

HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT

BREWER'S HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

I. NAME

Historic: Sherman's Addition Subdivision

Common: Brewer's Hill Historic District

II. Location

The Brewer's Hill Historic District is located directly north of the Central Business District. It includes eight city blocks contained within the general area approximately bounded by Vine Street, Hubbard Street, North Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, and Lloyd Street.

III. Classification

District

IV. Owner of Property

Multiple

V. Description

A. Boundaries

The Brewer's Hill District is bounded beginning at the southwest corner of 215-217 West Vine Street, then north along then east line of the alley between North Second Street and Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive to the north curb line of West Lloyd Street, then east to the west lot line of 2102-04 North Second Street, then north along said west lot line to the north lot line of 2102-04 North Second Street; then east along the north lot line of the lots on the north side of Lloyd Street to the east lot line of 2102 North Palmer Street; then south along the east lot line of the properties on the east side of North Palmer Street to the north curb line of East Brown Street; then west along said north curb line to the west curb line of North First Street; then south along said west curb line to the south curb line of East Reservoir Avenue; the east along said south curb line to the east property line of the lots on the east side of North Palmer Street; then south along the east property line to the north property line of 1823 North Hubbard Street; then east along said north property line to the west curb line of North Hubbard Street; then south along said west curb line to the south curb line of East Vine Street; then west along said south curb line to the east lot line of 1750 North Palmer Street; then south along said east lot line to the south lot line of 1746 North Palmer Street; then west along said south lot line and the south lot lines of the properties on the south side of Vine Street to the beginning point.

B. General Character

The Brewer's Hill Historic District is a Victorian residential area sited on a series of sloping bluffs above the Milwaukee River Valley, which afford panoramic views of downtown Milwaukee and the surrounding area. The neighborhood is unique in Milwaukee for its dramatic hillside setting, since most of the city is sited on a gently rolling plain characterized by only gradual changes in elevation. The district is located immediately north of the central business district within easy walking distance of the center of the city.

The district is overwhelmingly residential in character and is comprised of 185 buildings. There are, however, commercial and industrial buildings that are of the same scale and materials as the residences and contribute to the district's historical significance. Construction materials are primarily wood and brick with some carved stonework. The district's varied streetscapes with their irregular setbacks and spacing between buildings are characteristic of early Milwaukee neighborhoods. Many of the larger lots were subdivided at an early date to allow additional houses to be constructed. Another characteristic of the district is the prevalence of alley houses. These range from small cottages to full size duplexes and were built at the rear of the lot, often behind the original house on the site. Although fewer of these remain today than there were twenty years ago, they contribute to maintaining a sense of the densely built-up character of this inner-city neighborhood during its peak population period at the turn of the century.

Many of the houses are sited close to the street on high embankments affording little opportunity for formal landscape treatments. In addition, the rear yards are often crowded with alley houses or auxiliary buildings leaving little room for plantings. The mature yard trees and shrubs that have found a place for themselves give the district its landscape character.

C. Architectural Character

Architecturally, a rich mix of single and two-family house types characterizes the district. Its core of Greek Revival and Italianate, single-family, brick or frame houses is the most remarkable assemblage of architecture of its type remaining from Milwaukee's early years. The architecture of the district differs from that found in the Walker's Point Historic District, the only other remaining section of the city that still retains buildings from its settlement period, chiefly in its variety of building types and its concentration in a small, exclusively residential area.

The oldest surviving houses in the area display transitional Federal-Greek Revival design features. These are simple, end-gable-roofed, frame houses, often with round or half-round gable windows, eaves returns and doors enframed with sidelights and transoms. There are a great many of these including 1805 North Second Street, 135 West Reservoir, and 1810 North Palmer. An interesting example displaying elements borrowed from several popular mid-century styles is 1818 North Palmer with its Gothic-inspired gable window, Italianate bracketed eaves and window enframements, and Federal-derived door treatment.

