Sometimes the cross-gabled and cross-hipped types have a combination roof with a front hip on a side-gabled roof or, conversely, a front-facing gable on a hipped roof. Very large

<sup>5</sup> McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. 597.

<sup>6</sup> Every property in the district has had an electronic database entry prepared for it in accordance with Division of Historic Preservation (DHP) standards. These entries consist of a digital photo of the resource, a summary of the historical and architectural research performed on the subject property, and they also include other required information such as an address and a parcel identification number. These entries were made for the DHP as additions to its Architectural Historic Inventory (AHI), which now includes more than 200,000 building located throughout the state, and each property has a unique AHI number. The information contained in these entries and additional historic data can be viewed by accessing the Wisconsin Historical Society's web site: [www.wisconsinhistory.org](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org).

<sup>7</sup> McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. 597.

<sup>8</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. April 2, 1954, p. 31. Robert H. Smet was the builder/designer. This L-plan stone-clad house has no less than three separate chimney masses.

<sup>9</sup> *De Pere Journal-Democrat*. May 6, 1954. William Adriansen was the builder.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 5

examples may feature rather complex roof forms with a combination of roof heights and types.<sup>10</sup>

|             |                         |                                   |                    |
|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| AHI# 121704 | 840 W. St. Francis Road | Alfred & Mae Callahan House       | 1956 <sup>11</sup> |
| AHI# 121705 | 841 W. St. Francis Road | Roy H. & Agnes Behling House      | 1955 <sup>12</sup> |
| AHI# 233678 | 833 E. St. Francis Road | Francis & Virginia Dykstra House  | 1956 <sup>13</sup> |
| AHI# 233680 | 843 E. St. Francis Road | Sylvester & Florence Jansen House | 1955 <sup>14</sup> |
| AHI# 233681 | 848 E. St. Francis Road | Henry & Betty Goelzer House       | 1954 <sup>15</sup> |
| AHI# 233691 | 821 W. St. Francis Road | Philip & Betty McNulty House      | 1953 <sup>16</sup> |

Side-Gabled Roof Subtype:

About 10 percent of one-story Ranch houses have side-gabled roofs with a long roof ridge running parallel to the front façade. These are more common in rural areas and neighborhoods of smaller houses. Some high-style examples have slight angles in the front (or other) façade, giving the appearance of wide-spread welcoming arms.<sup>17</sup>

Examples of the side-gabled subtype are especially common in the district because they were a favored form of builder/designer Robert H. Smet, who built and designed 19 of the houses in the district. The district's Smet-designed examples of this subtype can be readily distinguished by his habit of using two different roof heights on these houses. Typically, a larger gable roof covers the main part of the house and a slightly lower separate gable roof covers the attached garage. The best of these houses is listed below.

|             |                         |                               |                    |
|-------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| AHI# 121701 | 805 E. St. Francis Road | Gerald & Alice Hermesen House | 1954 <sup>18</sup> |
| AHI# 121706 | 846 W. St. Francis Road | Thomas & Evelyn Lutsey House  | 1954 <sup>19</sup> |
| AHI# 121707 | 847 W. St. Francis Road | Hugo & Dolores Cuene House    | 1953 <sup>20</sup> |
| AHI# 121708 | 854 W. St. Francis Road | William & Elsie Bodart House  | 1953 <sup>21</sup> |
| AHI# 233674 | 814 E. St. Francis Road | Willard & Marian Jones House  | 1955 <sup>22</sup> |

<sup>10</sup> McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. 597.

<sup>11</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. November 3, 1955, p. 47. Robert H. Smet was the builder/designer.

<sup>12</sup> *De Pere Journal-Democrat*. December 2, 1954, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. December 1, 1955, p. 41. Ed Czeck was the builder.

<sup>14</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. November 5, 1954, p. 25. Ralph Vandebush was the builder.

<sup>15</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. March 3, 1954, p. 36. Ralph Vandebush was the builder.

<sup>16</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. November 7, 1952, p. 20. Robert H. Smet was the builder/designer.

<sup>17</sup> McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. 597.

<sup>18</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. October 7, 1954, p. 40. Robert H. Smet was the builder/designer.

<sup>19</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. November 4, 1953, p. 36. Robert H. Smet was the builder/designer.

<sup>20</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. October 1, 1953, p. 41. Robert H. Smet was the builder/designer.

<sup>21</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. June 3, 1953, p. 36. Robert H. Smet was the builder/designer.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 6

AHI# 233675                      822 E. St. Francis Road                      Howard & Nathalie Roberts House                      1955<sup>23</sup>

An especially noteworthy example of Smet's use of the side-gabled form is the house he designed for Richard & Viola Overmier. As Virginia McAlester suggested in her description of the hipped roof subtype, occasionally, a large gable-roofed example with broadly angled wings occurs, and the Overmier house, which bends around its corner lot, is such a one.

AHI# 233695                      860 W. St. Francis Road                      Richard & Viola Overmier House                      1954<sup>24</sup>

Two other fine district examples of the Side-Gabled Roof Subtype are both the work of unidentified builders.

AHI# 233874                      858 E. St. Francis Road                      Fred & Marion Will House                      1956<sup>25</sup>  
AHI# 233693                      831 W. St. Francis Road                      Sigward & Harriet Anderson House                      1954<sup>26</sup>

Cross-Gabled Roof Subtype:

About 40 percent of one-story Ranch houses have a broad side-gabled form, with a long roof ridge parallel to the street, and a single prominent, front-facing gable extension. Occasionally, a second such gable is present.<sup>27</sup>

Robert Smet also made use of this subtype for his designs for houses in the district, but his version is somewhat different from the norm in that his front-facing extension almost invariably has a hipped-roof on which sits a very broad, windowless triangular-shaped gable-roofed dormer. The best of these are also listed below.

AHI# 121703                      863 E. St. Francis Road                      Frederick W. & Helen Miller House                      1954<sup>28</sup>  
AHI# 233673                      800 E. St. Francis Road                      Glen & Ethel Macaux House                      1955<sup>29</sup>  
AHI# 233685                      868 E. St. Francis Road                      Morton E. Davis, Jr. House                      1953<sup>30</sup>  
AHI# 233687                      803 W. St. Francis Road                      Dr. Carleton & Dorothy Bolles House                      1954<sup>31</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. October 5, 1955, p. 39. Robert H. Smet was the builder/designer.

<sup>23</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. May 4, 1955, p. 25. Robert H. Smet was the builder/designer.

<sup>24</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. December 2, 1953, p. 32. Robert H. Smet was the builder/designer.

<sup>25</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. September 6, 1955, p. 39.

<sup>26</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. July 2, 1954, p. 24.

<sup>27</sup> McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. 598.

<sup>28</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. April 2, 1954, p. 1. Robert H. Smet was the builder/designer.

<sup>29</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. June 2, 1955, p. 43. Robert H. Smet was the builder/designer.

