

3549

Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)



**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** Milwaukee Athletic Club

**other names/site number**

**2. Location**

<b>street &amp; number</b>	758 North Broadway			N/A	<b>not for publication</b>
<b>city or town</b>	Milwaukee			N/A	<b>vicinity</b>
<b>state</b>	Wisconsin	<b>code</b>	WI	<b>county</b>	Milwaukee
		<b>code</b>	079	<b>zip code</b>	53202

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets \_ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_ nationally \_ statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date 1/31/19

State Historic Preservation Office - 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

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

3-28-19  
Date of Action**5. Classification****Ownership of Property**  
(check as many boxes as  
as apply)**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources  
in the count)

				contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)		
	public-local		district	1	buildings
	public-State		structure		sites
	public-Federal		site		structures
			object		objects
				1	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)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Sports Facility

DOMESTIC: Hotel

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Sports Facility/

DOMESTIC: Hotel

**7. Description****Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS: Classical  
Revival**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Limestone

Brick

roof Vinyl Sheet

other

**Narrative Description**

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

**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)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

SOCIAL HISTORY

**Period of Significance**

1917-1940 (Entertainment/Recreation)

1917-1968 (Social History)

**Significant Dates**

1917

1948, 1954, 1957

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Koch, Armand D.

Eschweiler & Eschweiler

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

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:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.38 acres

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

1 16T 42607176 476568.87  
Zone Easting Northing

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

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
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>	Emily Ramsey with JulieAnn Murphy, Associate				
<b>organization</b>	MacRostie Historic Advisors	<b>date</b>	April 30, 2018		
<b>street &amp; number</b>	53 West Jackson Blvd. Suite 1142		<b>telephone</b>	312-786-1700	
<b>city or town</b>	Chicago	<b>state</b>	IL	<b>zip code</b>	60604



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>	A. David Kriete, Board of Directors	<b>date</b>	
<b>organization</b>	Milwaukee Athletic Club	<b>telephone</b>	414-273-5080
<b>street &amp; number</b>	758 N. Broadway	<b>zip code</b>	53202
<b>city or town</b>	Milwaukee	<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 Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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**Description**

**Site and Setting**

The Milwaukee Athletic Club is located at 758 N. Broadway, at the northeast corner of Broadway and Mason Street. The building is situated on a lot at the southwest corner of the block bounded by Broadway on the west, East Wells Street on the north, North Milwaukee Street on the east, and East Mason Street on the south. The east end of the lot is bound by an alley running north-south through the center of the block. A parking lot is located north of the building; a one-story entry bay extends from the north façade of the building into the parking lot.

The building is located approximately three blocks north of Interstate 794 and two blocks east of the Milwaukee River. Originally part of Market Square, the city's commercial center in the mid-nineteenth century, the parcel is now surrounded by a variety of mid-rise and high-rise commercial and institutional buildings, including the Milwaukee City Hall, the M & I Bank Building (now BMO Harris Bank), the Pabst Theater, and Marine Plaza (now Chase Bank).

**Exterior**

The Milwaukee Athletic Club is a 12-story masonry building that was constructed in 1917-18. The original building is built on a concrete foundation, roughly square, with a small rectangular light court on its tenth, eleventh, and twelfth floors. A historic one-story brick penthouse marks the center of the north end of the roof; a two-story addition to the penthouse sits just to the west, at the northwest corner of the roof. The remainder of the roof on the south end of the building is taken up by a non-historic sun deck. The structure is built up to the sidewalk on the west (Broadway) and south (Mason Street) elevations. The rear elevation abuts a paved parking lot that serves the building, and the east elevation runs along a north-south alley in the middle of the block between Mason Street and Wells Street.

The exterior of the Milwaukee Athletic Club features two primary street-facing elevations—the west elevation facing Broadway, and the south elevation facing Mason Street. Both elevations are of limestone and brick, and feature a tripartite arrangement consisting of a three-story base of limestone, a center seven-story middle section in brick, and an upper two-story section in limestone. Both the base and upper stories of both elevations feature Classical detailing. The main entrance to the building is centered along Broadway, and a secondary pedestrian entrance is located on the Mason Street elevation. The east elevation, facing the alley, is of plain brick and features decorative elements matching the principal elevations at its south end. The north elevation is unadorned, of painted brick and having punched window openings. A north-side one-story entrance bay, built in the mid-1960s,

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 2

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

allows for entry to the building from the parking lot.

*Primary (West) Façade*

The west façade is arranged in a tripartite configuration commonly used for tall commercial and multi-residential buildings in the early twentieth century, with a three-story base, a seven-story middle-section or “shaft,” and a two-story “capital” at its top. The main entrance to the building is centered along this façade, and features a central entry door flanked by oversized sidelights and divided by limestone piers. The bronze doors, transom above, and sidelights date from a 1954 renovation, as do the granite panels below the sidelights. A heavy limestone projecting cornice supported by oversized, scrolled limestone brackets is above the entry. A large metal canopy also dating from the mid-1950s protects the entryway. Flanking the entry are four large openings divided by square limestone piers; these openings originally housed storefronts, and were infilled with granite panels and bronze multi-light windows in the mid-1950s. The piers separating the storefront bays extend to the second story. Paired, single-light windows separated by smaller, paneled limestone piers mark the bays at this level. The third story features regular window openings separated by brick piers with simple limestone ornamentation. These windows date from the 1950s renovation of the building—only the third bay from the north, which features two window openings separated by a limestone pier, exhibits the original window arrangement at the level, and the north window opening has been bricked in. The center section of the elevation, which extends from the fourth through the tenth floors, features simple walls of brick and is regularly fenestrated by punched window openings with simple stone sills. Most sash within the window openings on this section are metal replacement windows that date from the 1950s. The south four bays of the fifth, sixth, and seventh stories have window openings that have been bricked in or filled in; these windows correspond to the second floor of the main dining room and the gymnasium, and were infilled as part of the 1948 and 1954 renovations. The two-story upper section of the façade is of limestone, and features a limestone stringcourse just under the eleventh floor ornamented with cartouches, and a larger limestone cornice at the roofline. Each bay on the two floors of this section features a paired window opening, and the bays are divided by limestone vertical panels; ornamental stone spandrels separate the windows between the two floors. A penthouse located at the northwest corner of the roof is clad in metal.

*Secondary Street-facing (South) Façade*

The south façade is nearly identical to the west façade, and features the same tripartite vertical arrangement, exterior materials, and ornamentation. As with the west façade, the original first-story storefront levels were infilled with granite panels and bronze multi-light windows in the mid-1950s; the bay second from the west end of the façade was also converted into a secondary entrance at that time, and features a bronze entry door, revolving door, and transom set in a granite paneled surround. Window openings in the middle section either feature metal replacement windows from the 1950s, or

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

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

Section 7 Page 3

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

were bricked or filled in as part of the 1948 and 1954 renovation. Window openings in the west two bays of the fifth through seventh floors, as well as the east two bays sixth through ninth floors are bricked in; the west bays correspond with the main dining room and gymnasium, while the east bays mark the men's swimming pool and hand ball courts. The east three bays of the fourth floor have small metal sliding windows set into downsized openings.

*Side (North) Elevation*

The north elevation is a secondary elevation, and faces onto the club's adjacent parking lot facing onto the club's adjacent parking lot. The north elevation is painted brick, and features simple punched window opening, which have either been bricked in or feature replacement windows. The north wall of the penthouse rises from the roof of the building at the west end of the elevation. A one-story entry bay extends from the first story of the façade into the parking lot. The bay features a flat roof with metal cantilevered porte-cochere that extends over the entrance to the parking lot. The exterior of the bay is of Lannon stone, and features aluminum single-light windows and doors. A second entrance is located east of the porte-cochere bay, and is covered by a cloth awning.

*Rear (East) Elevation*

The east elevation is also a secondary elevation, and faces onto the alley running north-south through the center of the block. While the south two bays of the east elevation feature ornamentation that matches the primary elevations, the remainder of this elevation is brick, with simple punched window openings. The window openings along this elevation were either bricked in or replaced as part of the 1950s renovation. Metal ductwork marks the north end of the elevation, and a metal fire escape is installed on the elevation north of the finished bays at the southeast corner of the building.

**Interior**

The Milwaukee Athletic Club building is a twelve-story building with a full basement, a partial mezzanine level, and rooftop amenity spaces. Floor plates are organized around a central stair and elevator bank, with common lobbies on each floor. A secondary elevator, a freight elevator, and a secondary stair are located in northeast corner of the building and provide access to the service portions of every floor. Given the building's use as a club, the interior is divided into four main categories: public spaces, which include corridors, halls, restaurants, bars, ballrooms, and meeting rooms; public athletic spaces, which include specialized athletic rooms, gymnasiums, pools, and related spaces; service spaces, which include offices, employee rooms, kitchens, storage rooms, and other back-of-house spaces; and private spaces, which include a series of upper-floor guest rooms.



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

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

Section 7 Page 4

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

The building is divided vertically into four main sections with services spaces on nearly every floor; these sections are defined by the predominant types of spaces on each floor. The basement and a partial mezzanine above the first floor contain public athletic spaces and important mechanical and service rooms. Floors one through four hold all of the building's ballrooms, major dining rooms, and offices. Floors five through eight contain the majority of the club's athletic spaces. Floors nine through twelve primarily feature private guest rooms.

Below is a brief chronology of interior changes to the building, followed by a detailed description of all interior spaces.

### **Construction Chronology**

The interior Milwaukee Athletic Club seen today is result of several changes to the building after its initial construction, many of which occurred within the period of significance ending in 1968:

#### **1918 Initial Construction**

Though the building retains most of its original 1918 layout, the spaces in the building that retain the best integrity from the 1918 completion are the main stair core spaces and the 4th floor Grand Ballroom. Other 1918 spaces, including the basement pool, 1st floor lobby, 2nd floor Superior Room, 6th floor pool and gymnasium, and upper floor guest rooms, retain their 1918 overall layouts but have been considerably reconfigured and refinished.

#### **1920s-1940s Renovations**

As early as 1920, the Milwaukee Athletic Club began renovating existing spaces within its building. A 1941 brochure for the club also indicates minor alterations made to the building since its construction, including updates to the bowling alley, the addition of a cigar and cigarette stand in the lobby, and a women's beauty parlor in the basement, as well as cosmetic changes, including the painting over of the ornamental plasterwork on the ceiling in the lobby; none of these 1941 changes survive intact.

#### **1948 Renovation**

The first phase of a decade-long series of major renovations began in 1948 with the 3rd floor remodeling of the men's lounge, dining room, billiard room, and bar. The dining room, re-named the "Balinese Room," (today called the "Bali Room") featured a series of Balinese murals painted by New York muralist Robert Bushnell. The room's walls were clad in sleek walnut paneling, and a large circular, backlit recess marked the center of the ceiling. Bushnell also provided murals for the "Elephant Room" at the east end of the 3rd floor, which also featured wood paneled walls, a curving bar, and an amoebic, backlit recess on the ceiling. The renovated men's lounge at the southwest corner of the 3rd floor, although more subdued than the Balinese Room and Elephant Room, contained an

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

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

Section 7 Page 5

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

impressive rounded fireplace at its south end, topped by a series of curved walnut panels carved by local sculptor Dick Wiken. All of these finishes are intact.

The 1948 work included an updating of the 8th floor guest room spaces, along with a new elevator system and rooftop. Portions of the 6th and 7th floor pool, gym, and locker room spaces, as well as the 4th floor main Grand Ballroom also received minor updating. The most notable alteration to these areas was the filling in of multiple windows, including the 5th floor windows on the west and south walls of the 4th floor Grand Ballroom; the windows on the west and south walls of the gymnasium on the 6th and 7th floors, the windows on the east and south walls of the pool on the 6th and 7th floors; and the windows on the east and south walls of the handball courts on the 8th and 9th floors. Additionally, the windows at the east end of the south wall on the 4th floor were replaced in downsized openings infilled with brick.

**1954 Renovation**

Major changes from the 1954 renovation include remodeling of the 1st floor lobby, basement, and kitchen spaces. 1st floor perimeter spaces were also updated for new lounges and bars. New ventilation systems were installed in the basement pool and 6th floor pool and gymnasium. None of these 1954 changes mentioned above survive.

Surviving 1954 changes include marble cladding and Mid-Century Modern style bronze railings at the 1st floor stair. A new women's entrance was created along the south (Mason Street) façade. The east (Broadway) entrance was widened and the existing canopy installed.

**1957 Renovation**

In 1957, the 2nd floor "Elizabethan Room" banquet hall was divided into two separate spaces, the Milano Room (a large banquet hall) and adjacent foyer. The plan of these spaces remains intact but the finishes were updated in the 1990s.

**Mid-1960s-1968 Renovations**

Changes to the building in the mid- to late-1960s included the installation of anodized aluminum windows at most upper floor window openings, and the construction of a new north entrance structure which projected out into a new parking lot for the club.

**1970s-2010s Changes**

After the club began admitting women as full members in the 1970s, women's lounge spaces on the 1st floor became co-ed spaces and more recently converted into the southwest coffee shop and southeast restaurant. The bowling alley in the basement was also removed and replaced with a women's workout room.

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

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

Section 7 Page 6

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

Other more recent updates include the 1990s replacement of much of the 1950s finishes in the lobby (except for the marble and bronze entrance stair and main staircase); changes to the 2nd floor Superior Room; and the conversion of several of the handball courts on the 8th floor into weight training and aerobics studios. The upper guest room floors have also been updated over the years, with new doors, trim, wallpaper, and carpeting.