The more substantial early houses in the district display transitional Greek Revival Italianate characteristics. Typically, these are cubical boxes with low-hip roofs, bracket eaves, articulated window lintels and doors with sidelights and transoms. Most of these were built between 1855 and 1865. Among the finer cream brick examples are 1825 North Second Street and 1826 North Second Street, while 1851 North Second Street and 1830 North Second Street with its 1880's bay windows and porch are good frame examples of this popular building type.

After the Civil War, the fully developed Italianate Style emerged in the district. The Sanger House at 1823 North Palmer Street with its arched fenestration, quions, bracket eaves and belvedere is typical of the restrained villas of the late 1860's and early 1870's. Within a few years however, more picturesque massing had become popular and detailing became more exuberant. In the 1870's houses sprouted elaborately profiled window surrounds, paired brackets, bay windows, pediments and numerous porches. Typical of the more costly houses of this type is 1910 North Second Street. For people of more modest means, houses such as 101 West Vine Street, 224 East Vine Street, and 1918 North Second Street showed that even simple dwellings could achieve a degree of architectural distinction through the use of applied Italianate ornamental features.

In the late 1870's a flood of eclectic Victorian styles became popular in America. The district has examples of several of these later styles mixed with the predominantly older building stock. Under the influence of the Victorian Modern Gothic movement the elaborate, mansion-scale dwelling at 1843 North Palmer Street was constructed, while more modest carpenter versions of the style such as the twin houses at 1843 and 1847 North Second Street and 102 West Vine Street were built to house less prosperous middle-class families.

Among the other popular styles of the period represented in the district were the Stick Style exemplified by 1830 North First Street, the American Queen Anne style of which 1944 North Second Street and 1935 North Second Street are two frame examples, while 1833 North Palmer Street and 102 East Vine Street illustrate the continued popularity of cream brick as a building material.

The district was overwhelmingly single-family in character until the mid 1890's when the mounting pressure for increased residential density near the center of the city lead to the construction of a variety of different types of duplexes. Indicative of the continued desirability of the district as a place to live, most of these duplexes were relatively costly, architect-designed, brick structures, as exemplified by 1809-11 North Second Street and 205-07 West Vine Street. The frame duplexes constructed were also substantial, well-constructed buildings such as 1948-50 North Second Street, 1839-41 North Palmer and 2051-53 North Palmer Street.

There are several non-residential buildings in the district. These are 234 East Vine Street, a two-story, brick, former Miller Brewery Company-owned saloon built in 1902, 141 West Vine Street, a two-story, cream brick, flat-roofed industrial building built in 1906 as the cooperage shop for the nearby Schlitz Brewery, 2102 North Palmer Street, a brick commercial building built in 1895, 138-40 East Lloyd Street, a frame Victorian commercial building built in 1891, 2015 North Palmer, a

small store built in the 1870's, and the 1894 fire station at the corner of East Lloyd and North Palmer Streets.

The district's most intensive period of development was long over when four apartment houses were constructed in the 1920's. These are 1835 North Second Street built in 1922, 204 West Reservoir built in 1926, 1820 North First Street built in 1929 and 2022 North Palmer Street built in 1927. These large, multi-family structures stand in stark contrast to the frame or brick houses that surround them.

VI. Significance

Date Built: 1840-1930

The Brewer's Hill Historic District is significant for both its architectural and historical associations. It is historically significant as one of only two residential areas remaining from the city's settlement period in the 1840's and 1850's, the other being Walker's Point. The district includes the only concentration of historic buildings remaining from Kilbourntown, one of three original independent settlements that merged with Walker's Point and Juneautown to form Milwaukee. It represents the transition of Milwaukee from a pioneer village to an urban center with defined neighborhoods. The district is architecturally significant primarily for its fine concentration of Greek Revival and Italianate dwellings.