<sup>30</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. July 2, 1953, p. 14. Robert H. Smet was the builder/designer.

<sup>31</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. October 4, 1954, p. 40. Robert H. Smet was the builder/designer.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 7

Four other fine district examples of the Cross-Gabled Roof Subtype are listed below, three of which are the work of unidentified builders.

|             |                         |                              |                    |
|-------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| AHI# 121710 | 873 W. St. Francis Road | Herbert & Mary Trudell House | 1955 <sup>32</sup> |
| AHI# 233679 | 842 E. St. Francis Road | John & Elaine Holloway House | 1954 <sup>33</sup> |
| AHI# 233686 | 802 W. St. Francis Road | Robert & Marie Quigley House | 1955 <sup>34</sup> |
| AHI# 233694 | 855 W. St. Francis Road | Donald & Ruth Macco House    | 1954 <sup>35</sup> |

**Contemporary Style**

In her book *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Virginia Savage McAlester defined the Contemporary Style as follows:

Identifying Features: Low-pitched gabled roof (sometimes flat) with widely overhanging eaves; roof beams commonly exposed; windows generally present in gable ends (or just below roof line in non-gabled facades); built with natural materials (wood, stone, brick, or occasionally concrete block); broad expanses of uninterrupted wall surface typically on front façade; entry door may be recessed or obscured; asymmetrical.<sup>36</sup>

McAlester then goes on to identify five principal subtypes of the Contemporary Style, one of which is the Side-Gabled Roof Subtype, which she called “The least common of the gabled forms, this subtype is more often found in later examples.” The district contains just a single example of this style and it was the last house built in the district, the only one designed by an architect, and, at a cost of \$45,000.00, by far the most expensive. This was the seven bedroom-house (there were seven children) built for Dr. Bernard and Louise Waldkirch and designed by Wisconsin Rapids architect Robert L. Rowlands.<sup>37</sup> This 3270-square-foot house has a low one-story wing that contains the garage and the house’s principal living rooms and a taller two-story wing that contains the bedrooms, and it is mostly clad in vertical boards, although the main entranceway is also flanked by white brick-clad walls. White brick was also used to cover the massive battered chimney mass that rises from the roof of the one-story wing.

|             |                         |                                      |                    |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| AHI# 121709 | 867 W. St. Francis Road | Dr. Bernard & Louise Waldkirch House | 1957 <sup>38</sup> |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|

<sup>32</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. October 5, 1955, p. 31.

<sup>33</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. June 3, 1954, p. 39. Ralph Vandebush was the builder. This is an example of a hip-roofed house with a gable-roofed front extension.

<sup>34</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. March 3, 1955, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> *De Pere Journal-Democrat*. September 3, 1953, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. 629.

<sup>37</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. November 4, 1957, p. 12.

<sup>38</sup> *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. November 3, 1956, p. 14.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 8

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**Integrity**

The houses in the district are notable for being fine representative examples of the Ranch Style, they are very well maintained, and they still retain a high degree of integrity today, as does their setting. Some of these houses have been expanded over the years but these additions have all occurred on the rear elevations of these houses and are not visible from the street. In addition, several of the houses have also now had their original wooden siding sections covered over with vinyl but these sections of siding are usually limited to side elevations and gable ends.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 1

**Significance:**

The Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District contains the city of De Pere's finest concentration of 1950's-era single-family Ranch Style houses. The Daviswood Subdivision was created in 1952 on what was then still undeveloped land located along De Pere's northern boundary and it was intended from the onset that it would be an up-scale neighborhood having larger than average lots and restrictive covenants regarding building siting and design. The timing of this new development was excellent because De Pere and the much larger neighboring city of Green Bay were both then experiencing a post-war population boom and the market for new up-scale housing was growing rapidly at that time, as was the area's economy. As a result, the 35 lots in the plat sold quickly and by 1957, large, expensive, custom-built houses occupied by owners who were typically members of De Pere and Green Bay's entrepreneurial, managerial, and professional elite occupied each one. Nineteen of these houses were both built and designed by De Pere builder/contractor Robert H. Smet, with other area building contractors being responsible for the remainder, the district's single exception being the Ranch Style-influenced Contemporary Style house that was built in 1957 for Dr. Bernard Waldkirch and which was designed by Wisconsin Rapids architect Robert L. Rowland. Fortunately, all of the district's original buildings are still extant and are highly intact today and as a result, the district still looks almost exactly the way it did in 1957 when the Waldkirch House, the last house in the district, was built. Consequently, the district's period of significance spans the years from 1953-1957, these being the years during which all the houses in the district were constructed.

The Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District was first identified as a potentially eligible historic district in the Historical and Architectural Resources Survey of the City of De Pere, which was undertaken in 2017.<sup>39</sup> This survey found that the district was potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under NRHP Criterion C (Architecture) at the local level of significance. Research was therefore undertaken to assess the potential for nominating the district to the NRHP utilizing the NR significance area of Architecture, a theme that is also identified in the State of Wisconsin's Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP). This research centered on evaluating the resources within the district utilizing the Contemporary Style subsection of the Architecture Theme of the CRMP.<sup>40</sup> In addition, this research also centered on evaluating the resources within the district utilizing the context developed by the National Park Service in a National Register Bulletin entitled *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation For the National Register of Historic Places*.<sup>41</sup> The results of this research is detailed below and

<sup>39</sup> Heritage Research, Ltd. *Historical and Architectural Resources Survey, City of De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin*. De Pere, 2017.

<sup>40</sup> Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*. Madison: Division of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986, Volume 2, p. 2-37.

<sup>41</sup> Ames, David L. and Linda Flint McClelland. *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation For the National Register of Historic Places*. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service,

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 2

shows that the Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District is locally significant under NR Criterion C as an architecturally significant collection of fine Ranch Style single-family residences that together constitute a well-defined and visually distinct geographic and historic entity within the boundaries of the city of De Pere.

**History:**

A detailed history of the city of De Pere and its built resources is embodied in the City of De Pere Intensive Survey Report, printed in 2001, and the Historical and Architectural Resources Survey, City of De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin, printed in 2017.<sup>42</sup> Consequently, the historic context that follows deals primarily with the history of the district itself and with the immediate surrounding area.

The city of De Pere is situated on both banks of the Fox River some five miles south of the mouth of the river, at which point it flows into Green Bay and Lake Michigan, and like most other early Wisconsin communities, the city owes its existence to its proximity to water, which provided the state's first settlers with transportation routes, a source of water for drinking, and the only readily available means of generating power for industrial purposes before steam power became widespread. The first European to see what would become the future site of De Pere was, in all probability, Jean Nicolet in 1634, who upon arrival claimed the surrounding territory for France. In time, Nicolet was followed by two Jesuit missionaries, Fathers Allouez and Andre, who established a mission at the site of the first rapids of the Fox River in 1670. In 1671, the fathers erected a chapel and residence on the east shore of the river just below these rapids and these buildings became their headquarters and were the first buildings that were constructed on the future site of today's city.<sup>43</sup>

The earliest commercial activity that took place within and around what today is the city of De Pere was conducted by merchants catering to traffic moving up and down the old Military Roads on the east and west banks of the Fox River. It was not until after the first dam was built across the rapids at De Pere in 1836-37 and especially after the first bridge connecting the east and west sides of the river was built across the top of the dam in 1850-1851, however, that commercial activity at the De Pere site began in earnest because the combination of transportation access and readily available waterpower finally made the communities on both sides of the former rapids economically viable. As a result, commercial districts developed at both ends of the bridge and also along the roads that extended out from the two bridge ends and into outlying areas that were in need of the resources that De Pere was increasingly able to supply.