**Floor-by-Floor Interior Description**

**Basement**

The basement is below grade and is accessed by both the central stair and elevator core. The historic central stair from the first floor lobby has its original metal baluster and newel post and opens into the enclosed basement lobby. The lobby is primarily clad in non-historic finishes installed after the period of significance, including a dropped ceiling, later partitions, and carpeted floor; the stair is also covered in carpeting. At the east end of the lobby is a metal door that leads to service rooms along the east side of the floor. Three elevators with plain doors and frames line the north wall. The modern partition at the south end has a single wood veneered fire door in a metal frame with a side window; this door opens into the reception area for the pool and women's locker rooms. South of the reception area and front desk is a lounge area and a large weight room, which replaced the original bowling alley after the period of significance. It also has a window wall that looks out into the pool room. A corridor beside the lounge leads west to the women's locker rooms, which occupy a T-shaped space between the pool and weight rooms, and extend the full length of the western wall. All of the locker room spaces and the weight and lounge rooms have non-historic finishes and feature non-historic partitions installed after the period of significance.

The pool room occupies the northwestern corner of the floor and has the layout of the original "ladies tank" swimming pool based on 1918 plans; however, most surfaces have been repeatedly refinished and redecorated, with the latest refinishing dating to after the period of significance. Along the eastern side of the floor are a series of service spaces, which open off of a corridor that runs north-south from a freight elevator and secondary passenger elevator located the northeastern corner of the floor. These spaces include various mechanical and electrical rooms, a laundry, and storage rooms. At the north end of the corridor are offices for the building's engineering department. All rooms have concrete floors, plastered or plain concrete block walls, and acoustic metal tile ceilings or exposed concrete structural beams. All doors are painted metal and pipes and conduit are exposed along the corridor ceiling.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 7

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

**First Floor**

The first floor is accessed from all sides of the building, with the main public entrance from Broadway on the west side, a secondary entrance on the south side from Mason Street, a secondary entrance on the north side from the adjacent parking lot, and service entrances on the north and east sides. The west and south side of the floor contain public spaces, while the service spaces are located in the northeastern corner. Much of the first floor outside of the main lobby was reconfigured in 1954 and again in the 1990s. The finishes in all of the first floor spaces—including tile floors, wood paneled walls and columns, and modern beamed ceilings with wood trim and acoustical plaster—were installed in the 1990s or later, outside of the period of significance for the building.

*Main (West) Lobby*

The main (west) entrance opens into a small vestibule with a central revolving door flanked by single glass doors. The vestibule opens into the main lobby and is accessed by a short flight of carpeted steps that lead up from the street level to the level of the first floor. The steps are flanked by marble knee walls and have wide brass handrails. The lobby is an open space that roughly covers the location of the original lobby, but also incorporates areas along the west elevation, which originally were partitioned into commercial spaces. Except for the entrance stair and the central stair, which were installed in 1954 and feature marble cladding and bronze railings, the features and finishes in the lobby space were installed in the 1990s and date from outside the period of significance.

The rectangular lobby connects all of the public entrances and serves as the building's central gathering point. Opposite the main entrance is a small information desk. To the left and right of the desk are north-south corridors, which connect lead to the secondary public entrances. Behind the desk is an anterior lobby space with a bank of three elevators on the north wall and the main central stair in the southeast corner. Along the lobby's north side is the main reception and reservation counter for the club and upper floor hotel rooms. Behind the counter area is a suite of building management offices. The north corridor beside the counter leads to the north parking lot entrance. Along the south side of the lobby there is a wide opening that leads to a café and lounge space in the southwestern corner of the building. Next to the café is a south corridor that leads to the south entrance from Mason Street.

*North Spaces*

The north corridor and north parking lot entrance feature a single-story metal and glass entrance pavilion with a revolving door. The structure was added during the 1960s along with the northward expansion of a former commercial space in the northwestern corner. Doors along the east side of the north corridor lead to restrooms. The south entrance features a revolving door and a pair of glass and metal doors. The south corridor has entrances to the café and lounge in the southwestern corner and to a restaurant and bar space in the southeastern corner of the building. The restaurant occupies former commercial spaces and features a larger bar along the north side of the room, with booths at the east



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 8

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

and west ends, and tables in the middle. All features and finishes in the café, lounge, and restaurant spaces date to the 1990s and were installed after the end of the period of significance.

*South Spaces*

The service portion of the first floor occupies the eastern third of the floor and has a mezzanine level above. Most spaces have simple, utilitarian finishes dating to the 1950s and later. Floors are either concrete or have ceramic or acoustic vinyl tiles, walls are plaster, ceilings are plaster or have metal acoustic tiles, and all doors and jambs are metal. Three points of access connect the public spaces with the service spaces: 1. a door in the anterior lobby, beside the elevators; 2. a narrow corridor that runs behind the elevators from the lobby; and 3. a service door at the eastern end of the restaurant and bar room. The space is bisected by a narrow north-south corridor with storage rooms along the east side and a large kitchen and a mechanical room along the west side. The corridor runs north to a short flight of steps, which lead up to a receiving room and the lobby for the freight and secondary passenger elevators. A stair at the west end of the receiving room leads up to the mezzanine-level women's locker rooms, and a stair on the south side of the receiving room leads up to the mezzanine level men's locker rooms.

**Second Floor**

The second floor houses two event spaces on the west side—now known as the Superior Room and Foyer—along with building management offices and smaller east meeting rooms. A kitchen is located in the northeastern corner beside the freight elevator and secondary stair.

*Second Floor Elevator Lobby*

The second floor lobby is reached by the open central stair and by a bank of three elevators. The lobby is carpeted, has wallpapered walls, and plain painted ceilings. A white marble baseboard encircles the space and continues along the side of the stairs. The elevators have modern brass doors with decorative brushed square panels.

*Superior Room and Foyer*

*(Originally Elizabethan Room; remodeled in 1948 as Milano Room and Foyer)*

At the west end of the lobby is a double doorway leading to a large banquet room that was originally known as the Elizabethan Room, which occupies a large portion of the northwestern corner of the second floor. The room was remodeled in 1957 (within the period of significance) and separated into two spaces—a large banquet room re-named the Milano Room, with a smaller foyer at the south end. Although the current plan of these spaces matches the 1957 remodeling, the finishes throughout the Milano Room (carpeting, ceiling, wall coverings, lighting, etc.) all date from the 1990s renovations, when the space was re-named the “Superior Room.” The smaller foyer at the south end retains the 1957 ceiling and features a series of oval, backlit recesses, but the carpeting and paneling are non-

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

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

Section 7 Page 9

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

historic finishes added after the period of significance. At the east end of the smaller foyer room is a double doorway that leads out into a north-south corridor. The double doorway at the east end of the main lobby also opens into this corridor.

*Management Offices*

The south end of the north-south corridor leads to a series of building management offices, which line the south side of the floor. The north end of the corridor is accessed by a double doorway that leads to the service portion of the floor. Inside the doorway, the corridor floor changes from carpeting to light grey terrazzo with a white mosaic marble tile border and an outer border of dark grey terrazzo. Storage rooms and the freight elevator connect to this end of the corridor. Although some doors and acoustical tile ceilings appear to date from the 1950s or 1960s, within the period of significance, most of the finishes in these spaces are non-historic.

*East Meeting Rooms*

Opposite the lobby doorway there is a short corridor that leads to a second double-loaded north-south corridor on the far east side of the floor. This corridor is lined by several meeting rooms. Rooms on the east side of the corridor have windows, many of which are wood casements with foliate etched glass designs and walnut side panels and casing. Most meeting rooms have carpeted floors and dropped acoustic tile ceilings. Along the east side of the corridor are storage rooms and a doorway to closed stairway. The stair once accessed the third floor, but was partially removed when the Elephant Room above was built in 1948; currently the stair accesses a small storage closet and a duct and cable chase above the second floor meeting rooms.

*Northeast Service Spaces*

Utilitarian spaces at the second floor's northeast corner house kitchen, service, storage, and mechanical rooms.

**Third Floor**

The third floor has four of the building's most notable public spaces—the Bali Room, the Elephant Room, the Men's Lounge, and the President's Room—which together occupy the majority of the floor. A kitchen is located in the northeastern corner beside the freight elevator and secondary stair.

*Third Floor Elevator Lobby*

The lobby is similar to the second floor, except that the portion of the stair leading to the fourth floor features original painted metal balusters, newel posts, and stringers. The lobby also has three doorways: a northwest doorway to the Bali Room; a west doorway to the Men's Lounge; and an east doorway to a north-south corridor.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 10

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

*Bali Room*

The Bali Room doors are veneered wood dating to 1948 and are designed to look like raised panels. The doors open into a small paneled corridor that leads to the “Bali Room,” which is located in the northwest corner of the building. The room was originally designed in 1917 as a dining room, and was completely remodeled in 1948, within the period of significance. The walls are clad in sleek walnut paneling and the ceiling is punctuated by a dropped, curving ceiling with a large circular and backlit recess, both of which date to the 1948 remodeling. Pairs of murals by New York muralist Robert Bushnell as part of the 1948 remodeling line the north and south ends of the room, and are recessed in walnut frames with upholstered booth seats below. The room is carpeted, and the carpeting appears to be non-historic. A double doorway at the northeastern corner of the room connects to the kitchen.

*Men’s Lounge*

A double doorway at the west end of the lobby opens into the Men’s Lounge at the southeast corner of the building. The room was renovated in 1948 with parquet flooring and walls clad in sleek walnut paneling. The ceiling has a series of rectangular, backlit recesses, which date to the 1948 remodeling. At the northeast corner of the room, beside the main entrance is a frosted glass tryptic depicting various sports that look out into the central stair. Below the tryptic is a walnut cabinet with raised panel doors; above is a curving panel of walnut veneer with a metal-framed clock at its center. At the south end of the room, centered on the wall, is a semi-circular fireplace with a limestone base and a large rounded walnut panel with raised carvings by local sculptor Dick Wiken depicting a variety of sports and athletic events.

*President’s Room*

The east end of the lobby has a pair of walnut-framed doors with rectangular glass panels and a transom above. These doors open into a north-south corridor. At the south end is a double doorway to a C-shaped room at the southeastern corner of the building called the President’s Room. It is divided by folding partitions into a west meeting room and an east lounge space with semi-circular booths. Carpets cover the floors and the ceilings have acoustic tiles; most finishes were installed during the 1990s renovations and are non-historic.

*Elephant Room*

Opposite the doorway from the lobby is the Elephant Room, which was designed in 1948. A walnut-framed doorway and flanking sidelights with etched glass panels depicting an elephant in a forest setting, which date to 1948, identify the room. Inside, the circular room features no windows and has a smaller adjoining rounded lounge space. It is defined by a kidney-shaped bar along the east side and a series of large murals (also completed by Robert Bushnell in 1948) depicting elephants in the forest. The elephant theme continues to the bar, which features a curving brass rail that is held by cast brass elephant heads. The ceiling has a curving and backlit recessed center that appears to be pinched by a

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

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

Section 7 Page 11

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

pair of round piers. A curving and backlit plaster soffit runs the perimeter of the room. These features are all original elements of the 1948 remodeling.

*Northeast Service Spaces*

The north end of the north-south corridor opens through twin veneered walnut doors into the kitchen space and service rooms. These rooms are largely utilitarian with orange tile floors, lower walls with beige square tiles, and dropped acoustic tile ceilings. At the west end of the kitchen is a passage to the Bali Room. In this space there is a built-in refrigerator with a solid wood door and nickel-plated hardware likely dating to before 1930. A service stair at the far west end connects to kitchen spaces on the fourth floor.

**Fourth Floor**

The fourth floor houses the building's most intact 1918 public spaces—the Grand Ballroom and Ladies' Dining Room, both at the west end of the building. The remainder of the fourth floor houses utilitarian service and kitchen spaces.

*Fourth Floor Elevator Lobby*

Similar to lower floors, the main elevator and central stair lobby is the only public access point. The lobby features heavy wood baseboard molding and a plaster crown ceiling detail that are likely original to the building. The original winding central stair also continues with original ornamented metal baluster and newels posts.

A double doorway at the west end of the lobby opens into the two-story, south portion of the Grand Ballroom; a passageway at the northwest corner of the lobby leads to a second doorway, which opens into the single-story north portion of the Grand Ballroom, originally the Ladies' Dining Room. Twin casement windows overlooking the central stair borrow light from the ballroom. These spaces retain the original 1918 plan and finishes with minor alterations.

*Ladies' Dining Room*

The north portion of the Grand Ballroom, originally known the Ladies' Dining Room, is single story with a mirrored north wall and sets of windows on the west wall. The walls are decorated with wainscoting and raised plaster panels, while the ceiling is divided into two shallow, barrel vaulted ceilings decorated with fine raised Classical bell flower molding and shell and anthemion motifs. The volume and detailing of these spaces are original to the building. The Ladies' Dining Room was designed so that it could be partitioned off from the larger dining space. Today, the room remains open to the Grand Ballroom, although moveable partitions remain.