VII. History

Historically the Brewer's Hill Historic District is significant for its associations with the establishment of the first permanent neighborhoods in the city and as the residence of important Milwaukee citizens. After the initial settlement period of 1835 to 1850, areas like Brewer's Hill developed as distinct residential neighborhoods apart from major commercial and industrial uses. However, it was typical for small-scale businesses and home workshop type industries to be integrated with the residential fabric. Also characteristic of these neighborhoods, was the wide range of income levels living in close proximity. It was not uncommon for the business executive and the shop laborer of the same company to live across the street or down the block from each other. Important individuals who resided in the district were Caspar Sanger at 1823 North Palmer Street and Baron Von Cotzhausen at 1825 North Second Street. Sanger was the founder of Sanger, Rockwell & Co., one of the nation's largest sash, door and blind manufacturers. Later this house was the residence of Mayor Joseph Phillips from 1873 to 1906. Cotzhausen had descended from Prussian nobility and his father was president of the electoral college under Napoleon I. When he came to Milwaukee in 1856, he dropped his title and worked as an attorney. The district remained a neighborhood of significant residents until about 1910 after which it declined in residential importance.

Architecturally the district includes one of the two highest concentrations of Greek Revival and Italianate style residences extant in Milwaukee from the period 1840 to 1875. Only the Walker's Point Historic District (NRHP-1978) on the city's near southside is comparable. The Italianate residences from this period are exceptional and exemplify the first major residential style to be widely built after the city's initial settlement period. Those built between 1855 to 1865 are highly transitional in their design, borrowing heavily from the Greek Revival. Pivotal examples of this are the frame residents at 1818

North Palmer Street, the cream brick residence at 1826 North Second Street, and the Von Cotzhausen House at 1825 North Second Street. After the Civil War, a more picturesque Italianate Style emerged. One of the finest examples in the city is the Sanger/Phillips House at 1823 North Palmer Street. The other period of significant architecture represented in the district occurred in the 1880's and 1890's. Two pivotal examples are the Stick Style residence at 1830 North First Street and the Suess House at 1843 North Palmer Street. The Suess House is significant as one of the few extant residential commissions of the 19th century architect Charles A. Gombert.

VIII. Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that Brewer's Hill be designated as an historic district in accordance with the provisions of Section 2-335 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances.

IX. Preservation Guidelines

The following preservation guidelines represent the principal concerns of the Historic Preservation Commission regarding this historic designation. However, the Commission reserves the right to make final decisions based upon particular design submissions. These guidelines shall be applicable only to the Brewer's Hill Historic District. Nothing in these guidelines shall be construed to prevent ordinary maintenance or restoration and/or replacement of documented original elements.

A. Guidelines for Rehabilitation

These guidelines are based upon those contained in Section 2-335(10) of the historic preservation ordinance. These guidelines are not intended to restrict an owner's use of his/her property, but to serve as a guide for making changes that will be sensitive to the architectural integrity of the structure and appropriate to the overall character of the district.

1. Roofs

- a. Retain the original roof shape. Dormers, skylights and solar collector panels may be added to roof surfaces if they do not visually intrude upon those elevations visible from the public right-of-way. Avoid making changes to the roof shape that would alter the building height, roofline, pitch or gable orientation.
- b. Retain the original roofing materials where ever possible. Avoid using new roofing materials that are inappropriate to the style and period of the building and neighborhood.
- c. Replace deteriorated roof coverings with new materials that match and old in size, shape, color and texture. Avoid replacing deteriorated roof covering with new materials that differ to such an extent from the old in size, shape, color and texture so that the appearance of the building is altered.

2. Exterior Finishes

- a. Masonry
 - i. Unpainted brick or stone should not be painted or covered. Avoid painting or covering natural stone and unpainted brick. This is likely to be historically incorrect and could cause irreversible damage if it was decided to remove the paint at a later date.
 - ii. Repoint defective mortar by duplicating the original in color, style, texture and strength. Avoid using mortar colors and pointing styles that were unavailable or not used when the building was constructed.