National Register of Historic Places, 2002.

<sup>42</sup> Heggland, Timothy F. City of De Pere Intensive Survey. De Pere: 2001, and Heritage Research, Ltd. Historical and Architectural Resources Survey, City of De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin. De Pere, 2017.

<sup>43</sup> Maes, Matthew J. The History of Brown County and De Pere, Wisconsin. Brown County Democrat: April 3, 1914, p. 9 and April 10, 1914, p. 9.

Attachment: Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District NR Form (9889 : Staff recommendation and possible action regarding nomination

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 3

The most important road on the east side of the river was a former part of the old Military Road called Broadway. What made this particular north-south-running road important was the fact that it was the principal road that ran north up the east side of the river to the city of Green Bay, which is located at the mouth of the Fox River. Thus, Broadway was already an important local and regional thoroughfare when the first bridge was built at De Pere and the place where Broadway connected with the east end of the east-west-running bridge thus became a natural place for commerce to develop.

In the years that followed, a thriving commercial district did in fact evolve along Broadway at this location and much of what survives of it is now listed in the NRHP as the South Broadway Historic District.<sup>44</sup> In addition, the one-block-wide stretch of land on the west side of Broadway that is located just north of this historic commercial district slopes gently down to the Fox River from Broadway and comprises the east bank of the river. As a result, large lots were created along this stretch of Broadway that turned out to be ideal sites for some of the De Pere area's most spacious and expensive late nineteenth and early twentieth Century homes, and these homes are also now listed in the NRHP as the North Broadway Street Historic District.<sup>45</sup>

By 1910, De Pere's population had risen to 4477, by which time new residential development on the east side of the river was moving south, north, and eastward from the city's historic east side core as lots in the existing plats filled up. One of these older plats was the De Pere Land Co. Addition, Subdivision A, which had been platted in 1892 and which was bounded by N. Broadway to the west, what was then the city limits to the north, what today is Ridgeway Blvd. to the south, and what today is Glenwood Ave. to the east. That at least a speculative demand existed for the 99 lots in this subdivision was obvious because all of them were sold within two days of the new plat being announced and even before the streets in the plat had been completely graded or landscaping begun. However, nothing much was built in this plat, which is located just to the east of the north end of the North Broadway Street Historic District, until 1913, when it was resurveyed and replatted by Ira M. Martin as the Urbandale Park Addition and the Urbandale Park Second Addition.<sup>46</sup>

At that time, De Pere's streetcar line ran north on N. Broadway adjacent to the new suburb on its way north to Green Bay. Even so, serious development did not take place in Urbandale Park until after World War I and even by 1937, only sixteen houses had been built in the subdivision. Mostly, this lack of growth was due to the dire economic conditions that were prevalent nationwide during the Great Depression but another factor that influenced potential home builders was the lack of municipal services in the suburb, which even as late as 1935 lacked sewer hookups and paved roads. Conditions in Urbandale began to change in 1934, however, when the City of De Pere began working on

<sup>44</sup> South Broadway Historic District. National Register Reference # 09001272.

<sup>45</sup> North Broadway Street Historic District. National Register Reference # 83003368.

<sup>46</sup> Urbandale Park was platted on July 2, 1913 and Urbandale Park Second Addition on July 28, 1913.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 4

infrastructure improvement projects using money and labor provided by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA). The first project to affect the district was the laying of sewer pipe beginning in 1934. The following year, a local newspaper account had this to say.

Work on the Urbandale sewer project has been discontinued temporarily until additional pipe can be purchased. Up to date 3,500 feet of pipe has been laid and 1,000 feet additional are necessary to complete the job. Pipe purchased last year under the appropriation of the city council has been used and when further funds are available under the government's emergency relief act the contract will be finished.<sup>47</sup>

The following year, another district-related construction project was given approval by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and resulted in what is now Ridgeway Boulevard.

Plans for the improvement of Ridgeway from Broadway [east] to Allouez avenue call for its widening to 60 feet with a boulevard in the center and a 20-foot roadway on either side. The road will be surfaced with gravel and the sides will be curbed and guttered to within 1000 feet of the east end. New water mains were laid by the city to connect with the Urbandale system and storm sewers connecting with the Huron street and the Broadway sewers were put in without cost to the city under the contract as awarded. ... All streets entering on to Ridgeway boulevard are now barricaded and several weeks will be required for the completion of the work.<sup>48</sup>

By 1937, the Urbandale Park Addition had evolved into a well serviced and highly attractive but still largely undeveloped plat and it is therefore not surprising that with infrastructure improvements in place and a slowly improving national economy, local and area real estate dealers began to turn their attention to it. Leading this effort was Green Bay real estate dealer Elmer Denessen, who in 1937 began to build houses on several lots in the plat as a speculative venture.

Urbandale Park subdivision of East De Pere has now become the scene of a building program, which is planning to establish it as one of the fine subdivisions in the Fox river valley. Located between Broadway and the new boulevard [Ridgeway Boulevard], this heavily wooded section, with its curving lanes and fine Colonial homes, offers an atmosphere of seclusion and country quiet, maintained by rigid restrictions.

The building program promoted through the Elmer Denessen company of Green Bay started with two homes this year, a Cape Cod and a Colonial. These were sold before completion, and two

<sup>47</sup> De Pere Journal-Democrat. June 27, 1935, p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. July 9, 1936, pp. 1, 4.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 5

more Colonials will be finished in February.<sup>49</sup>

By the beginning of World War II, Broadway and Allouez Avenue (today's Webster Avenue) had become concrete-surfaced highways that serviced De Pere itself, the city of Green Bay to the north, and other Fox River Valley communities to the south. Also, by this time, the automobile had largely supplanted mass transit as the preferred means of commuting to work and the Urbandale Park suburb was ideally positioned to serve those who worked both within and outside of De Pere. As a result, by 1942, houses occupied more than half of the lots in the plat, with the largest concentrations being located on Oakdale and Randall avenues and on Lawton Street. Construction activity in Urbandale was interrupted only by the war, and by 1950 almost all the lots in the suburb had been built upon, the suburb had become one of De Pere's most desirable neighborhoods, and a portion of it now comprises the NRHP-listed Randall Avenue Historic District.<sup>50</sup>

Located just to the east of the two Urbandale additions in 1950 was a 33.8-acre parcel of land bounded by Urbandale to the west, Ridgeway Blvd. to the south, Webster Ave. to the east, and the City of De Pere's corporate limits to the north, and it was owned by the heirs of Morton E. Davis (1881-1948), a very successful, recently deceased, Green Bay attorney.<sup>51</sup> This parcel was still undeveloped land at that time, with its westernmost 15-acres being largely covered with trees, and it may have been the success of the adjacent Urbandale additions that provided the Davis heirs with the incentives they needed to develop part of their parcel. Whatever their reasons, on March 5, 1952, local surveyor R. F. Wolfe completed a plat plan of the westernmost 15-acres of her land for Morton Davis's widow, Jessie N. Davis (1881-1974), with the plat to be called "Daviswood." A week later the De Pere City Council formally approved the plat and by May, newspaper ads for the new plat were beginning to appear.