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

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

Section 7 Page 12

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

*Grand Ballroom (Former Main Dining Room)*

The two-story south portion of the Grand Ballroom, originally the main dining room, is also largely intact and richly decorated with polychrome plasterwork. The walls are lined by casement windows with arched plaster tympana along the west wall, and false windows line the east wall. Above the east wall false windows are smaller second-story false windows with projecting Juliet balconies with wrought iron railings. Matching windows with balconies historically existed above the west windows, but the windows were infilled and the balconies removed in 1948, within the period of significance. The room has four pairs of windows along the east and west walls, which are visually divided by pairs of fluted, plaster pilasters with Corinthian capitals. The pilasters appear to carry a series of three heavy plaster beams that cross the room from east to west. Each beam supports a part of large crystal chandeliers; the light fixtures in the room have changed several times and may not date to the period of significance. Between the beams, the ceiling is decorated with a repeating field of square and octagonal coffers detailed with acanthus rosettes, egg and dart molding, dentil molding, reed and bead molding, and a twining ribbon pattern. At the south end of the ballroom is a pedimented portico that frames a painting; it was once part of a raised stage area. The north end of the room transitions into the lower north Grand Ballroom with a folding partition at the bottom and a continuation of the smaller second-story windows with Juliet balconies above.

*East Service and Kitchen Spaces*

A small storage room off the southeast corner of the south Grand Ballroom is decorated with oak timbering and has a ceiling supported by beaded beams carried by decorative brackets, which likely are original to the building. The windows in this room were partially infilled and replaced by smaller units in 1948; the eastern portion of the former lounge space was made part of the bakery.

The eastern half of the fourth floor is occupied by utilitarian kitchen spaces and storage rooms. Most spaces have terra cotta tile floors, melamine paneled walls, and acoustic dropped ceilings.

**Fifth Floor**

The fifth floor is a transitional floor between the public meeting and event rooms on the lower floors and the athletic rooms above. Most of the western third of the floor is occupied by the upper part of the fourth-floor Grand Ballroom, while most of the eastern third of the floor is taken up by the lower part of the sixth floor men's pool.

*Fifth Floor Elevator Lobby*

The main lobby at the center of the fifth floor has finishes similar to the fourth floor, with plain wood baseboard and decorative plaster crown molding.

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

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

Section 7 Page 13

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

*Northwest Offices (Former Dining Rooms)*

A north-south corridor at the northwest corner of the lobby leads to an east-west corridor, which serves a series of offices along the north side of the building, and a meeting space that overlooks the Grand Ballroom below. Originally highly decorative period-themed dining rooms, the plan of these spaces is intact, but today finishes - including carpeted floors, modern wood doors, and dropped ceilings—are non-historic and were installed after the period of significance.

*South Fitness Spaces*

At the southwest corner of the lobby is a doorway that leads to an irregularly-shaped weight training room with a non-historic metal stair that connects to a sixth floor weight training space.

*East Service and Pool Spaces*

Service spaces on this floor are mainly corridors and mechanical rooms associated with the sixth floor pool. All floors are concrete and wall and ceilings are plastered. A service lobby formed by the freight and secondary passenger elevators features a built-in wood cupboard with upper shelves and paneled doors that is original to the building. In addition, the original dumb waiter is identified by a trimmed, square opening with an inner sliding paneled door; portions of the former shaft were removed on other floors.

**Sixth and Seventh Floors**

The sixth and seventh floors house the Milwaukee Athletic Club's two largest athletic spaces which are original to the building and flank the sixth and seventh floor elevator lobbies: the two-story Men's Pool to the east and the two-story Gymnasium to the west. The remainder of these floors house locker rooms and other support spaces that have been heavily altered and retains no character defining historic features.

*Sixth Floor Elevator Lobby*

The sixth floor elevator lobby has non-historic finishes installed after the period of significance, including carpeting, modern partitions, and a dropped ceiling. The central stair is enclosed at the sixth floor. From the sixth floor up, the central stair is highly utilitarian in character and is fully enclosed and separated from the elevator lobbies. Non-historic doors at the east and west ends of the lobby open into the two-story pool, the two-story gymnasium, locker rooms and fitness spaces.

*7<sup>th</sup> Floor Elevator Lobby*

The 7<sup>th</sup> floor elevator lobby has non-historic finishes including carpeting, modern partitions, counters and workspaces, and a dropped ceiling. The central stair is enclosed at the 7<sup>th</sup> floor. Non-historic doors open onto the east pool mezzanine and into a west corridor connecting north and south locker rooms. West windows overlook the gymnasium.

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

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

Section 7 Page 14

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

*Men's Pool*

The two-story main pool room is a large open volume with a large center pool. The space features a second level mezzanine along the north, west, and south walls of the room. A metal stair at the southeast corner allows access to the mezzanine, which features a decorative metal railing with plain square balusters, and posts with decorative foliate caps. Two doorways at the north end lead to the service elevators and the northeast stair. The space retains its 1918 volume and pool basin. Most finishes, except for the metal balcony baluster and railing, are non-historic finishes installed after 1968. The east and south walls historically featured windows, but these were infilled during renovations in 1948 within the period of significance.

*Gymnasium*

The two-story gymnasium has a hardwood tongue and groove floor, lower glazed brick walls, and a plastered ceiling dating to 1918. Gymnastic equipment fixtures remain attached to the ceiling along with later equipment including basketball hoops. Similar to the pool, the south and west walls historically featured windows that were infilled in 1948, within the period of significance.

*6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Floor Locker Rooms and Fitness Spaces*

At the south end of the 6<sup>th</sup> floor between the pool room and the gymnasium is a fitness space that connects down to the 5<sup>th</sup> floor via a non-historic stair. The north end of the 6<sup>th</sup> floor and both the north and south ends of the 7<sup>th</sup> floor house service and locker room spaces that were renovated in the 1990s with no character-defining historic features remaining.

**Eighth Floor**

The eighth floor is a transitional floor between the lower athletic rooms and the upper meeting and guest room floors with finishes largely dating to 1948.

The main elevator lobby has plain finishes and a backlit soffit that borders the room. A corridor at the northwest corner leads north and then east behind the elevator bank to a series of handball courts along the east side of the building. The corridor has plain wood baseboards, raised wood casing around doorways, and features flat panel doors with plain cast brass hardware, which appear to date from 1918. The two-story former handball courts have hardwood tongue and groove floors and exposed concrete beams and posts. Second level balconies offer a place for spectators to watch matches. Similar to other floors, these rooms historically featured windows, but these were infilled in 1948. Otherwise, the volume, flooring, and finishes from 1918 are extant. Other rooms along the north side of the building include a daycare and playroom (identified as the Milwaukee Room). In addition, there is an original linen room off the service elevator lobby, which is lined by built-in painted wood

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

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

Section 7 Page 15

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

cabinets with lower drawers and upper shelves. Beside the freight elevator is another paneled doorway for the former dumb waiter.

At the southwest corner of the elevator lobby is a corridor to a large meeting room on the south side of the building, known as the Wisconsin Room. A second corridor at the west end of the lobby connects to a north-south corridor along the west end of the building. It serves a series of former guest rooms that have been refurnished as meeting rooms. All rooms have an adjoining bathroom and are finished with carpeted floors, wainscoting, and acoustic tile ceilings that were installed after the period of significance.

*Ninth Floor*

The ninth floor is largely composed of guest rooms, which are organized around a circular corridor. The plan of this floor dates to 1918. The eastern third of the floor is occupied by the upper levels of the eighth floor handball courts; a series of balconies overlooking the courts are accessible from the east end of the elevator lobby. The south end of the lobby connects to the main corridor, which encircles windowless offices. Finishes in the lobby and corridor largely date from the 1950s and 1960s, within the period of significance. The carpeting is non-historic. The guest rooms that line the outside walls, all have adjoining bathrooms. One of the rooms on the north side of the building was remodeled to serve as a barbershop. Finishes in the guest rooms are largely 1950s or later, with a few rooms retaining original 1918 trim and doors.

*Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Floors*

The tenth through twelfth floors house guest rooms along the outer walls, connected by a circular corridor with the main elevator lobby and enclosed central stair at its center. The plan of these floors date to 1918. Finishes in the lobby and corridor largely date from the 1950s and 1960s, within the period of significance. The carpeting is non-historic. Additional rooms flanking the lobby include an archive (on the tenth floor) and large storage rooms. All guest rooms on the tenth floor have an adjoining bathroom. Carpeting in the rooms is non-historic. Plaster walls and egg and dart crown moldings remain from 1918, but ceilings are acoustical tile ceilings dating to 1950 or later. Rooms on the eleventh and twelfth floors have acoustic tile ceilings without the original crown moldings. The corridors are similarly clad in non-historic finishes. At the northeast corner of each floor is the service elevator lobby; most have painted floors with plaster walls and ceilings which likely date to 1918 and some have paneled doors for the original dumb waiter.

*Thirteenth Floor*

The thirteenth floor is mainly taken up by a non-historic addition at the northwest corner, constructed in 1972, that contains a series of two-story squash courts and connect to the original masonry penthouses at the center of the roof. The facilities are accessed by the central stair, which opens into a small corridor with a door to the squash court addition and an exterior doorway to the rooftop deck.



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 16

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

Two squash courts occupy the northwestern corner, while there is a third court to the south. All three courts share a central east-west corridor with metal stairs at each end that lead up to second level spectator balconies. Rooftop decks line the south and east side of the roof; the perforated metal screen on the west wall was installed in the 1950s.

The masonry penthouses east of the 1972 addition include mechanical and elevator support spaces. These rooms are mainly finished with exposed brick walls and concrete floors and ceilings.

**Integrity**

The Milwaukee Athletic Club has very good exterior and interior integrity to reflecting its significance under Criterion A for Recreation and Social History, with most significant alterations occurring within the period of significance ending in 1968.

The exterior integrity of the building is good, with the original brick walls and limestone detailing at the first two stories and upper two stories intact. Many of the alterations on the exterior occurred as part of the 1948 remodeling or the 1954-1957 remodeling, and are within the period of significance. These include the infill of the storefronts on the west and south elevations with granite and bronze windows, the expansion of the main entry doors on Broadway, and the addition of a secondary entrance along Mason Street, as well as the infill of windows corresponding to social and athletic spaces on the upper floors. The original windows throughout the building were replaced in the 1960s with anodized aluminum windows within the original openings. The north side entry addition, which dates from c. 1965, is also within the period of significance.

Significant renovations were completed in most of the principal spaces in the Milwaukee Athletic Club between 1948 and 1957, within the period of significance, as part of a multi-phase modernization of the building in the post-WWII era and illustrates the club's attempt to remain relevant and attract new members during a period of increasing suburbanization. Many of the building's most significant public spaces date from this era, including the Bali Room, Elephant Room, and the Men's Lounge on the third floor. Several of the building's original 1917-18 spaces also exist with only minor alterations, including the main dining room (now grand ballroom) on the fourth and fifth floors of the building, and the gymnasium on the seventh and eight floors. Other athletic spaces, including the men's pool on the fifth and sixth floors, the women's pool in the basement, and several of the handball courts on the eighth floor remain, although they have been updated with new finishes. The original arrangement of space on the residential floors of the building is original, although the finishes have been updated.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 17

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

While most of the alterations to the first-floor spaces date to the 1990s, elements of the 1950s remodeling of the main lobby remain intact, including the marble staircase with bronze railing and the overall arrangement of the space.

Even with more recent alterations, the Milwaukee Athletic Club retains very good integrity from its period of significance (1917-1940; 1917-1968) having historic period circulation, rooms, features and finishes to relay its historic significance as the city's premier athletic club from the early twentieth century through the post-war period.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 1

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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**Statement of Significance**

**Summary Statement**

The Milwaukee Athletic Club at 758 North Broadway in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is locally significant under National Register Criterion A, in the areas of Recreation and Social History, as the primary building associated with one of Milwaukee's oldest and longest-lived athletic clubs. Founded in 1879 as the Milwaukee Athletic Society, the club incorporated in 1882, and changed its name to the Milwaukee Athletic Club in 1898. After leasing space in many buildings in the city through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the club erected this purpose-built clubhouse at the northeast corner of Broadway and Mason Street in 1917-18.

The Milwaukee Athletic Club building is significant as a physical representation of the evolving nature of the Club through the early-to-mid-twentieth century. Early in its history, the club focused solely on athletics, with an emphasis on competitive amateur team and individual sports. Its nineteenth-century headquarters, which included none of the social spaces seen in other urban athletic clubs of the period, were relatively sparse. Even its quarters on the top floors of the Wells Building, which it held from 1902 until 1917, included only a handful of social spaces. The construction of a 12-story clubhouse in the heart of the city's downtown coincided with a shift in the purpose and direction of the club, from "a society founded for athletic purposes" to "the center of not only athletic, but civic, business, and social life in the city."<sup>1</sup> The new building offered more social and recreational spaces than any of its previous quarters, and included residential floors to serve as both long-term and temporary housing for club members. The building was also the first in the club's history to provide dedicated space to women associated with the organization.

In the years following World War II, the Milwaukee Athletic Club sought to retain and grow its membership in the face of stiff competition from suburban country clubs by embarking on a nine-year renovation of many of the club's social spaces and athletic facilities. Several of the club's most significant extant historic spaces, including the Bali Room, Men's Lounge, and the Elephant Room, date from this renovation. The Milwaukee Athletic Club continues to operate in the building.

The period of significance for Recreation begins in 1917, the year of the building's construction, and ends in 1940, when the club largely abandoned competitive club athletics to provide more space for social activities and business functions for its members. Although the club continued to provide

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<sup>1</sup> *Milwaukee Athletic Club*, brochure published by the Milwaukee Athletic Club, 1941, p. 1.