- iii. Clean masonry only when necessary to halt deterioration and with the gentlest method possible. Sandblasting brick or stone surfaces is prohibited. This method of cleaning erodes the surface of the material and accelerates deterioration. Avoid the indiscriminate use of chemical products that could have an adverse reaction with the masonry materials, such as the use of acid on limestone or marble.
- iv. Repair or replace deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible. Avoid using new material that is inappropriate or was unavailable when the building was constructed, such as artificial cast stone or fake brick veneer.

b. Stucco

Repair stucco with stucco mixture duplicating the original as closely as possible in appearance and texture.

c. Wood

- i. Retain original material, whenever possible. Avoid removing architectural features such as clapboards, shingles, cornices, brackets, half-timbering, window architraves and doorway pediments. These are in most cases an essential part of a building's character and appearance that should be retained.
- ii. Repair or replace deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the appearance of the old as closely as possible. Avoid covering architectural features with new materials that are inappropriate or were unavailable when the building was constructed such as artificial stone, brick veneer, asbestos or asphalt shingles, vinyl or aluminum siding.

3. Windows

- a. Retain existing window and door openings that are visible from the public right-of-way. Retain the original configurations of panes, sash, lintels, keystones, sills, architraves, pediments, hoods, doors, shutters and hardware. Avoid making additional openings or changes in the principal elevations by enlarging or reducing window or door openings to fit new stock window sash or new stock door panes or sash. Avoid discarding original doors and door hardware when they can be repaired or reused.
- b. Respect the stylistic period or periods a building represents. If replacement of window sash or doors is necessary, the replacement should duplicate the appearance and design of the

original window sash or door. Avoid using inappropriate sash and door replacements such as unpainted galvanized aluminum storm and screen window combinations. Avoid the filling in or covering of openings with materials like glass-block or the installation of plastic or metal strip awnings or fake shutters that are not in proportion to the openings or that are historically out of the character with the building. Avoid using modern style window units such as horizontal sliding sash in place of double-hung sash or the substitution of units with glazing configurations not appropriate to the style of the building.

4. Porches, Trim and Ornamentation

- a. Retain porches and steps visible from the public right-of-way that are historically and architecturally appropriate to the building. Avoid altering porches and steps by enclosing open porches or replacing wooden steps with cast concrete steps or by removing original architectural features, such as handrails, balusters, columns or brackets.
- b. Retain trim and decorative ornamentation including copper downspouts and guttering, copings, cornices, cresting, finials, railings, balconies, oriels, pilasters, columns, chimneys, bargeboards or decorative panels. Avoid the removal of trim and decorative ornamentation that is essential to the maintenance of the buildings historic character and appearance.
- c. Repair or replace, where necessary, deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible. Avoid using replacement materials that do not accurately reproduce the appearance of the original material.

B Guidelines for Streetscapes

The streetscapes in Brewer's Hill are visually cohesive because of the intact building stock and the retention of period street and landscaping features. There are few non-contributing buildings or visually prominent inappropriate additions to historic structures. The traditional landscape treatment of the building lots and the period streetlights contribute to the maintenance of the district's traditional residential character.

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

A. Guidelines for New Construction

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

1. Siting

New construction must reflect the traditional siting of buildings in Brewer's Hill. This includes setback, spacing between buildings, the orientation of openings to the street and neighboring structures, and the relationship between the main building and accessory buildings. New buildings should not obstruct the vistas from the street to the house.

2. Scale

Overall building height and bulk; the expression of major building divisions including foundation, body and roof; and, individual building components such as porches, overhangs and fenestration must be compatible with the surrounding structures.

3. Form

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

4. Materials

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

B. Guidelines for Demolition

Although demolition is not encouraged and is generally not permissible, there may be instances when demolition may be acceptable, if approved by the Historic Preservation Commission. The Commission shall take the following guidelines, with that found in subsection 9(h) of the ordinance, into consideration when reviewing demolition requests.

1. Condition

Demolition requests may be granted when it can be clearly demonstrated that the condition of a building or a portion thereof is such that it constitutes an immediate threat to health and safety.

2. Importance

Consideration will be given to whether or not the building is of historical or architectural significance or displays a quality of material and craftsmanship that does not exist in other structures in the area.

3. Location

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

4. Potential for Restoration

Consideration will be given to whether or not the building is beyond economically feasible repair.

5. Additions

Consideration will be given to whether or not the proposed demolition is a later addition that is not in keeping with the original design of the structure or does not contribute to its character.