Not surprisingly, the first newspaper ads for the new plat were lavish in their praise, although for once, the praise was a reasonably accurate description of what was being offered.

Buy a wooded lot now for your future "Dream Home" in beautiful suburban DAVISWOOD located in city limits of East De Pere lying on the north side of Ridgeway Blvd. just west of Webster Ave.—the upper De Pere Road.

Heavily wooded with stately trees. You can build that home of your dreams in one of the truly beautiful and picturesque settings still available in Brown County. Daviswood is situated adjacent to Urbandale Park Second Addition and east of Urbandale Park, both of which contain

<sup>49</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette. October 18, 1937, p. 19.

<sup>50</sup> Randall Avenue Historic District. National Register Reference # 07000370.

<sup>51</sup> "Attorney, Ill Ten Days, Dies." *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, November 1, 1948, p. 1. Obituary of Morton E. Davis.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 6

all new and distinctive homes. Your home will be equally desirable as it will be in a restricted district with all improvements. Indeed, you can be "CITY SPOILED YET COUNTRY LOVING" in picturesque DAVISWOOD.

Lots have 100-foot frontage but more footage may be had if desired.<sup>52</sup>

Daviswood is one of the first known post-World War II suburban plats in De Pere to include restrictive covenants in its deeds, although these restrictions governed what could be built in the plat, not who could live there. As the following list shows, these restrictions were intended to ensure that everything that was built in the plat would be in harmony with the whole and would serve to enhance the prestige of the plat.

1. No building erected elsewhere shall be moved to any lots and parts thereof in said plat.
2. The premises shall be used and occupied for residential purposes only.
3. No building designed to be occupied by more than one family shall be erected in said plat and no residence shall be erected on a parcel of less than one hundred feet frontage.
4. All homes must face St. Francis Road and the residence erected on Lot 8, Block 2, must face west and that erected on Lot 9, Block 2, must face east.
5. All garages must be attached to the residence of the owner thereof.
6. All residences constructed in the plat must be completed within ten months from the date construction commences. No temporary dwelling of kind will be permitted for residential purposes.
7. A perpetual easement of five feet is reserved over the rear of each lot for utility installation and maintenance.
8. No billboard or advertising boards of any kind shall be constructed or maintained in said plat, nor shall any residence erected in said plat be used for such purposes.
9. No horses, cattle, swine or live fowl of any kind shall be kept in said plat, and no nuisance of any kind shall be maintained or allowed thereon nor use thereof made or permitted which shall be noxious or dangerous to health or which will impair the enjoyment of living thereon.
10. No building or any part thereof shall be erected in said plat nearer to St. Francis Road or Ridgeway Boulevard than the setback lines indicated on said plat as it is now recorded, and no building nor any part thereof shall be erected less than ten feet from the side line of any lot except that where one person owns more than one hundred feet of frontage this provision shall apply to the exterior side lines thereof.
11. No residence shall be erected in said plat until a copy of the final plans and specifications thereof, showing the nature, kind, shape, height, materials, color scheme, and location of the

<sup>52</sup> Neufeld Realty Advertisement. *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, May 16, 1952, p. 22. Illustrated with the plat's map.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 7

structure and the grade thereof be first submitted to Jessie N. Davis, her heirs, executors, administrators or assigns and her or their written approval thereof be first obtained.

12. The purpose of these restrictions is to make this plat an attractive, desirable, fully enjoyable place in which to live and such restrictions shall expire January 1, 1980. These restrictions shall run with the land and shall be part of the consideration for the purchase thereof and shall bind all subsequent vendees and owners, violation thereof shall cause title to revert to the owner, her heirs, executors, administrators and assigns.<sup>53</sup>

A month later the city council approved sewer and water extensions to the new plat and by November of 1952 local contractor Robert Smet had taken out the first building permit for a house in the plat, which was located at 821 W. St. Francis Rd.<sup>54</sup> The stated cost of this new house was \$18,000.00, which was almost twice as much as the next new De Pere house listed in the same newspaper article, and the same would be true of all of the new houses that would be built in Daviswood in the following years, which were consistently a good deal more expensive than those being built in other parts of the city.

It is not known how many of the houses in Daviswood were built on a speculative basis but Smet's first house was, because an illustrated advertisement for it was published in the Green Bay newspaper shortly after it was completed and before it was subsequently purchased by its first owners, Philip and Betty McNulty.<sup>55</sup> McNulty was the manager of the Wisconsin Finance Co. in Green Bay when he purchased this house for \$22,000.00 and he would be typical of future first purchasers of houses in the plat, many of whom worked in Green Bay and commuted from De Pere.

By 1955, real estate ads in the local newspapers were referring to "the very exclusive Daviswood addition" and new house prices in the plat were climbing to \$29,000.00 and more. A year later, still other ads were referring to Daviswood as "De Pere's most fashionable neighborhood" and "this most desirable setting in De Pere." Construction in the plat was finally completed in November of 1956 when Dr. Bernard Waldkirch, a De Pere physician, took out a permit for a seven bedroom \$45,000.00 house located at 867 W. St. Francis Rd., which was designed by Wisconsin Rapids architect Robert L. Rowland.<sup>56</sup>

By 1957, all the lots in Daviswood were occupied and the roster of the original homeowners in the plat makes it clear that the Davis family had been successful in establishing Daviswood as an especially prestigious neighborhood. Among those who chose to build there besides Dr. Waldkirch were: Dr.

<sup>53</sup> Daviswood Plat. Dated March 28, 1952. On file at: Brown County Registrar of Deeds, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

<sup>54</sup> "Three New House Permits Are Taken." *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, November 7, 1952, p. 20.

<sup>55</sup> "Nature Tailored Daviswood." *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, February 27, 1953, p. 22 (illustrated).