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

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

Section 8 Page 2

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

athletic facilities to promote physical fitness among its members, the post-World War II period saw the Milwaukee Athletic Club increasingly used as a place for business meetings, formal dinners and dances, and other social events. The club has continued to serve as an important center for social functions from its opening in 1917 to the present day. For this reason, the period of significance for Social History begins in 1917 and extends to 1968, applying the 50-year rule for National Register significance.

**Development of Milwaukee's East Side Commercial District**

The Milwaukee Athletic Club is located in the downtown commercial district east of the Milwaukee River. The neighborhood is bounded by I-794 on the south, the Marquette University neighborhood on the west, McKinley Avenue on the north, and the Milwaukee River on the east.

Milwaukee's commercial history began with the first settlement of the town in 1835. The physical characteristics of the Milwaukee and Menomonee Rivers divided the area into three sections: east, west, and south. The three sections were staked out by three competing land speculators, resulting in separate and competing settlements in the city's early years. Morgan L. Martin, in partnership with Solomon Juneau, claimed the land east of the Milwaukee River to Lake Michigan as a townsite, which was originally known as Juneautown.<sup>2</sup>

The three independent villages were legally combined in 1846 when Milwaukee was incorporated as a city. On the east side, a clearly defined central business district emerged by the 1860s, with Water Street, Michigan Street, and Wisconsin Avenue serving as the main commercial thoroughfares. Broadway also emerged in the 1860s as a retail district.<sup>3</sup>

Between 1870 and 1900, Milwaukee became a highly diversified city and the driving force of the city's economy shifted from agricultural processing to industrial manufacturing. The resulting economic boom saw a significant expansion in the east side commercial district, as new buildings were constructed to accommodate the increasing scale of business activity in the area. Many of the opulent commercial, office, and wholesaling blocks surrounding the Milwaukee Athletic Club date from this period of growth.<sup>4</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century, the east side and west side business sectors had merged to form a single defined central business district. On the east side, "a continuous strip of commercial fabric along

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<sup>2</sup> National Register of Historic Places, East Side Commercial Historic District, Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, National Register #86002325, 1-2.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 5-6.

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

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

Section 8 Page 3

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

North Water Street “ connected the wholesale district of the Third Ward with the financial district centered on Michigan Street and Wisconsin Avenue and retail lining Water Street, Broadway, and Milwaukee Street. The commercial district on the east side had also spread east of Milwaukee Street, with various business uses replacing the former residential district.<sup>5</sup>

The east side business district which was fully developed by 1900, experienced relatively little growth in the early 1900s, with the exception of several large office buildings and the Milwaukee Athletic Club. The onset in the Great Depression in 1929 further curtailed new development. Significant construction in the area did not resume until the 1960s, when several swaths of nineteenth century commercial buildings were replaced by corporate office towers.

The East Side Commercial Historic District, which encompasses the core of remaining nineteenth century commercial buildings on Milwaukee’s east side, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1986. The Milwaukee Athletic Club is located north of Mason Street and falls just outside of the northern boundary of the East Side Commercial Historic District.

**History of Social and Athletic Clubs in Milwaukee**

*Brief History of Private Clubs in Milwaukee*

The Milwaukee Athletic Club was founded during a period in which private clubs played a vital role in the social and recreational lives of middle- and upper-class residents in Milwaukee and other cities throughout the country. Fraternal organizations were among the earliest to establish themselves in Milwaukee, and remained popular through the early twentieth century. Local lodges offered opportunities for fellowship and networking for members, while their elaborate rituals lent a sense of importance and mystery to the organization. Many fraternities also provided members with life insurance and sometimes sickness insurance. Fraternal organizations like the Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, Modern Woodmen of America, and the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, all established local chapters in Milwaukee in the second half of the nineteenth century, and many built impressive headquarters in the city.<sup>6</sup>

Other private clubs proliferated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in Milwaukee, and reflected a variety of interests and identities. A Milwaukee City Directory from 1892 illustrates the breadth of these organizations during this period in the city. The directory lists military organizations like the G. A. R. and Sons of Veterans, Turner Societies, and dozens of clubs organized around ethnic

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Final Historic Designation Study Report: University Club of Milwaukee, June 2003, p. 5.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 4

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

or racial identities, vocations, hobbies, and political causes. Women's groups were also well-represented, with the Women's Club of Wisconsin, the Women's Industrial Exchange, and the Women's School Alliance among the groups listed. Sporting and recreational clubs included boating clubs like the Milwaukee Yacht Club and Milwaukee Boat Club, seven gun clubs, a kennel club, two cricket clubs, and a lake fishing club. Musical societies, orchestras, and choirs were also popular during this period—the directory even included a banjo orchestra that met every Tuesday.<sup>7</sup>

The late nineteenth century also saw the rise of social clubs in city. Unlike many other organizations of the period, social clubs “were formed for the sheer purpose of providing places for people to socialize and find camaraderie around meals, drinks, or special events.” Among the early social clubs in Milwaukee were the Woman's Club of Wisconsin (1876), the oldest private women's club in the United States; the Milwaukee Club (1882), the oldest private men's club in the city; and the Wisconsin Club (1891).<sup>8</sup>

Private clubs and other social organizations often did not own a dedicated building or space in the city, and instead met in rented rooms, halls located within commercial buildings downtown, or at large taverns; however, by the 1880s several clubs with wealthy or a large number of members were able to either erect purpose-built meeting halls or purchase large mansions for their headquarters. The Milwaukee Club built its imposing three-story Queen Anne clubhouse at 706 N. Jefferson Street in 1883—the building included a library, dining rooms, tavern, lounges, and meeting rooms, and several small rooms on the third floor that provided accommodation for members. In 1896, the Wisconsin Club began renting the Alexander Mitchell residence, which was originally built in 1848 and remodeled in the Second Empire style in the 1870s. The Club later purchased the building, which it still occupies today.<sup>9</sup>

### *History of Athletic Clubs*

Athletic clubs first emerged in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century, and were generally private clubs for men “who wanted to participate in sports and socialize with like-minded peers. The clubs functioned as a home away from home for men, who exercised, dined, and drank at these members-only establishments.”<sup>10</sup> The New York Athletic Club, founded in 1866 and incorporated in 1868, was among the earliest athletic clubs in the country, and set the standard for similar clubs

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<sup>7</sup> Fold3.com, Milwaukee City Directory, 1892, Milwaukee, WI, p. 50. Accessed at <https://www.fold3.com/image/243/257472291> on November 21, 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Final Historic Designation Study Report: University Club of Milwaukee, p. 6-7.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Steven A. Riess, editor, *Sports in America from Colonial Times to the Twenty-First Century: An Encyclopedia* (London: Routledge, 2011), p.112.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 5

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

established in urban centers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The club sponsored the first national amateur championships in track and field in 1876, swimming in 1877, and boxing and wrestling in 1887. Although its initial focus was on athletics, by the mid-1880s the New York Athletic Club had become a “status institution,” where the city’s wealthy and well-connected men could gather to socialize and conduct business.<sup>11</sup> Other cities quickly followed by opening clubs of their own—the Los Angeles Athletic Club opened in 1880, the Boston Athletic Club in 1887, and the Chicago Athletic Club in 1890. By the early 1880s, the number of urban athletic clubs in America reached 150; by 1900, at least one athletic club existed in most of the country’s large and mid-sized cities.<sup>12</sup>

Athletic clubs were generally run by a group of elected officers, with special committees assigned to the management of various aspects of the club (membership, athletics, social activities, clubhouse maintenance). New members usually needed recommendations from existing members before being accepted into the organization, and initiation fees and annual dues were often high. As with most social clubs in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, athletic clubs were open only to white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, which led other ethnic and religious groups to form their own athletic clubs in many cities.

Elite athletic clubs in large cities like New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago built impressive headquarters that provided a wide range of spaces for athletics and socializing. Most included a fully-equipped gymnasium, running tracks, courts for handball, a fencing room, a bowling alley, and other training facilities. Dining rooms, parlors, a library, a smoking room, and billiard or card rooms provided space in which to socialize and conduct business. Many clubs also included private rooms or apartments that were available to members for short- or long-term lease.<sup>13</sup> Although full membership to the club was generally not extended to women, most athletic clubs allowed women with family ties to members to use certain facilities on designated days. Children of members were also often allowed on these days. Some clubs created special areas within the clubhouse for women, and a few even built separate facilities. In the Minneapolis Athletic Club, a ladies’ dining room was created to encourage women shopping downtown to lunch in the club, and the Berkley Athletic Club in New York City built a \$200,000 clubhouse for women in 1889. In Chicago, Belle Ogden Armour and Pauline Harriette Lyon founded the Women’s Athletic Club of Chicago in 1898. The club was the first private athletic club for women in the United States, and allowed for the Chicago Athletic Club to remain a men-only

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 113; Final Historic Designation Study Report: University Club of Milwaukee, p. 7.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 6

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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institution until 1972.<sup>14</sup> Even with these accommodations, many athletic clubs did not extend full membership to women until well after World War II.<sup>15</sup>

In the late nineteenth century, most athletic clubs focused on competitive team and individual athletics, participating in a variety of local, regional, and national competitions for a wide variety of sports, including track and field events, boxing, wrestling, swimming, water polo, golf, rowing, baseball, and football, among many others. Particularly competitive clubs often sponsored elite athletes to compete in events, and offered them temporary member status to allow them to represent the organization. Clubs also regularly hosted competitive athletic events within their club houses.<sup>16</sup> By the 1920s, most clubs began to shift away from competitive sports, choosing instead to focus on recreational sports and physical fitness for the edification of its members, rather than be a center of “sporting entertainment.”

*Turner Societies*

In Wisconsin and other areas with large German populations, the athletic club also grew out of the popularity of Turnvereine, or Turner Societies, in the nineteenth century. Based on German Turnverein associations first founded by Friedrich Ludwig Jahn in 1811, American Turnverein associations followed the motto “*mens sana in corpore sano*” (“a sound mind in a sound body), combining a push for social reform and open democratic government with physical development. Milwaukee’s first Turner Society was founded in 1852, and became a pillar of the city’s German community. In addition to offering classes in gymnastics to members, Turner Societies in Milwaukee and throughout Wisconsin were also influential in the establishment of physical education programs in the state’s public schools.<sup>17</sup>

**Early History of the Milwaukee Athletic Club**

*The Founding of the Milwaukee Athletic Society*

The Milwaukee Athletic Club was originally organized on March 31, 1879 as the Milwaukee Athletic Society. According to an article in the November 19, 1916 edition of the *Milwaukee Journal*, the idea for the club originated in a conversation between three local businessmen over lunch at the Noble Restaurant in the basement of the Mack Building at the corner of Water and Milwaukee streets. The

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<sup>14</sup> “Fitness and Athletic Clubs,” *Encyclopedia of Chicago*. Accessed at <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/459.html> on November 21, 2017.

<sup>15</sup> Riess, p 114.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 113.

<sup>17</sup> “History of the Milwaukee Turners,” Accessed at <http://www.milwaukeeeturners.org/about/history-of-milwaukee-turners> on November 21, 2017; Riess, p. 914.



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 7

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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men—attorney John M.W. Pratt, Henry R. King, and Charles W. Norris—were “talking of various athletic organizations which had been born, lived, and then died in the city. They talked particularly of the old Milwaukee Athletic club, which had gone out of existence some two years before.”<sup>18</sup> It is unknown when this first Milwaukee Athletic Club was founded, but newspaper notices for the club indicate that it was likely organized in the early 1870s. An advertisement in the May 12, 1875 edition of the *Racine Journal* for a gymnastic performance by the club at Racine Turn Hall boasted of the club’s “unrivalled gymnastic specialties, consisting of vaulting, tumbling, exercises on horizontal and parallel bars, club swinging, groupings, tableaux, etc.”<sup>19</sup>

Inspired by the first Milwaukee Athletic Club, the men sought to create a “city-wide athletic organization, which should provide gymnastic and physical training for men, women, and children.”<sup>20</sup> Quarters for the new organization were secured in the Mack Building, and equipment for the gymnasium was purchased later that year. Leonard Barnickel, who had trained under the old athletic club’s director George Brosius, was hired to be the new club’s first athletic director. In his inaugural address as president of the organization, Henry King “predicted that the Milwaukee Athletic Society would become a permanent institution in Milwaukee and grow to be one of the prized possessions of the city.”<sup>21</sup> On September 18, 1882, the Milwaukee Athletic Society formally incorporated, and in 1898, members voted to change the name of the association to the Milwaukee Athletic Club.

*Competitive Athletics at the Club*

Although clubs for specific sports were popular in Milwaukee—individual clubs for baseball, cricket, cycling, and lawn tennis were all founded in the late nineteenth century—the Milwaukee Athletic Club was the one of the only clubs in the city to offer a wide range of athletic and sporting pursuits within a single organization. The club’s members participated in track and field events, including foot races, the high jump and long jump, the pole vault, and the shot put. Other individual sports offered by the club included bicycling, fencing, and swimming. Among the most popular individual sports in the club were boxing and wrestling—the association regularly hosted boxing and wrestling matches between its members and rival clubs from the surrounding states, and sent its boxers and wrestlers to competitions throughout the country. Due to Wisconsin’s law against prizefighting, matches were not allowed to end in knock outs; after a particularly brutal match held at the Milwaukee Athletic Club’s headquarters at

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<sup>18</sup> Wisconsin Historical Society. Wisconsin Local History & Biography Articles: *Milwaukee Journal*; Milwaukee, WI; November 19, 1916; viewed online at <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Newspaper/BA8878> on November 21, 2017.