6. Replacement

Consideration will be given to whether or not the building is to be replaced by a compatible building of similar age, architectural style and scale or by a new building that would fulfill the same aesthetic function in the area as did the old structure (see New Construction Guidelines).

E. Fire Escapes

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

F. Signs

The installation of any permanent exterior sign other than those now in existence shall require the approval of the Commission. Approval will be based on the compatibility of the proposed sign with the historic and architectural character of the building and the district.

Plan for the Brewers Hill/Harambee Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District

Exhibit B

Brewers Hill is a three by six-block area located on a steep rise just west of the Milwaukee River and north of Downtown Milwaukee. It was a subdivision carved out of the original Kilbourntown in the 1850's, and soon became an important residential enclave sandwiched between the factories that lined Commerce Street and the bustling retail centers of then-Third Street and North Avenue. Business owners and laborers lived side by side in the 19th century, leading to a mixture of grand houses on large lots next to closely spaced workers cottages and duplexes.

When Brewers Hill was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983, the nomination stated 'Its core of Greek Revival and Italianate, single-family, brick or frame houses constitutes the most remarkable assemblage of architecture of its type remaining from Milwaukee's early years.... chiefly in it's variety of building types and concentration in a small, exclusively residential area'.

Although many of the original houses survived the decline of the post WWII years, the city was forced to demolish a number of abandoned buildings in the 60's and 70's, leaving gaps in the streetscape of Brewers Hill. Over the last 10 years, new houses have been built to fill most of those gaps, bringing new homeowners to the area. Also, proximity to cultural and entertainment centers have attracted young and 'empty nest' buyers to condos and townhouses carved out of old factories and warehouses, as well as to new construction on both city-owned and privately-held acreage.

Already the rapid growth of the Brewers Hill area has begun to change its character; increased traffic and street parking, noise, loss of open/green space as new construction takes up vacant land, and skyrocketing taxes are among the challenges facing the residents. Most recently, the threat of oversized condo complexes towering over the old houses galvanized neighbors' objections, and focused attention on the need for a long term plan for the area. The same issues are already spilling over into adjacent areas west of Brewers Hill, and will eventually affect all the surrounding neighborhoods; consequently, we believe this is a prime opportunity to include those areas in the overlay district.

The Harambee Neighborhood, which overlaps with Brewer's Hill, is expected to experience the most new housing development. Harambee's boundaries are Holton, on the east, N. 7th Street on the west, Burleigh on the North, and Walnut on the South.

Harambee is a neighborhood of impressive resources, including substantial homes, active commercial areas, residents, and community based organizations that are committed to neighborhood revitalization and a strong cultural heritage. The southern portion of the community also includes the Halyard Park neighborhood, a suburban-style subdivision of spacious homes and large lots. This neighborhood was built between the late 1970's and mid-1990s and has symbolized new life in the heart of the central city.

Originally farmland, the Harambee neighborhood was settled between 1850 and 1890. Nearly all of the early residents were German immigrants who eventually populated a trading center known as Williamsburg. Urban settlement came to the area in the 1870's as the city limits expanded northward. In 1891 Williamsburg, by then a suburban community of blue-collar workers, was annexed to Milwaukee and become a neighborhood.