<sup>56</sup> Waldkirch's house was completed in 1957 and it was the most expensive house built in De Pere during the period when Daviswood was under development.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 8

Carleton Bolles, another physician; Robert M. Quigley, the president of Bay West Paper of Green Bay and Tested Papers of America in Chicago; attorney Morton E. Davis, Jr., the son of the owner of the plat; Frederick W. Miller, the president of the Rahr Green Bay Brewing Co.; Fred Will, the former public administrator of Brown County and a prominent Green Bay attorney; Thomas E. Burgess, executive vice-president of Van Drisse Motors, Inc.; Charles Foster, district manager of the Huron Portland Cement Co.; Frederick F. Kress, treasurer of the Green Bay Paper and Pulp Co.; Fred H. Lindner, president and chairman of the board of the Bark River Culvert and Equipment Co.; Alfred Callahan, president of Badger Wholesale, Inc.; Thomas H. Lutsey, the founder of the Gold Bond Ice Cream Co. and the Ace Cone Co.; and Willard Jones, president of Jones Motor Co., to name only a few. Not only is the roster of Daviswood's original homeowners impressive in itself but it is also noteworthy that many of these persons continued to live in their Daviswood homes until their deaths, which in a number of cases occurred several decades after they first took occupancy.

Daviswood still continues to attract similar homeowners today and its well-maintained state and high degree of integrity all testify to its enduring appeal as a place to live and as a symbol of success.

**Architecture:**

The Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District is locally significant under NRHP Criterion C (Architecture) because the 35 houses it contains constitute De Pere's finest assemblage of 1950's Ranch House style residential designs. All of the buildings in the district were built between 1953 and 1957, and all but one are fine representative examples of the Ranch Style, the single exception being an architect-designed Contemporary Style house whose design was heavily influenced by the Ranch Style. Fortunately, these buildings are all still highly intact today and are in excellent condition and they are still being used for their original purposes. As a result, the district still retains the appearance that it had in 1957, when the district's last building was completed.

At first, the period immediately following the end of World War II proved to be a difficult one for the building industry. Thanks to the millions of veterans who were returning home and were now anxious to start families and needed housing, the nation's home building industry was anticipating a period of enormous growth, but this unprecedented opportunity was at first hobbled by the fact that building materials were still being rationed and supply was limited. By 1947, though, the immediate post-war housing shortage crisis had been alleviated in most parts of the country and builders and their suppliers were now able to get down to the business of fulfilling the demand for housing that had been growing since the beginning of the war.

Interestingly, one of the casualties of the war would be new houses designed in the Period Revival styles such as the Colonial Revival and the Tudor Revival styles that had dominated home construction before the war. Instead, the new house designs that De Pere-area builders provided their

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 9

post-war customers with were almost always examples of Modern Movement designs and especially examples of the Ranch Style and nowhere can this radical shift in public taste be seen more clearly than in Daviswood. The plat of Daviswood lies adjacent to the somewhat older plat of Urbandale, whose houses were mostly built in the 1930s and 1940s and are excellent examples of the Colonial Revival style. Like Daviswood, many of the lots in Urbandale are larger than normal and contain what would have been considered sizable houses in De Pere during that period, and they too were first occupied by members of De Pere and Green Bay's managerial, entrepreneurial, and professional elite. And yet by 1953, just three years after nearly all the lots in Urbandale had been occupied, all of the houses that would be built next door in Daviswood would be examples of the Ranch Style. This shift in public taste is all the more extraordinary in Daviswood's case because it was apparently shared by potential homebuyers of a similar status to those who just a few years earlier would probably have been happy with a Colonial Revival design. In addition, this change in public taste was also apparently shared or at least recognized by the Davis family, whose members had design approval over what was built in the new plat. While the reasons for this shift in the public's idea of what constituted a suitable home are undoubtedly complex and varied, the fact remains that all the houses that were built in the Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District between 1953 and 1957 were examples of Modern Movement designs, and especially, examples of the Ranch Style.

Neither the Ranch Style nor the Contemporary Style is discussed in the Wisconsin Historical Society's Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP), and even today these styles do not have universally accepted definitions. The authors of the CRMP, which was written in 1986, acknowledged this issue in their discussion of buildings constructed from 1950 to the present, which they called "Contemporary Style" buildings, and which the National Register of Historic Places calls "Modern Movement" buildings.

Contemporary architecture cannot be defined or described in the manner of other preceding stylistic movements. "Contemporary" can be used to designate any twentieth century building of distinction and potential interest, whose identity or features cannot be ascribed to styles and forms discussed in this report. Although architectural historians have invented names for some contemporary schools of architecture (i.e., Brutalism, The New Formalism, Neo-Expressionism, Late Modernism, Post-Modernism, etc.), buildings of these genres are not of sufficient age, and generally do not have widely-recognized and understood scholarly value, to be evaluated for significance according to National Register criterion. Other widely accepted terms for mid-twentieth century residential architecture such as "ranch house," "tract home," and "split-level," refer to buildings generally not surveyed in the Wisconsin program. As with contemporary schools of architecture, a terminology will likely be adopted as scholarship develops and as these buildings reach 50 years of age.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*. Madison: Division of Historic Preservation, State

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 10

That these post-war buildings cannot yet be placed within universally accepted stylistic categories does not mean that they are ineligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, though. The “House and Yard” chapter of the context developed by the authors of the *National Register Bulletin: Historic Residential Suburbs* specifically discusses “The Contemporary House,” and by extension, it acknowledges that such buildings can be eligible for NRHP-listing, depending on their age and the degree of architectural distinction that they possess. This context begins its discussion of post-World War II residences with “The Suburban Ranch House,” of which there are 34 examples in the Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District.

The suburban Ranch house of the 1950s reflected modern consumer preferences and growing incomes. With its low, horizontal silhouette and rambling floor plan, the house type reflected the nation’s growing fascination with the lifestyle of the West Coast and the changing functional needs of families. ... Picture windows, broad chimneys, horizontal bands of windows, basement recreational rooms, and exterior terraces or patios became distinguishing features of the forward looking yet lower cost suburban home. ... In the 1950s, as families grew larger and children became teenagers, households moved up to larger Ranch houses, offering more space and privacy. With the introduction of television and inexpensive, high-fidelity phonographs, increasing noise levels created a demand for greater separation of activities and soundproof zones. The split-level house provided increased privacy through the location of bedrooms on an upper level a half story above the main living area and an all-purpose recreation room on a lower level. The Ranch house in various configurations, including the split-level, continued as the dominant suburban house well into the 1960s.<sup>58</sup>

Typically, suburban Ranch Style houses were builder’s houses and their designs were usually based to a large degree on purchased plans. Architect-designed, custom-built Ranch Style houses were the exception. Contemporary Style houses built during this same period, on the other hand, were mostly custom-built and they typically required the services of an architect in order to make them a reality. The important role of the architect in the creation of the Contemporary Style was also noted by the authors of the *National Register Bulletin: Historic Residential Suburbs* in their discussion of “The Contemporary House.”

The influence of Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer, Richard J. Neutra, Mies van der Rohe, and other modernists inspired many architects to look to new solutions for livable homes using modern materials of glass, steel, and concrete, and principals of organic design that utilized cantilevered forms, glass curtain walls, and post-and-beam construction.

Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986, Vol. 2, p. 2-37 (Architecture). This was written in 1986, but today, Ranch Style houses and other Modern Movement styles are routinely surveyed in Wisconsin.

<sup>58</sup> Ames, David L. and Linda Flint McClelland. Op. Cit., pp. 66-67.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 11

The contemporary home featured the integration of the indoor and outdoor living area and open floor plans, which allowed a sense of flowing space. Characteristics such as masonry hearth walls, patios and terraces, carports, and transparent walls of sliding glass doors and floor-to-ceiling windows became hallmarks of the contemporary residential design.<sup>59</sup>

The houses in the Daviswood district follow this same general pattern in that the only house in the district that is the work of an identified licensed architect is also the district's only Contemporary Style house. This is the house of Dr. Bernard and Louise Waldkirch located at 873 W. St. Francis Rd., which was designed by Wisconsin Rapids-based architect Robert L. Rowland, and which was both the last house built in the district and by far the most expensive. What makes the district's Ranch Style houses unusual is that many of them also appear to have been custom-built as well and at least nineteen of them were not only built by De Pere builder Robert H. Smet; they were designed by him as well.

What follows is a listing of the district's only identified architect and his work in the district and this is followed by a listing of the building contractors who built in the district and their identified works.

**Architect:**

Robert L. Rowland

Robert Leslie Rowland (1924-1988) was born in Biron, Wisconsin in 1924, served in the U.S. Army Air Force from 1942-1945, and was educated at both the University of Wisconsin and the University of Minnesota, from the latter of which he graduated with honors in 1949 with a bachelor's degree in Architecture. From 1950 to 1954 he worked in several different Wisconsin architectural firms before starting his own firm in Wisconsin Rapids in 1955. His first notable project was for the design of the First English Lutheran Church in Wisconsin Rapids (extant) and other projects soon followed, including the WFHR-Tribune Building in Wisconsin Rapids (AHI# 229413) in 1960.<sup>60</sup> In between these larger projects Rowland also designed a new home of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard Waldkirch in De Pere that was completed in 1957, and his firm, Rowland Assoc., would go on to design many other buildings in Wisconsin as well until 1970, when Rowland became the City of Wisconsin Rapids' new redevelopment director.<sup>61</sup>

Dr. Bernard & Louise Waldkirch House

873 W. St. Francis Rd.

1957

<sup>59</sup> Ames, David L. and Linda Flint McClelland. Op. Cit., p. 67.

<sup>60</sup> *American Architects Directory*. New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1962, p. 602.

<sup>61</sup> "Appoint Rowland acting redevelopment director." *Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune*, August 6, 1970, p. 1.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 12

**Builders:**

William Adriansen

No information about Adriansen was found but he built one identified house in the district.

|                                  |                        |      |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|------|
| Charles and Margery Foster House | 849 E. St. Francis Rd. | 1954 |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|------|

Edward J. Czeck

No information about Czeck was found but he built one identified house in the district and his firm, Czeck Construction Co., was one of a number of builders located in Green Bay in the 1950s.

|                                       |                        |      |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|------|
| Frances E. and Virginia Dykstra House | 833 E. St. Francis Rd. | 1956 |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|------|

Robert Schaetz

Robert (Bob) Schaetz (1904-1983) was born in the Town of Denmark, Brown County, Wisconsin, in 1904 and attended the local area grade school. He subsequently became a builder and in 1927 married Marie Biersteker of De Pere. In his obituary it was stated that "Mr. Schaetz was a building contractor in the area all his life. He built many nursing homes and convents in the area."<sup>62</sup> Schaetz built a single identified house in the district.

|                               |                        |      |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|------|
| Irving and Evelyn Reeke House | 879 W. St. Francis Rd. | 1954 |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|------|

Irvin L. Selsmeyer

Irvin Lou Selsmeyer (1920-1965) was born in De Pere and was married to Harriet Johnson in 1949. Selsmeyer, a building contractor, built two identified houses in the district and was the vice-president and treasurer of the Martell Construction Co. in De Pere/Green Bay when he died in 1965.<sup>63</sup>

|                                  |                        |      |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|------|
| Charles and Martha Trayser House | 812 W. St. Francis Rd. | 1953 |
| Dell and Frances McCoy House     | 820 W. St. Francis Rd. | 1953 |

<sup>62</sup> "Robert (Bob) Schaetz." *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, December 17, 1983, p. 23. Obituary of Robert Schaetz.

<sup>63</sup> "Irvin L. Selsmeyer." *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, March 29, 1965, p. 20. Obituary of Irvin L. Selsmeyer

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 13

Robert H. Smet

Robert H. Smet (1907-1980) was born in De Pere and he attended the public schools there and later, a technical school in either Milwaukee or Chicago where he acquired some training in architectural design. In 1930, Smet married Henrietta Verboort and by 1935 he had established himself as a builder and masonry contractor in De Pere. By 1952, Smet had become one of De Pere's most respected and best known builder of single family residences and it was late in that same year that he started to build his first house in Daviswood, this being the house of Philip and Betty McNulty at 821 W. St. Francis Rd. This was just the first of the nineteen known Ranch Style homes that Smet would eventually build in Daviswood between 1952 and 1956, however, and more than any other builder, it his work that defines the appearance of the district. What makes Smet's work in the district especially notable is the fact that he not only built these houses, he designed them as well. Most building contractors of that day were content to work from the published plans of the period, modifying them on site in order to suit the needs and budgets of their clients. While Smet was undoubtedly influenced by the published plans of others, surviving blueprints from several of his Daviswood projects prove that he took the lead role in the designing of these custom-built houses, a distinction that set him apart from most of his local peers. The Daviswood houses of Robert Smet are especially notable for their extensive use of masonry cladding, which may reflect his earlier background as a masonry contractor and also his desire to give his houses a distinctive, more substantial appearance, one that was in keeping with the up-scale aspirations of the new suburb.

Robert Smet continued to build houses in the Green Bay and De Pere area until his retirement in the late 1960's, by which time his son and partner, Daniel J. Smet, had changed the firm's emphasis to focus more on commercial construction and warehousing.<sup>64</sup> Daniel Smet also changed the firm's name to Daniel J. Smet and Sons General Contractors when his sons, Chad Smet and Scott Smet, joined him, and today this family-owned firm is larger than ever and under the leadership of Scott Smet is now known as Smet Construction Services Corp.<sup>65</sup>

|                                   |                        |      |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|------|
| Philip and Betty McNulty House    | 821 W. St. Francis Rd. | 1953 |
| Leon and Lorraine DuChateau House | 813 W. St. Francis Rd. | 1953 |
| Hugo and Dolores Cuene House      | 847 W. St. Francis Rd. | 1953 |
| William and Elsie Bodart House    | 854 W. St. Francis Rd. | 1953 |
| Morton Davis, Jr. House           | 868 E. St. Francis Rd. | 1953 |
| Gerald and Agnes Hermesen House   | 805 E. St. Francis Rd. | 1954 |
| Clarence and Thelma Albert House  | 815 E. St. Francis Rd. | 1954 |

<sup>64</sup> "Robert H. Smet." *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, July 31, 1980, p. 32. Obituary of Robert H. Smet.