<sup>19</sup> *Racine Journal*, May 12, 1875, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 8

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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the Light Horse Squadron Armory on Broadway, the city's chief of police threatened to ban all future boxing matches in the city.<sup>22</sup> This turned out to be a largely empty threat, although reports of boxing matches being halted by police did appear in newspapers through the late 1890s.

Team sports, including baseball, football, basketball, rowing, hockey, polo, and even tug-of-war, were also offered by the Milwaukee Athletic Club in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although the club's hockey team was well-known, football, baseball, and basketball never really took hold at the club. The football team was disbanded after a few seasons in the late 1890s, as was the basketball team, although the junior basketball team became briefly popular at the club later on.<sup>23</sup>

This broad range of amateur competitive sports offered by the Milwaukee Athletic Club was typical of most athletic clubs throughout the country during this period, and countless local, regional, and national competitions were organized around the country in which clubs participated. In 1888, in response to the growing numbers of athletes in clubs receiving financial compensation for competing for the organization, the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) was founded to certify amateur athletes in the United States. In addition to controlling creeping professionalism among the athletic clubs, the AAU also sponsored regional and national competitions that became the backbone of amateur competitive athletics in the country.<sup>24</sup> The Milwaukee Athletic Club joined the AAU's Central division soon after the union's creation, and participated in many AAU-sponsored events through the years. In addition to AAU competitions, the club also hosted local and regional competitions for a number of sports, and held an annual field day, which included swimming, track and field events, and a bicycle race.<sup>25</sup>

During the Milwaukee Athletic Club's heyday in competitive sport in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the organization produced regional and national champions in several sports. Bill Momsen and Emil Rohm both won the national club swinging championship in the early 1890s, and Ben Kavelege, Herman Koehler, Otto Wagner and Bill Lachenmeier took home national honors in gymnastics during the same period.<sup>26</sup> In 1894, George Whittaker won the world's championship medal for swimming at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1894<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, January 31, 1891, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Oiver E. Ruechle, "Milwaukee Athletic Club's Early History Filled with Triumphs Which Won it National Renown," *Milwaukee Journal*, February 18, 1940, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> "Amateur Athletic Union of the United States (AAU)," accessed at <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Amateur-Athletic-Union-of-the-United-States-on-November-24>, 2017.

<sup>25</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, June 24, 1894, p. 7

<sup>26</sup> *Milwaukee Journal*, February 18, 1940, p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, June 24, 1894, p. 7

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 9

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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With the founding of the modern Olympic Games in 1896, amateur sport extended to the international level, and many early American Olympiads came out of athletic clubs throughout the country. Olympic medalists who were produced or associated with the Milwaukee Athletic Club at some point in their athletic careers include Al Kraenzlein, who “started his career at a switchman’s picnic here in 1894” went on to become the first athlete in Olympic history to win four individual gold medals in a single discipline, capturing the gold in the 60-meter dash, 110-meter high hurdles, 200-meter low hurdles, and the long jump. Archie Hahn, known as “the Milwaukee Meteor,” won gold medals in the 100- and 200-meter dash at the 1904 St. Louis games, and the 100-meter dash in 1906. Oscar Osthoff also won a gold and silver medal in weightlifting at the St. Louis games.<sup>28</sup>

*Early History: Milwaukee Athletic Club Headquarters, 1879-1902*

Although by the turn of the twentieth century the Milwaukee Athletic Club had become the city’s premier athletic club, with nearly 500 members, the organization still lacked a permanent clubhouse to call its own. In the 23 years after its founding in 1879, the club rented space in six different buildings throughout the city: the Mack Block (1879-1882); Plankinton Hall/Old Library Building (1882-1884); Weber’s Block at 420 E. Water Street (1884-1885); the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors of 388-390 Broadway (1885-1889); the upper two floors of 458 E. Water Street (1889-1893); the Light Horse Squadron Armory Building on Broadway (1893-1902).<sup>29</sup>

Unlike some of the richly-appointed athletic clubs in cities like New York and Chicago, the Milwaukee Athletic Club’s quarters through the nineteenth century were relatively Spartan in nature. An article in the February 18, 1940 edition of the *Milwaukee Journal* detailing the early history of the club described its first space in the Mack Building as geared solely toward athletics:

Everything there [in the club’s first space] centered around the gymnasium. The club had neither dining room nor bar, neither lounge nor powder room. It was strictly an athletic club with the atmosphere of the old Turnvereins. . . . It wasn’t until the club moved to the upper floors of the Wells building in 1902, at the zenith of its athletic greatness, perhaps, that it acquired a grill or reading room, or even a swimming tank, which was in the basement of the building.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *Milwaukee Journal*, February 18, 1940, p. 5; “Archie Han,” Accessed at <https://www.olympic.org/archie-hahn> on November 24, 2017.

<sup>29</sup> “History of the Milwaukee Athletic Club,” unidentified brochure in archive of the Milwaukee Athletic Club.

<sup>30</sup> *Milwaukee Journal*, February 18, 1940, p. 5

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 10

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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*Athletic Clubs in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

By the turn of the twentieth century, the distinction between many athletic clubs and other social and fraternal clubs in Milwaukee and other urban centers had begun to blur. Fraternal organizations often included recreational and athletic spaces within their club houses, and hosted a variety of sporting events, including boxing, swimming, bowling, and wrestling matches. The clubhouse for the Fraternal Order of Eagles in Oshkosh, built in 1924, included a 10-lane bowling alley in its basement, and hosted boxing and wrestling matches in its main ballroom. In turn, many athletic clubs began to include other recreational and social activities beyond sports, and many athletic club buildings added spaces usually seen in fraternal or social club houses, including dining rooms, lounges, and bars.

In 1901, the Milwaukee Athletic Club followed this trend toward expanding its scope beyond sports, and secured the top floors and basement of the newly-completed Wells Building on Wisconsin Avenue for its new headquarters. The *Inter Ocean* reported that “A large swimming tank will be built in the basement which will be sufficiently large to play water polo and conduct swimming races, while on the fourteenth floor the gymnasium, hand-ball court, indoor tennis courts, and dressing rooms will be located, and on the floor below will be the parlors, billiard-room, library, café, and buffet.”<sup>31</sup> The expanded quarters also allowed the club to increase its membership from 500 to 700 members.<sup>32</sup>

At the same time, the Milwaukee Athletic Club continued to support and promote a broad program of competitive athletics. In 1908, the organization secured Tom Larkin, a well-known local athlete and long-time member of the club, as its new athletic director. Larkin remained in the position until 1933, and under his direction, the club continued to excel in competitive amateur sport through the first decades of the twentieth century. The club’s ice hockey and skating teams were strong during this period, and its track team “competed regularly in all AAU meets and in addition met turnvereins and other athletic clubs all over the middle west in dual meets”<sup>33</sup>

**Construction of the Milwaukee Athletic Club Building**

The Milwaukee Athletic Club remained at its headquarters in the Wells Building for approximately 16 years, far longer than any of its previous locations; however, by the mid-1910s, the organization began to plan for its first purpose-built clubhouse in the city. The club had grown substantially in the years since its last move—membership had increased nearly twofold, from 700 to 1182—and larger

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<sup>31</sup> “Athletic Club Quarters,” *The Inter Ocean*, February 26, 1901, p. 4

<sup>32</sup> *Racine Journal-Times*, March 28, 1901, p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> *Milwaukee Journal*, February 18, 1940, p. 5.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 11

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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accommodations were needed.<sup>34</sup> Even with the rapid growth of the organization, a purpose-built clubhouse had been a long-time goal for the club—in 1898, a majority of its 400 members “voted to amend its charter so as to empower it to buy, hold, and mortgage real estate for the promotion of the purposes of the association..... This action has been taken with a view to securing permanent quarters.”<sup>35</sup> At the time, the club had obtained an option for an empty lot near the center city, and planned to build a new clubhouse there, but the plan fell through, and the association remained in the Armory for another four years before moving on to the Wells Building.<sup>36</sup>

In 1915, the Milwaukee Athletic Club entered a long-term lease for the parcel at the northeast corner of Broadway and Mason Street, which was at the time occupied by the Hathaway Building. The club planned to construct a 12-story masonry building to house its athletic and club facilities, and to provide short or long-term hotel accommodations to its members. Joining the Milwaukee Athletic Club in this new venture was the Merchants and Manufacturers’ Association, whose permanent headquarters was to be located on the second floor of the new building. An article in the February 10, 1915 edition of the *Oshkosh Northwestern* stated that “The cost of the new building is estimated at \$900,000. The Athletic club has signed a lease already for three floors of it for a long term of years. The architect’s plans were made in conformity to the wishes of officers of the club. The ground floor will contain stores and the other floors will be divided into offices and light manufacturing purposes.”<sup>37</sup>

The construction of the first purpose-built building for the Milwaukee Athletic Club coincided with a shift in the purpose and direction of the club, from an organization that focused primarily on competitive team and individual sports to one that focused on physical fitness and athletics for its members, as well as social and recreational activities. “It wasn’t until the club built its own building. . . that it slowly changed. With the new building and everything that it provided, the present policy started to take shape, the support was gradually withdrawn from athletics and it became essentially a club for the welfare and good of its own members.”<sup>38</sup> Although this evolution from “a society founded for athletic purposes” to “the center of not only athletic, but civic, business, and social life in the city” had its detractors, it was in keeping with how many athletic clubs throughout the country operated in the twentieth century, when organizations chose to focus more on serving the whole of its membership instead of focusing resources on a smaller number of athletes.<sup>39</sup> In a statement made around the time

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<sup>34</sup> “History of the Milwaukee Athletic Club.”

<sup>35</sup> “Arranges Athletic Programme,” *The Inter Ocean*, January 18, 1898, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> “Building at Milwaukee,” *Oshkosh Northwestern*, February 10, 1915, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> *Milwaukee Journal*, February 18, 1940, p. 5

<sup>39</sup> *Milwaukee Athletic Club*, brochure published by the Milwaukee Athletic Club, 1941, p. 1.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 12

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

that the new club building on Broadway opened, athletic committee head Art O'Connor summed up the Milwaukee Athletic Club's position on the matter:

Whether a club is entitled to be called an athletic club. . . depends to a large extent upon one's viewpoint. It is the thought of the present athletic committee that a healthy development of some form of athletics limited to individual members is more to be desired than the promotion of those forms of athletics which can be enjoyed only by a few in strict training. It is our idea that it is far better to have members engage in exercise than to have them watch others perform.<sup>40</sup>

Architectural plans of the proposed building published by the association neatly illustrate the new direction of the club. Although the structure as built featured major changes from this set of plans, the overall separation and arrangement of spaces was largely retained, and shows the expansion of social and recreational spaces, as well as the addition of residential floors for dues-paying members. In addition to the extensive social spaces and residential rooms included in the new club building, also of note were facilities designed specifically for women. From its organization in the late 1870s, the Milwaukee Athletic Club "made provisions. . . to provide special classes in physical instruction and gymnasium work for women and children."<sup>41</sup> This tradition of allowing women and children into sections of the club at certain times continued through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. With the design of the new building on Broadway, the Milwaukee Athletic Club officially made room for women within the organization, while still not allowing for full membership.

#### Interior Design

The first floor of the building featured the main lobby off Broadway, a small women's lounge with a separate exterior entrance just north of the lobby, and a series of small storefronts in the remaining spaces along Mason Street and Broadway. The second floor had offices and a large assembly hall for the Merchants and Manufacturers Association.

The third through fifth floors contained the recreational, social, and dining spaces for the Athletic Club, and represented a great expansion of these types of facilities for the organization. The preliminary plans called for a billiard room, reading room, "stein room," and several small card rooms. As built, the billiard room was retained, but in a different location, and the reading room was replaced with the men's dining room. A men's lounge was also added to the southwest corner of the floor.

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<sup>40</sup> *Milwaukee Journal*, February 18, 1940, p. 5

<sup>41</sup> Wisconsin Historical Society. Wisconsin Local History & Biography Articles: *Milwaukee Journal*; Milwaukee, WI; November 19, 1916.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 13

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

The fourth and fifth floors were originally assigned as the “restaurant department.” Preliminary drawings placed the large, two-story main dining room across the south end of the building, with a small lounge and café extending north along the west end of the floor, and a large kitchen taking up the northeast corner. As built, the fourth floor did include a two-story dining room, but the space was located along the west end of the building facing Broadway, with the kitchen along the east end of the floor. The fifth floor housed the upper level of the main dining room at its west end. In another substantial break from the preliminary drawings for the building, the lower section of the men’s swimming pool was placed at the east end of this floor—the pool as built extends from the fifth to the seventh floors. Armand Koch had originally planned to place the men’s swimming pool in the basement, and included a ladies’ dining room and tea room in the fifth-floor plans that were subsequently not built. Although no plans of these floors as built are available, historic photographs from the 1920s and the 1950s indicate that the space north of the main dining room was the ladies’ dining room and the perimeter of the main dining room, on both the fourth and fifth floors, likely contained a series of smaller, private dining spaces.