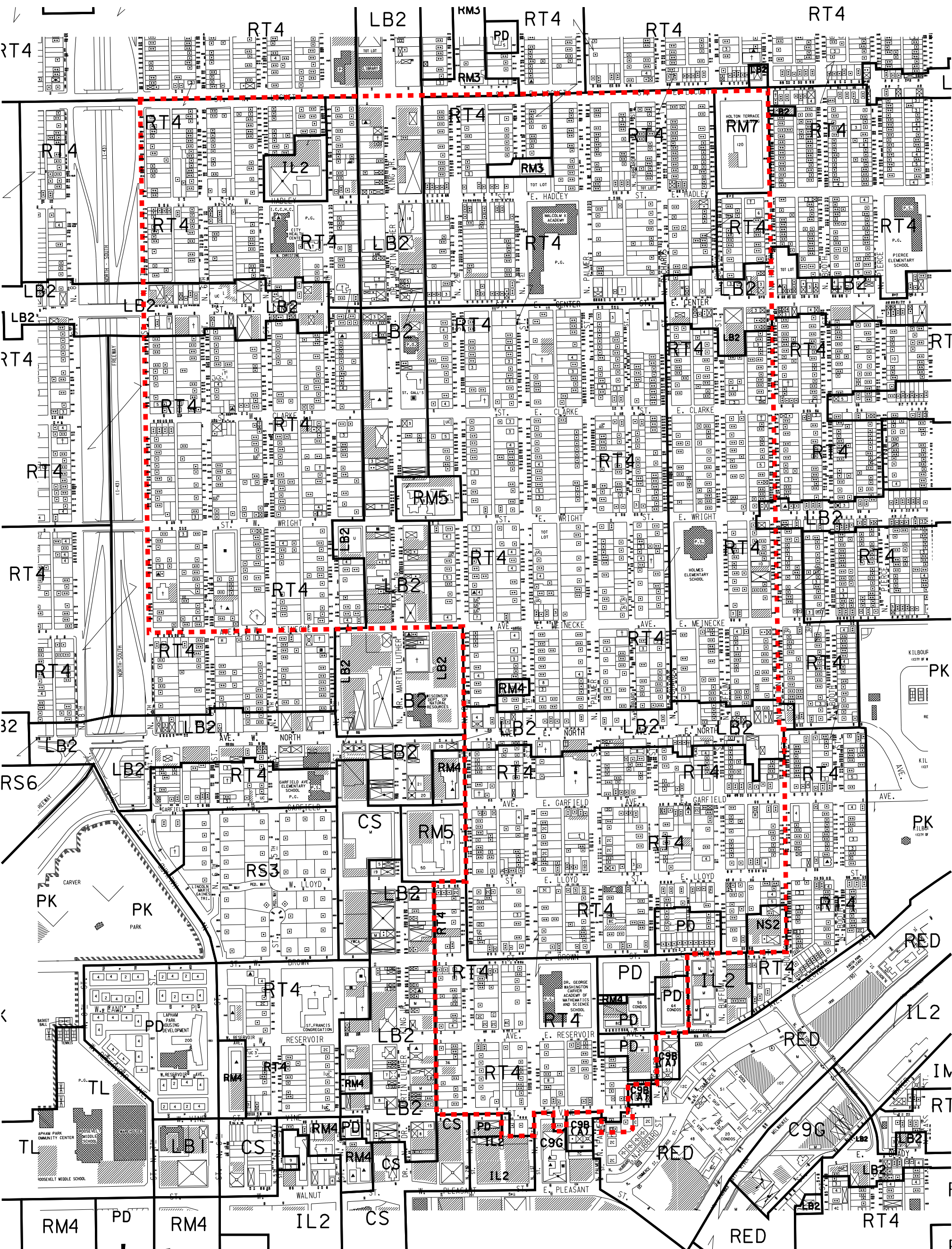
Following expansion, the first Black families arrived in the 1930's. Thriving business corridors such as "Bronzeville" grew in the area of what is now called King Drive and Walnut. By the 1970's Black's were the largest group in the vicinity. Europeans remained, while there was a swelling Hispanic community in the blocks just west of Holton Street. As the number of minorities heightened, Germans and Europeans moved to the northern portions of Milwaukee. The community established churches, new businesses and developed a distinct cultural district. (Adapted from the 2003 Harambee Neighborhood Strategic Plan).

Today the community is predominately Black American with a growing White and Hispanic population. The median household income is approximately \$19,573. The employment exclusion rate is over 50%, with a substantial amount of Black males unemployed in the area.

An overlay district that will encourage continued investment in the existing housing stock as well as guide the growth of carefully planned new construction is essential to the success of our neighborhood. It will also serve as a long-term blueprint for managed growth in the areas north of Brewers Hill.

Brewers Hill Neighborhood Conservation

Overlay-District



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