<sup>65</sup> "Sons give firm a new identity." *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, December 14, 1993, p. 38. See also: (www.smet.com), accessed July 15, 2020.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 14

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|                                       |                        |      |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|------|
| Fred and Dorothy Lindner House        | 823 E. St. Francis Rd. | 1954 |
| Thomas and Carol Burgess House        | 857 E. St. Francis Rd. | 1954 |
| Frederick w. and Helen Miller House   | 863 E. St. Francis Rd. | 1954 |
| Dr. Carleton and Dorothy Bolles House | 803 W. St. Francis Rd. | 1954 |
| Thomas and Evelyn Lutsey House        | 846 W. St. Francis Rd. | 1954 |
| Richard and Viola Overmier House      | 860 W. St. Francis Rd. | 1954 |
| Glen and Ethel Macaux House           | 800 E. St. Francis Rd. | 1955 |
| Willard and Marion Jones House        | 814 E. St. Francis Rd. | 1955 |
| Howard and Nathalie Roberts House     | 822 E. St. Francis Rd. | 1955 |
| Frederick and Elizabeth Kress House   | 832 E. St. Francis Rd. | 1955 |
| John C. and Helen Whitney House       | 830 W. St. Francis Rd. | 1956 |
| Alfred and Mae Callahan House         | 840 W. St. Francis Rd. | 1956 |

Ralph Vandenbush

Ralph Vandenbush (1922-2010) was born in Green Bay in 1922, he became a builder, and in 1948 he married Rosemary Adriansen. In his obituary it was stated that “Ralph was a carpenter by nature and built custom homes for most of his career until his retirement.”<sup>66</sup> Vandenbush built three identified houses in the district.

|                                     |                        |      |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|------|
| John and Elaine Holloway House      | 842 E. St. Francis Rd. | 1954 |
| Henry and Betty Goelzer House       | 848 E. St. Francis Rd. | 1954 |
| Sylvester and Florence Jansen House | 843 E. St. Francis Rd. | 1955 |

**Conclusion:**

The Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District is therefore believed to be eligible for inclusion in the NRHP at the local level for its architectural significance as a highly intact ensemble of Post-World War II Ranch Style single family residences that is clearly visually distinct from the surrounding historic residential neighborhood and because it contains individual buildings of considerable architectural merit. The buildings in the district are especially notable within their local context for being excellent examples of the Ranch Style. They are also notable for being larger and more expensive than houses in neighboring areas, for their associations with locally notable owners, and for their high degree of integrity. Collectively these houses represent the finest group of 1950s-era Ranch Style single family residences that were built in the city of De Pere during the period of significance and their significance is greatly enhanced by their high degree of integrity and their very well-maintained state.

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<sup>66</sup> “Ralph Vandenbush.” *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, February 17, 2010, p. 14. Obituary of Ralph Vandenbush.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 15

**Preservation Activity:**

The City of De Pere's Historic Preservation Commission has long been active in educating owners of historic resources in De Pere as to the importance and value of historic preservation, including acting as the sponsor of this nomination.

**Archeological Potential**

The extent of any archeological remains in the district is conjectural at this time. No information regarding possible prehistoric remains in this area was found in the course of this research. Furthermore, it is likely that many remains of pre-European cultures that may once have been located within the district would have been greatly disturbed by the farming and building activities associated with the subsequent development of the area. It is possible, however, that archaeological remains associated with the Euro-American farms that were once located within the district boundaries are still extant. Maps and historic photos that would help locate these remains exist, but these remains are also likely to have been disturbed by the post-World War II building activity in the district.

**Acknowledgment**

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**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 9 Page 1

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**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section 10 Page 1

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**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The district boundaries form a rectangular shape that begins at a point on the north curb line of Ridgeway Blvd. that also corresponds to the west corner of the lot associated with 803 W. St. Francis Rd. The line then continues in a NE direction along the rear lot lines of the lots associated with 803, 813, 821, 831, 841, 847, 855, 861, and 867 W. St. Francis Rd. until reaching a point that corresponds to the north corner of the lot associated with said 867 W. St. Francis Rd. The line then turns 90° and continues in a SE direction along the rear lot lines of 867, 873, and 879 W. St. Francis Rd. and 868 E. St. Francis Rd. until reaching a point that corresponds to the east corner of the lot associated with said 868 E. St. Francis Rd. The line then turns 90° and continues in a SW direction along the rear lot lines of the lots associated with 868, 858, 848, 842, 832, 822, 814, and 800 E. St. Francis Rd. until reaching a point on the north curb line of Ridgeway Blvd. that also corresponds to the south corner of the lot associated with 800 E. St. Francis Rd. The line then turns 90° and continues NW along the said north curb line of Ridgeway Blvd., crossing E. St. Francis Rd. and W. St. Francis Rd. in the process, until reaching the POB. The district boundaries enclose 15.3 acres of land.

**Boundary Justification:**

The district boundaries enclose all the land that has historically been associated with the district's resources.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section photos Page 1

Items a-d are the same for photos 1 – 22.

Photo 1

- a) Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District
- b) De Pere, Brown County, WI
- c) Timothy F. Heggland, April 1, 2020
- d) Wisconsin Historical Society
- e) 805 E. St. Francis Rd., View looking N
- f) Photo 1 of 22

Photo 2

- e) 815 E. St. Francis Rd., View looking NW
- f) Photo 2 of 22

Photo 3

- e) 863 E. St. Francis Rd., View looking SW
- f) Photo 3 of 22

Photo 4

- e) 863 E. St. Francis Rd., View looking S
- f) Photo 4 of 22

Photo 5

- e) 840 W. St. Francis Rd., View looking SE
- f) Photo 5 of 22

Photo 6

- e) 841 W. St. Francis Rd., View looking NW
- f) Photo 6 of 22

Photo 7

- e) 867 W. St. Francis Rd., View looking NW
- f) Photo 7 of 22

Photo 8

- e) 873 E. St. Francis Rd., View looking NE
- f) Photo 8 of 22

Photo 9

- e) 800 E. St. Francis Rd. , View looking E
- f) Photo 9 of 22

Photo 10

- e) 814 E. St. Francis Rd., View looking SE
- f) Photo 10 of 22

Photo 11

- e) 822 E. St. Francis Rd., View looking SE
- f) Photo 11 of 22

Photo 12

- e) 823 E. St. Francis Rd., View looking NNW
- f) Photo 12 of 22

Photo 13

- e) 842 E. St. Francis Rd., View looking SE
- f) Photo 13 of 22

Photo 14

- e) 843 E. St. Francis Rd., View looking NW
- f) Photo 14 of 22

Photo 15

- e) 868 E. St. Francis Rd., View looking NE
- f) Photo 15 of 22

Photo 16

- e) 802 W. St. Francis Rd., View looking ENE
- f) Photo 16 of 22

Photo 17

- e) 830 W. St. Francis Rd. , View looking SE
- f) Photo 17 of 22

Photo 18

- e) 831 W. St. Francis Rd., View looking NW
- f) Photo 18 of 22

Photo 19

- e) 855 W. St. Francis Rd., View looking E
- f) Photo 19 of 22

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section photos Page 2

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Photo 20

e) 860 W. St. Francis Rd., View looking S

f) Photo 20 of 22

Photo 21

e) General View E. St. Francis Rd., View looking NE

f) Photo 21 of 22

Photo 22

e) General View of 867, 873 and 879 W. St. Francis Rd., View looking NNW

f) Photo 22 of 22

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District  
De Pere, Brown County, Wisconsin