The sixth and seventh floors of the new building contained the athletic facilities for the club. Preliminary drawings include a two-story gymnasium along the south end of the building, with the main floor of the gym on the sixth floor and a running track around the periphery on the seventh floor. The remainder of the sixth floor on the drawings is taken up by men’s and women’s locker rooms and showers, as well as two small boxing rooms. The north end of the seventh floor on the preliminary plans housed hand ball courts. As built, the two-story gymnasium was located at the southwest corner of the floors; instead of a running track, a balcony overlooking the gym was placed along its east side. The east end of the sixth floor contains the main level of the men’s pool, and the seventh contains the balcony overlooking the pool space. It is unknown what was originally built on the remainder of either floor, although it is likely that the floors housed locker rooms, showers and steam rooms for the men.

The eighth floor of the building served as a transitional point between the athletic facilities and the residential section of the building. Although the preliminary plans locate the lower level of the hand ball courts on the seventh floor, with spectators’ galleries on the eighth, this plan was altered when the building was constructed, and the hand ball courts instead spanned the eighth and ninth floors. Both the preliminary plans and the eighth and ninth floors as built featured private bedrooms for club members along its south end. The tenth, eleventh, and twelfth floors, both in the preliminary plans and as built, were solely residential, with bedrooms arranged around multiple hallways.

Armand Koch’s original plan for the basement level of the building included two pools—a 40 x 75-foot pool for the male members, and a smaller pool for women. Also included on the preliminary plans were dressing rooms, and a mezzanine level that housed Turkish baths. It is likely that the Milwaukee

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 14

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

Athletic Club and Koch later decided that, instead of combining men's and women's pools on the same floor, it would be more prudent to separate out the spaces more fully. The basement level as built also included a bowling alley, which was not included in the preliminary plans.

Historic photographs of some of the original social and recreational spaces in the Milwaukee Athletic Club show the opulence of the new clubhouse. The original lobby featured heavy wood beamed ceilings and wood paneled walls marked by fluted classical pilasters. The men's grill on the third floor of the building was even more richly appointed, with massive wood beams and crossbeams on the ceiling, lightened slightly by plaster panels with painted foliate ornament. The walls of the room also featured slender, dark wood panels. The adjacent lounge, by comparison, was relatively Spartan, with simple painted beamed ceilings and unadorned walls.

The gem of the new club's social spaces was the main dining room on the fourth floor (now the Grand Ballroom), which was rendered in a grand Renaissance Revival style. The two-story south end of the room featured a deeply coffered ceiling dense with classical trim. Window openings along the west and south walls of the room featured blind round arches decorated with plaster foliate and cornucopia ornament; the openings along the east wall of the room also featured these arches. Above the openings of the east wall of the room were smaller window openings framed by ornate wrought-iron balconettes that opened into small private dining rooms on the fifth floor. The one-story north end of the room was the ladies' dining area and separated from the south end by a wide opening with heavy classical surround, featured a shallow, barrel-arch ceiling that was also richly decorated. These spaces remain intact with minor alterations.

**The Milwaukee Athletic Club in the Inter-War Period**

With its purpose-built downtown clubhouse as showpiece, the Milwaukee Athletic Club continued to grow its membership in the decades following the building's construction, even as many other athletic clubs across the country saw declining memberships due to Prohibition and the Great Depression. A 1941 brochure for the club put the number of members at over 2,000—an increase of nearly 900 since the clubhouse opened.

Through the 1920s and 1930s, the club continued to move away from competitive amateur athletics and toward recreational sports and individual fitness. While certain sports – swimming, boxing, and, to a lesser extent, hockey and ice skating—continued to compete under the club colors, most other sports gradually fell by the wayside. Competitive track and field, at which the club had excelled, was largely abandoned during World War I. This downturn in amateur competitive sport at the club was indicative of a broader trend in Wisconsin. An article in the March 7, 1930 edition of *The Capital Times* in Madison reported that Avery Brundage, the president of the Amateur Athletic Union (A.A.U.),



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 15Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

appointed a committee of six well-known athletes in the state to help promote amateur sport under the organization, which had dropped steeply in recent years. Brundage “said that the only A. A. U. events in the state in recent years have been the swimming meets conducted by the Milwaukee Athletic Club and the amateur boxing contests staged by local fraternal organizations.”<sup>42</sup> By 1940, the Milwaukee Athletic Club had withdrawn support “from all representative club teams except swimming.”<sup>43</sup> Swimming did remain as a popular competitive sport for the club, with both men and women competing in meets throughout the state.

Social and recreational activities came to the fore at the Milwaukee Athletic Club during this period. Male members of the club increasingly used its facilities as a place to conduct business, and boards for local businesses often held formal meetings at the clubhouse. Other social and civic organization also utilized the club’s facilities to host dinners and special events. The club held regular functions to encourage socializing among the members, including weekly dinner-dances in the main dining room every Saturday night, special holiday parties, and game nights. In the 1930s, local radio station WISN broadcast jazz orchestra performances from the club’s main dining room.<sup>44</sup>

The Milwaukee Athletic Club also continued to encourage the participation of women within the organization. In June 1936, club president William F. Kinsella persuaded Mrs. Oswald C. Jaeger to organize “a women’s committee to correlate activities.”<sup>45</sup> The resulting Women’s Auxiliary became a vital part of the club’s social organization in the following years.

*Post-War History*

As with many clubs, the Milwaukee Athletic Club sought to keep its social and athletic spaces up-to-date and fashionable for its members. As early as 1920, the organization began renovating existing spaces within the building. A 1941 brochure for the club also indicates that minor alterations had been made to the building since its construction, including updates to the bowling alley, the addition of a cigar and cigarette stand in the lobby, and a women’s beauty parlor in the basement, as well as cosmetic changes, including the painting over of the ornamental plasterwork on the ceiling in the lobby.<sup>46</sup>

In the years immediately following World War II, the Milwaukee Athletic Club undertook a large-scale renovation of the building that continued until 1957. In updating its major social spaces and some

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<sup>42</sup> “Brundage Names A. A. U. Board for Wisconsin,” *The Capital Times*, March 7, 1930, p. 18.

<sup>43</sup> *Milwaukee Journal*, February 18, 1940, p. 5

<sup>44</sup> “On the Air Tonight,” *The Appleton Post-Crescent*, January 23, 1931, p.14.

<sup>45</sup> Lois V. Barry, “Club Notes.” *Exclusively Yours*, February 1954, p. 16

<sup>46</sup> 1941 Milwaukee Athletic Club brochure.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 16

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

of its athletic facilities, the club sought to remain relevant and to attract new members during a time when suburban country clubs posed an increasing threat to urban social clubs. The first phase of the renovation, completed in 1948, included a remodeling of the men's lounge, dining room, billiard room, and bar on the third floor of the building. The dining room, re-named the "Bali Room," featured sleek walnut paneled walls and a large, circular, backlit recess at the center of the ceiling, and were decorated with a series of Balinese murals painted by New York muralist Robert Bushnell.

Bushnell also provided murals for the "Elephant Room" at the east end of the floor, which also featured wood paneled walls, a curving bar, and an amoebic, backlit recess on the ceiling.<sup>47</sup> Both the Bali Room and Elephant Room retain the significant interior details and finishes from 1948. In the Bali Room, the distinctive ceiling with backlit recess, walnut wall panels, and murals are all intact. In the Elephant Room, the wood paneled walls, curving bar, recessed ceiling and murals are intact. In both spaces, new carpeting and furniture have been added.

The renovated men's lounge at the southwest corner of the floor, although more subdued than the Bali Room and Elephant Room, contained walnut paneled walls, a ceiling with recessed lighting coves, parquet wood flooring, and a truly impressive, rounded fireplace at its south end, topped by a series of curved walnut panels carved by local sculptor Dick Wiken (b.1913-c.1985). The panels Wiken designed and carved for the men's lounge were "devoted to athletics in Wisconsin from the Indian lacrosse to the athletic events of today. The border depicts the historical pageant of Wisconsin, showing missionaries and fur traders with the Indians, the arrival of settlers, and even some of today's industries."<sup>48</sup> Another work designed by Wiken for the Milwaukee Athletic Club—a frieze of the Roman goddess Diana executed by stonecutter Adolph Roegner—was installed above the Mason Street entrance as part of the second phase of remodeling in 1954, but was later removed as part of the 1990s remodeling.<sup>49</sup>

Like the Bali Room and Elephant Room, the men's lounge retains many of its distinctive 1948 features, including the ceiling with recessed lighting, the parquet flooring, walnut paneled walls, and the round fireplace with wood carvings by Dick Wiken.

In addition to the extensive renovations on the third floor, the most notable alteration to these areas was the filling in of multiple windows including the fifth-floor windows on the west and south walls of the main ballroom; the windows on the west and south walls of the gymnasium on the sixth and

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<sup>47</sup> *The Palm Beach Post*, July 17, 1960, p. 25; *Interior Design*, Volume 30, p. 174.

<sup>48</sup> "Wiken Carves Big Pageant in Walnut for Athletic Club," *The Milwaukee Journal*, February 15, 1948, p. 6.

<sup>49</sup> Bobby Tanzilo, "Urban Spelunking: Milwaukee Athletic Club," accessed at <https://onmilwaukee.com/history/articles/spelunking-milw-athletic-club.html> on November 1, 2018.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 17

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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seventh floors, the windows on the east and south walls of the pool on the sixth and seventh floors; and the windows on the east and south walls of the handball courts on the eighth and ninth floors. In addition, windows at the east end of the south wall on the fourth floor were replaced in downsized openings infilled with brick. These infills are still evident on the exterior of the building.

In 1954, the second phase of the remodeling—which included the first-floor lobby, basement, and kitchen—began. The plan, designed by architects Eschweiler & Eschweiler, cost nearly \$1 million to complete, and included the relocation of the women’s entrance from Broadway to Mason Street, as well as a complete reconfiguration of the lobby, women’s lounge, and most of the storefront spaces. The existing women’s lounge on the north side of the floor was removed and replaced by a new men’s lounge and checkroom; the existing storefronts along the south side of the building were then transformed into new women’s lounge and bar, called the “Cherry Blossom Room.” The lobby space was gutted, and appointed with new walnut paneled walls, recessed dome lighting, and Italian and Colorado marble trim. The existing staircase at this level was remodeled in marble, with sleek polished bronze railings. The existing main entrance on Broadway was also widened and updated with new bronze doors and sidelights, and the existing canopy was replaced. Work in other areas of the club during this phase included a new ventilation system in the men’s and women’s pools and the men’s gymnasium.<sup>50</sup> Although portions of the 1954 plan of the first floor remain today, all of the features and finishes installed as part of the 1950s renovations were removed in a subsequent remodeling in the 1990s (outside of the period of significance), with the exception of the marble staircase with bronze railings, which is still extant.

The final space in the Milwaukee Athletic Club to be transformed as part of the 1950s renovation was the second floor of the building, most notably the assembly hall known as “The Elizabethan Room.” The room’s stained wood paneled walls with classical niches and paneled plaster ceiling were removed and the space was divided into a large banquet room with foyer. New finishes were installed to create what the *Milwaukee Sentinel* called “a contemporary Italian motif,” and the room was re-named “The Milano Room.”<sup>51</sup> The east wall of the room was clad in smooth walnut paneling, while the north wall featured a large panel of Italian marble. Windows along the west wall of the room were concealed by floor-to-ceiling curtains. The ceiling was punctuated by a series of circular, backlit insets and smaller recessed lights. The foyer was similarly treated, with over 1,300 members attended the opening of the new space in October 1957.<sup>52</sup> According to the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, the entire second floor of the Milwaukee Athletic Club had been redone in addition to the Milano Room, resulting in “a maze of

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<sup>50</sup> Unidentified newspaper article in archive of Milwaukee Athletic Club, February 2, 1954.

<sup>51</sup> Dorothy Parnell, “New MAC Room Opened,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, October 17, 1957, p.4.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

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

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

Section 8 Page 18

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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other rooms.”<sup>53</sup> Like the first floor, little remains of the finishes from the 1950s renovations on the second floor outside of the stair and elevator lobby. The plan of the Milano Room and foyer remain from 1957, but the finishes in the spaces were removed during the subsequent renovations in the 1990s.

*Later History*

By the mid-1950s, the Milwaukee Athletic Club had grown to over 3,500 members, and was considered one of the premier clubs in the Milwaukee, a role it continues to fill to the present day. Through the late twentieth century, the club continued to serve as a place for the city’s business and professional class to socialize, network, and conduct business. Politicians including President Bill Clinton and Senator Hillary Clinton, Vice-President Al Gore, and Mitt Romney have visited the club, as have prominent sports figures including Vince Lombardi, Roger Clemens, and members of the Milwaukee Brewers. Lorenzo Vicini, who began working at the club as a parking attendant in 1976 and later became general manager, remembered that Bob Hope always stayed at the club when he visited Milwaukee.<sup>54</sup>

The Milwaukee Athletic Club has continued to update the facilities to serve the changing tastes and needs of its members. In the mid-1960s, the club added a north entrance bay to allow for easy access into the building from the adjacent parking lot. After the club began admitting women as full members in the 1970s, the women’s lounge and Cherry Blossom Room became co-ed spaces; in the 1990s, the lounge was converted into a coffee shop, and the space once occupied by the Cherry Blossom Room was completely renovated as a restaurant. The bowling alley in the basement was also removed and replaced with a women’s workout room.