Section figures Page 1

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\_\_\_ Insert Figures

\_\_\_ End Figures

Attachment: Daviswood Ranch Homes Historic District NR Form (9889 : Staff recommendation and possible action regarding nomination



## City of De Pere, Wisconsin

### Request For Historic Preservation Commission Action

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**MEETING DATE:** August 17, 2020

**DEPARTMENT:** Planning

**FROM:** Peter Schleinz

**SUBJECT:** Staff recommendation and possible action regarding the 2020 Local History & Historic Preservation Conference being held virtually on October 21-23, 2020.

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The Historic Preservation Commission members should consider attending the 2020 Local History & Historic Preservation Conference that is being held virtually on October 21-23, 2020. Revised details, including updated costs and schedules, have not yet been released since the conference was changed from being in-person to virtual.

The Historic Preservation Commission has \$750.00 available for conference reimbursement and annual membership dues.

Please note that there is a larger amount available for the fall conference than in past years due to COVID-19, which caused a spring conference to be completely cancelled.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Identify the HPC members that plan on virtually attending the conference. Attending members should register for the conference on their own, keep all virtual registration receipts, and then file for reimbursement with staff after the conference.



## City of De Pere, Wisconsin

### Request For Historic Preservation Commission Action

**MEETING DATE:** August 17, 2020

**DEPARTMENT:** Planning

**FROM:** Peter Schleinz

**SUBJECT:** Staff recommendation and possible action regarding the logo used on historic district street signage.

City of De Pere staff is seeking a recommendation from the HPC regarding the logo that should be used on new and future signage that is printed for historic districts. Included in the meeting packet are three samples.

- \* The first sample includes a version of the city logo from the past that may no longer be recognizable to the public.
- \* The second sample is the new city logo in white (note that the background will be transparent or brown to match the sign, not black as shown in the sample).
- \* The third sample is the new city logo in color (there is an option to have the background be either brown to match the sign, or white as shown).

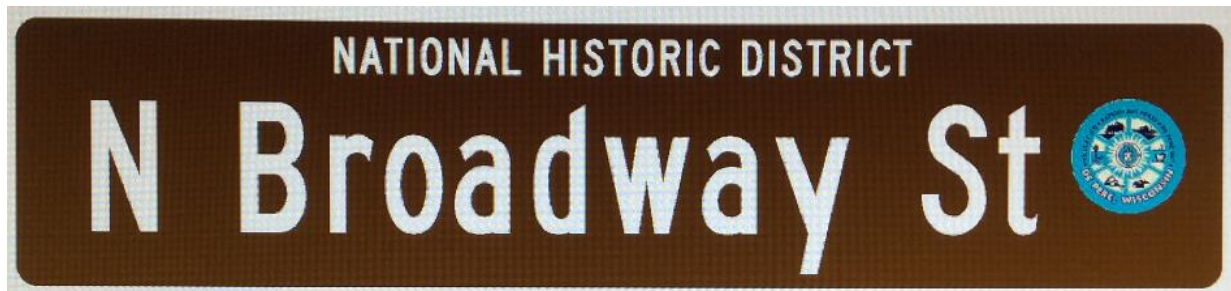
Things for HPC to consider: ease of reading, clarity when multiple colors are used, and quick/simple recognition as De Pere by all ages.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** A simple, easy to read, logo that is recognized by all may be the best option.

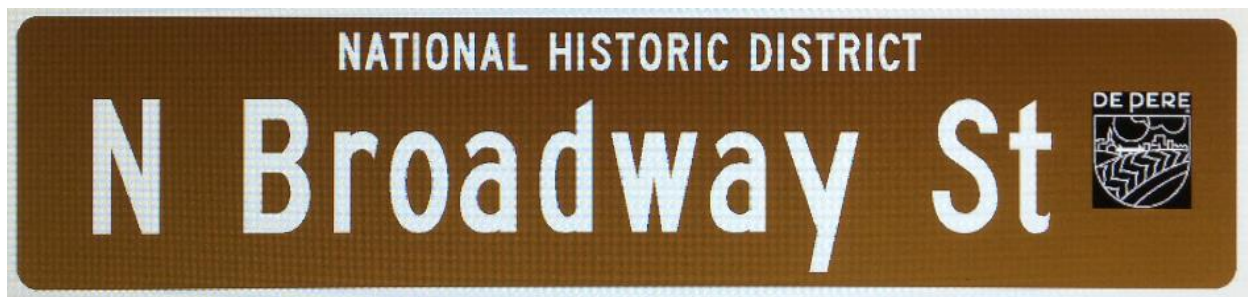
#### ATTACHMENTS:

- Sign Option Attachment (DOCX)

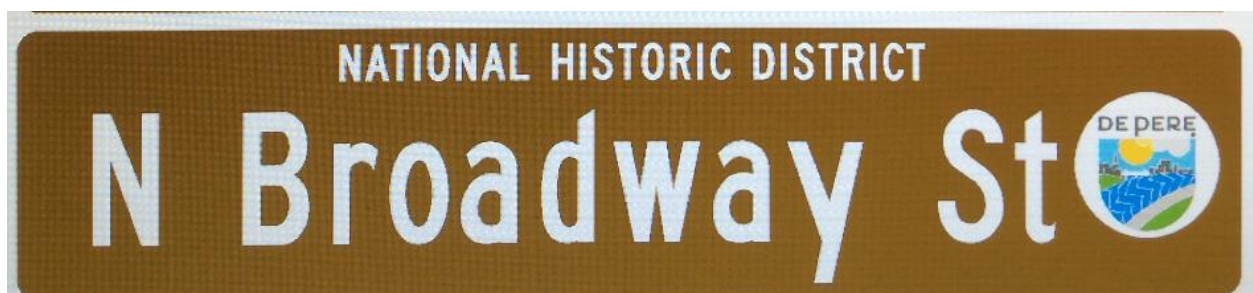
Option #1:



Option #2:



Option #3:





**City of De Pere, Wisconsin**

**Request For Historic Preservation Commission Action**

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**MEETING DATE:** August 17, 2020

**DEPARTMENT:** Planning

**FROM:** Kelly Barker

**SUBJECT:** Future Agenda Items.

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