Other 1990s changes include the replacement of much of the 1950s finishes in the lobby (except for the marble and bronze entrance stair and main staircase); the renovation of the “Milano Room” on the second floor (now called the “Superior Room”), and the conversion of several of the handball courts on the eighth floor into weight training and aerobics studios. The upper residential floors have also been updated over the years, with new trim, wallpaper, and carpeting.

Even with these alterations, the Milwaukee Athletic Club building is significant as a physical representation of the evolution of one of Milwaukee’s oldest and longest-lived athletic club through from the early twentieth-century through the post-WWII era.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Elizabeth Hockerman, “Vicini Climbed the Ranks at the Milwaukee Athletic Club.” *Small Business Times*, September 14, 2007, p. 17-18.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 19

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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**Comparable Early 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Club Buildings in Milwaukee**

Although no context statement for social and athletic clubs is included in *Cultural Resources Management in Wisconsin*, the landmark designation study report prepared for the University Club of Milwaukee in June of 2003 provides a thorough context of the evolution of clubs in the city of Milwaukee through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While the city's early social life revolved primarily around religious and fraternal organizations, in the 1880s and 1890s the social landscape in Milwaukee expanded rapidly to include clubs organized around a variety of interests and activities. Clubs organized around political affiliations, military service, sports and athletics, ethnic background, and cultural and artistic interests proliferated in the late nineteenth century. Many of these clubs had no permanent meeting space, and gathered in rented halls in bars or commercial buildings; however, several larger organizations had enough members and capital to purchase or build their own facilities. The Milwaukee Club built its imposing three-story Queen Anne clubhouse at 706 N. Jefferson Street in 1883—the building included a library, dining rooms, tavern, lounges, meeting rooms, and several small rooms on the third floor that provided accommodation for members. In 1896, the Wisconsin Club began renting the Alexander Mitchell residence, which was originally built in 1848 and remodeled in the Second Empire style in the 1870s. The Club later purchased the building, which it still occupies today.<sup>55</sup> The Women's Club of Wisconsin built its Tudor Revival style clubhouse at 813 E. Kilbourn Avenue in 1887; the facilities included a large club parlor, library, offices, and assembly hall.<sup>56</sup> Both the Wisconsin Club and Women's Club are individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Although clubs organized around specific sporting or athletic activities were common in the late nineteenth century in Milwaukee, many of these clubs did not have the resources for dedicated meeting spaces. Among the few clubs focused on athletics to have a purpose-built facility during this period was the Milwaukee Turnverein. The organization constructed Turner Hall at 1034 N. Fourth Street in 1882-3. Designed by Henry C. Koch, the High Victorian club building features an asymmetrical massing, round-arch windows, and polychrome exterior brickwork. The interior of the building includes a grand ballroom on the third floor and a two-story vaulted gymnasium space in the basement. Turner Hall was listed to the National Register in 1977, and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1996.

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>56</sup> National Register of Historic Places, Women's club of Wisconsin (The Athenaeum), Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, National Register #82001847, Section 7, p. 1.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 20

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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The construction of club building slowed around the turn of the twentieth century, but growing memberships and increasing prosperity ushered in a “golden era” of club house design in Milwaukee in the 1910s and 1920s, with organizations building impressive facilities that “included extensive dining rooms, ballrooms, gymnasiums, small apartment or rooms for members to rent, and in some cases even pools and bowling alleys.”<sup>57</sup> Many of the club houses built during this period were for fraternal organizations, and were located along major thoroughfares on large lots formerly occupied by large residential buildings. The designation report for the University Club identifies six clubs built during the late 1910s and 1920s in Milwaukee in addition to the Milwaukee Athletic Club. Of these six, all but one—the Elks Club, built at 910 E. Wisconsin Avenue in 1925 and demolished in 1971—are extant.

*University Club of Milwaukee (1926)*  
*924 E. Wells Street*  
*John Russell Pope, Architect*

The University Club building was designed by John Russell Pope and completed in 1926, with additions dating from 1953 and 1972. Founded in 1898, the University Club was a social club that was formed “to cultivate an interest in the science and liberal arts and to allow for social interaction among college and university graduates.”<sup>58</sup> The organization built its first club house at 825 N. Jefferson Street in 1903, and remained there for over 20 years. John Russell Pope’s design for the new building sought to give the club the atmosphere of a large country house. The Georgian-Revival exterior features a symmetrical front façade, with the main entry centered along a raised first story of stone. The three center bays above the entry are separated by Ionic pilasters, and feature large, multi-light windows with round-arch transoms and center keystone lintels on the second story. The east façade, which faces Prospect Avenue, features similar Georgian detailing.

The interior of the building originally contained reception rooms, card rooms, and offices on the first floor; a banquet hall and ladies dining room on the second floor; and a library, large card room, and a series of private dining rooms on the third floor. Residential rooms for members were located on the third and fourth floors, and the basement had squash courts and bowling alleys. Although the residential rooms on the fourth floor and sections of the first floor and basement levels were reconfigured in the 1970s and 1980s, the principal club spaces remain largely intact. The building is still owned and occupied by the University Club.

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<sup>57</sup> Final Historic Designation Study Report: University Club of Milwaukee, p. 7.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 21

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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*Tripoli Temple (1926-8) (NRHP # 86000142)*  
3000 W. Wisconsin Avenue  
Clas-Shephard-Clas, Architects

The Tripoli Temple at 3000 W. Wisconsin Avenue was built in 1926-8 and designed by Clas-Shephard-Clas. The building was constructed for the Milwaukee chapter of the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (Shriners), and is considered one of the best examples of Moorish Revival architecture in the country. The temple's design is loosely based around the Taj Mahal, and features an impressive center dome flanked by two smaller domes, polychromatic stone work, minarets at each corner of the building, and a projecting center entry bay with elaborate tilework. The main lobby and reception room on the first floor of the building is the most impressive interior space within the building, and features a polygonal opening at its center that is open to the tiled interior of the main dome. The space is intricately decorated with ornamental tilework and plasterwork. Other spaces within the building, including the billiard room and Mellon Parlor, are also intact. A 400-seat ballroom was added to the rear of the building in 1956. The temple was listed to the National Register as part of the West Side Area MRA in 1986, and remains the Milwaukee headquarters for the Shriners.

*Pythian Castle Lodge (1927) (NRHP # 88000089)*  
1925 W. National Avenue  
Richard E. Oberst, Architect

The Pythian Castle Lodge was built in 1927 at 1925 W. National Avenue for the Milwaukee chapter of the Knights of Pythias and designed by Milwaukee architect Richard E. Oberst. The Mediterranean Revival-style building features buff-colored brick walls, ornamental cast stone detailing, and a clay-tile roof. The projecting center bay on the front façade contains the main entrance to the building, which is encased by an elaborate cast-stone surround with twisted columns. The surround extends to the second-story window above the entry. Identical wings flank the center tower, and end with projecting corner bays. The interior of the building retains its entry hall, first-floor banquet hall, and second-floor ballroom. The barrel-vaulted ceiling of the ballroom is obscured by a drop ceiling that was installed in the 1980s, and a one-story addition was built to the northeast corner of the building in the 1950s. The building was listed to the National Register in 1988; the main building is currently occupied by the Lao Buddhist Temple, and the one-story northeast addition houses a restaurant.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 22

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

*Eagles Club (1927) (NRHP 86002096)*  
2401 W. Wisconsin Avenue  
Russell Barr Williamson, Architect

Completed in 1927, the building at 2401 W. Wisconsin Avenue was built to house Milwaukee Aerie #137 of the Fraternal Order of Eagles, which at the time was the largest local outpost of the club in the United States. The monumental five-story structure was designed in the Mediterranean Revival style, and features a prominent projecting center pavilion housing a three-part entry and topped by an arcade and hipped roof. The side wings feature an elaborate running frieze ornamented with winged, eagle-headed forms.

The building originally contained an array of athletic facilities designed to meet the standards of the Amateur Athletic Union, including a swimming pool, two-story gym, billiard room, and bowling alley. The impressive oval ballroom at the building's top floor hosted live musical and theatrical productions. The ballroom was leased to George J. Devine in 1939, and became known as "Devine's Million Dollar Ballroom." The venue hosted big bands and comedians in the 1940s and early 1950s, and rock concerts through the 1980s.<sup>59</sup>

Although the club's ballroom continued to be used as a concert venue through the late twentieth century, by the 1980s the building had fallen into disrepair. The club was sold in 1992 for use as a live music club; the ballroom was restored, and the athletic spaces were converted into smaller concert venues. The building was listed to the National Register of Historic Places as part of the West Side Area MRA in 1986.<sup>60</sup>

*Jefferson Hall (1928)*  
2617 W. Fond du Lac Avenue  
Grassold and Johnson, Architects

Jefferson Hall was constructed at 2617 W. Fond du Lac Avenue in 1928 and designed by Grassold and Johnson. The building was erected for the Freie Gemeinde (Free Thinkers) Society, a progressive club of German American intellectuals founded in Milwaukee in 1867. The two-story brick building features a center full-height entry bay with a limestone-enframed Palladian window on its second story. The four bays flanking the center bay feature second-story three-part windows within round arch openings and three-part windows with flat stone lintels on the first story. Each bay is separated by a brick pilaster that ends at the second-story window. A classical stone cornice tops the front façade. A

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<sup>59</sup> National Register of Historic Places, West Side Area MRA, Inventory Sheet for the Eagles Club, Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, National Register #86002096, p. 3-4.

<sup>60</sup> "The Historic Eagles Club," accessed at [https://www.therave.com/historic\\_eagles\\_club.asp](https://www.therave.com/historic_eagles_club.asp) on November 6, 2018.



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 23

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

two-story addition was built along the southeast elevation in 1940. The interior of the building originally held an auditorium, gymnasium, bowling alley, and club rooms. The current condition of these spaces is unknown. The building is currently occupied by the Oasis of Hope Church.<sup>61</sup>

Although the list above includes several prominent examples of athletic and social clubs in the city, the Milwaukee Athletic Club is an early example and the only high-rise example of the type in the city, with a design that was influenced by the commercial structures around it rather than by residential or church designs. In addition, the Milwaukee Athletic Club retains both athletic spaces and social spaces that date within the period of significance. Most early-twentieth century club buildings in Milwaukee served strictly as social clubs with no athletic facilities provided. Of the clubs that did historically feature extensive athletic facilities (such as the Eagle's Club), most have significantly altered these spaces or converted them to new uses.

**Architects of the Milwaukee Athletic Club**

*Armond Koch (1870-1931)*

The Milwaukee Athletic Club was designed by Milwaukee architect Armand D. Koch. The son of prominent architect Henry Koch, Armand Koch was born in Milwaukee in 1870 and educated in the Milwaukee school system. Koch received a degree in architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris before returning to Milwaukee to join his father in his practice. In 1910, Koch established an independent practice in the city. He was elected to the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1908, and served as the chapter's president in 1912.<sup>62</sup> The choice of Armand Koch as architect for the Milwaukee Athletic Club was a natural one—he designed the Wells Building, which housed the club's quarters beginning in 1902. Other notable buildings designed by Koch in Wisconsin include the Waldheim Building (1915) in Milwaukee; the Grant County Courthouse in Lancaster (1902, listed to National Register in 1970); and the Resthaven Hotel and Sanitarium in Waukesha (1905, listed to the National Register in 1983).

*Eschweiler & Eschweiler (1954 Renovations)*

The Milwaukee architecture firm Eschweiler & Eschweiler were the architects of record for the 1954 remodeling of the first floor. One of the city's most well-known and prolific firms of the early twentieth century, Eschweiler & Eschweiler was founded in 1893 by Alexander Chadbourne Eschweiler (1865-1940). A native of Boston, Eschweiler moved with his family to Milwaukee in

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<sup>61</sup> Historic Preservation Study Report: Jefferson Hall, Winter 1984, p. 1-2.

<sup>62</sup> "Armand D. Koch," accessed at <http://prabook.com/web/person-view.html?profileId=1346664> on November 24, 2017.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 24

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

1882. Eschweiler left the city in 1886 briefly to study architecture at Cornell University; after returning in 1870, he secured a position at the architectural firm of Henry C. Koch and Company, where he remained for over 20 years.<sup>63</sup>

Eschweiler quickly gained a reputation for designing handsome historic revival-style houses in Milwaukee, dozens of which are still extant within the city. In the early 1920s, Eschweiler expanded his practice to include his three sons, Alexander Jr., Carl F., and Theodore L. Eschweiler.<sup>64</sup> The firm produced some impressive commercial designs in Milwaukee during the 1930s and 1940s, including the Art-Deco office tower for the Wisconsin Gas Company at 626 E. Wisconsin Avenue (1930) and the Wisconsin Telephone Company at 722 N. Broadway (1917-1930) (NRHP # 86002325). Notable Art Moderne buildings by the firm from this period include the WTMJ “Radio City” building at 720 E. Capitol Drive (1941) and the John W. Mariner Building at 411 E. Mason Street (1937) (NRHP # 86002325).

*Robert Bushnell, Muralist*

Bushnell was born in 1896 and worked as a muralists in New York City and Florida for most of his career. Bushnell, a member of the National Society of Mural Painters, made a name for himself in the 1930s in Palm Beach by painting exotic, tropical-themed murals for homes designed by local architect Maurice Fatio. In 1937, he completed a series of Balinese murals for the cocktail lounge of the Everglades Club in Palm Beach.<sup>65</sup> In 1955, Bushnell returned to Palm Beach to complete a 45-foot-wide, 30-foot-long ceiling mural for the Royal Poinciana Playhouse. The elaborate Italian baroque-style mural, which contained portraits of 125 international stars and local luminaries including Lily Pulitzer, Clark Gable, Joan Crawford, Fred Astaire, and Yule Brenner, took him two years to complete.<sup>66</sup> Bushnell designed numerous murals for private homeowners, theaters, and various clubs in addition to some public commissions, such as his mural of Hoboken completed in 1956 for the Pier B. Hoboken Marine Facility. Bushnell died in 1960 in New York City.<sup>67</sup>

*Dick Wiken, Sculptor*

Born in 1913 in Milwaukee, Wiken was a self-taught sculptor who began his career in the early 1930s as a member of the Painters and Sculptors Unit of the Wisconsin Works Progress Administration (WPA) Art Project. Wiken also worked for the WPA’s Milwaukee Handicraft Project, which employed workers and artists to create handcrafted items for use in schools and institutions. In

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<sup>63</sup> Final Historic Designation Study Report: Manegold/Grambling House, Summer, 2003, p. 8-9.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> “Bushnell Again Painting Murals in Palm Beach,” *The Palm Beach Post*, January 9, 1958, 6.

<sup>66</sup> Sharon Koskoff, *Murals of the Palm Beaches*, Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, SC 2018 p. 10.

<sup>67</sup> Hoboken Historical Museum Online Collections Database,

<https://hoboken.pastperfectonline.com/byperson?keyword=Bushnell%2C+Robert>; accessed November 1, 2018.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 25

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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addition to his work with the WPA, Wiken served as an instructor at the Art Institute in Milwaukee (1934-1937) and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (1938-1943).<sup>68</sup> After serving in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during World War II, Wiken returned to Milwaukee and devoted the remainder of his career to designing for professional commissions, producing works for banks, schools, churches, libraries, and breweries in Milwaukee and throughout the United States. Noted works by Wiken include carved doors for the Administration Building at Soldier Field in Chicago, an outdoor sculpture and fountain commissioned by the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, and a series of historical murals for the Playa de Cortez, a hotel in Guaymas, Mexico.<sup>69</sup>

**Conclusion**

The Milwaukee Athletic Club at 758 N. Broadway in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is locally significant under National Register Criterion A, in the areas of Recreation and Social History, as the primary building associated with one of Milwaukee's oldest and longest-lived athletic clubs. Founded in 1879 as the Milwaukee Athletic Society, the club incorporated in 1882, and changed its name to the Milwaukee Athletic Club in 1898. After leasing space in many buildings in the city through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the club erected this purpose-built clubhouse at the northeast corner of Broadway and Mason Street in 1917-18. The new building offered more social and recreational spaces than any of its previous quarters, and included residential floors to serve as both long-term and temporary housing for club members. The building was also the first in the club's history to provide dedicated space to women associated with the organization.

In the years following World War II, the Milwaukee Athletic Club expanded its membership by embarking on a nine-year renovation of many of the club's social spaces and athletic facilities. Several of the club's most significant extant historic spaces, including the Bali Room, Men's Lounge, and the Elephant Room, date from this renovation. The Milwaukee Athletic Club continues to operate in the building.

The period of significance for Recreation begins in 1917, the year of the building's construction, and ends in 1940, when the club largely abandoned competitive club athletics to provide more space for social activities and business functions for its members. Although the club continued to provide athletic facilities to promote physical fitness among its members, the post-World War II period saw the Milwaukee Athletic Club increasingly used as a place for business meetings, formal dinners and

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<sup>68</sup> "Dick Wiken," biography from the Museum of Wisconsin Art Website, accessed at <http://www.wisconsinart.org/archives/artist/dick-wiken/profile-3524.aspx> on November 1, 2018.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 26

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

dances, and other social events. The club has continued to serve as an important center for social functions from its opening in 1917 to the present day. For this reason, the period of significance for Social History begins in 1917 and extends to 1968, following the 50-year rule for National Register significance.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 1

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 2

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 3

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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Milwaukee, WI; November 19, 1916; viewed online at  
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**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 1

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

**Verbal Boundary Description:**

Milwaukee Athletic Club is a 0.38 acre site located at 758 North Broadway in Milwaukee Wisconsin. The nomination area is in East Town neighborhood of downtown Milwaukee and is bounded by North Broadway to the west, East Mason Street to the south, an unnamed alley to the east, and a surface parking lot associated with the site to the north.

**Boundary Justification:**

The boundary encompasses the purpose-built property historically associated with the Milwaukee Athletic Club.



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section photos Page 1

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

**Photo Log**

**Name of Property:** Milwaukee Athletic Club  
**City or Vicinity:** Milwaukee  
**County:** Milwaukee **State:** Wisconsin  
**Photographer:** John Cramer and Matt Wicklund  
**Date Photographed:** November 2017

**Photo 1**

West and south exterior elevations  
Camera facing northeast

**Photo 2**

South exterior elevations  
Camera facing northwest

**Photo 3**

Ground floor and main entrance on west elevation  
Camera facing east

**Photo 4**

Ground floor and secondary entrance on south elevation  
Camera facing north

**Photo 5**

North exterior elevation  
Camera facing south

**Photo 6**

Main lobby, first floor  
Camera facing southwest

**Photo 7**

Lobby stair, first floor  
Camera facing southeast

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section photos Page 2

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

**Photo 8**

Lobby stair, third floor  
Camera facing southeast

**Photo 9**

Men's lounge, third floor  
Camera facing southeast

**Photo 10**

Rounded fireplace in Men's lounge, third floor  
Camera facing southeast

**Photo 11**

Bali Room with Robert Bushnell murals, third floor  
Camera facing southwest

**Photo 12**

Elephant room, third floor  
Camera facing south

**Photo 13**

Main dining room, fourth floor  
Camera facing north

**Photo 14**

Main dining room, ladies' dining room, fourth floor  
Camera facing northwest

**Photo 15**

Pool, sixth floor  
Camera facing southwest

**Photo 16**

Gymnasium, sixth floor  
Camera facing southwest

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section photos Page 3

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

**Photo 17**

Pool, basement  
Camera facing south

**Photo 18**

Guest room, typical, 12<sup>th</sup> floor  
Camera facing west

**Photo 19**

Rooftop  
Camera facing north

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section figures Page 1

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

**List of Figures**

**Figure 1:** Exterior Photokey  
*Milwaukee Interactive Mapping*

**Figure 2:** Site Plan  
*Milwaukee Interactive Mapping*

**Figure 3:** 1926 exterior View  
*Milwaukee Athletic Club Brochure, 1926*

**Figure 4:** 1926 view of fourth floor Main Dining Room  
*Milwaukee Athletic Club Brochure, 1926*

**Figure 5:** 1926 view of fourth floor Ladies' Dining Room  
*Milwaukee Athletic Club Brochure, 1926*

**Figure 6:** 1926 view of sixth floor Men's Swimming Pool  
*Milwaukee Athletic Club Brochure, 1926*

**Figure 7:** 1926 view of sixth floor Gymnasium  
*Milwaukee Athletic Club Brochure, 1926*

**Figure 8:** 1926 view of the basement Ladies' Swimming Pool  
*Milwaukee Athletic Club Brochure, 1926*

**Figure 9:** 1926 View of typical upper floor Sleeping Room  
*Milwaukee Athletic Club Brochure, 1926*

**Figure 10:** Fourth floor Main Dining Room, c. 1955  
*Milwaukee Athletic Club Archives*

**Figure 11:** Basement Ladies' Swimming Pool, c. 1955  
*Milwaukee Athletic Club Archives*

**Figure 12:** Third floor Bali Room, c. 1955  
*Milwaukee Athletic Club Archives*

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section figures Page 2

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---

**Figure 13:** Third floor Elephant Room, c.1955  
*Milwaukee Athletic Club Archives*

**Figure 14:** Third floor Men's Lounge, c. 1955  
*Milwaukee Athletic Club Archives*

**Figure 15:** Basement Plan and Photo Key

**Figure 16:** First Floor Plan and Photo Key

**Figure 17:** Third Floor Plan and Photo Key

**Figure 18:** Fourth Floor Plan and Photo Key

**Figure 19:** Sixth Floor Plan and Photo Key

**Figure 20:** Twelfth Floor Plan and Photo Key

**Figure 21:** Roof Plan and Photo Key

**Figure 22:** Second Floor Plan

**Figure 23:** Fifth Floor Plan

**Figure 24:** Seventh Floor Plan

**Figure 25:** Eighth Floor Plan

**Figure 26:** Ninth Floor Plan

**Figure 27:** Tenth Floor Plan

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section figures Page 3

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin



Figure 1: Exterior Photo Key

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section figures Page 4

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin



Figure 2: Site Plan



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section figures Page 5

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---



Figure 3: 1926 exterior view



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section figures Page 6

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---



Figure 4: 1926 view of fourth floor Main Dining Room

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section figures Page 7

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---



Figure 5: 1926 view of fourth floor Ladies' Dining Room

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section figures Page 8

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---



Figure 6: 1926 view of sixth floor Men's Swimming Pool



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section figures Page 9

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---



Figure 7: 1926 view of sixth floor Gymnasium

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section figures Page 10

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---



Figure 8: 1926 view of the basement Ladies' Swimming Pool

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

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

Section figures Page 11

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---



Figure 9: 1926 View of typical upper floor Sleeping Room



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

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

Section figures Page 12

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---



Figure 10: Fourth floor Main Dining Room, c. 1955

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section figures Page 13

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---



Figure 11: Basement Ladies' Swimming Pool, c. 1955



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

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

Section figures Page 14

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---



Figure 12: Third floor Bali Room, c. 1955

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section figures Page 15

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

---



Figure 13: Third floor Elephant Room, c.1955

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

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

Section figures Page 16

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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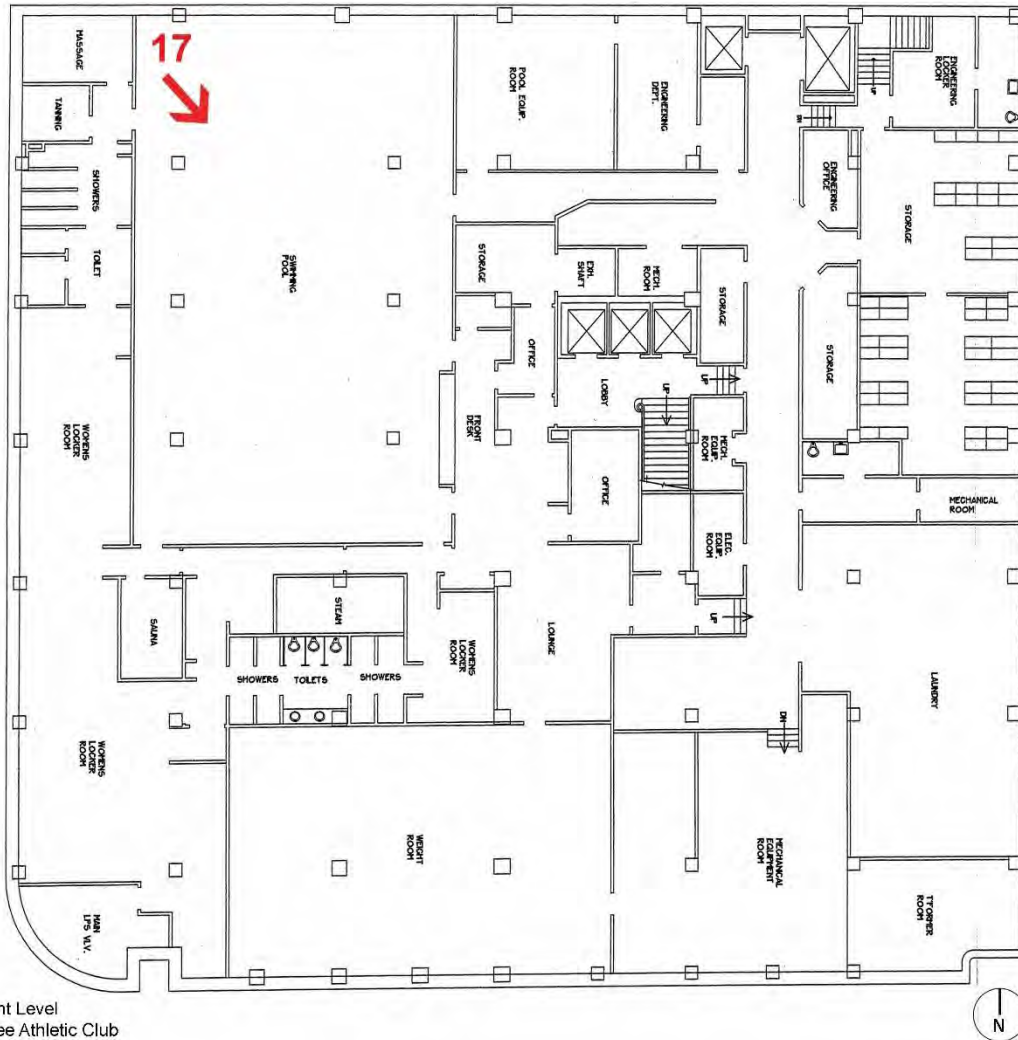
Figure 14: Third floor Men's Lounge, c. 1955

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Section figures Page 17



Basement Level  
Milwaukee Athletic Club

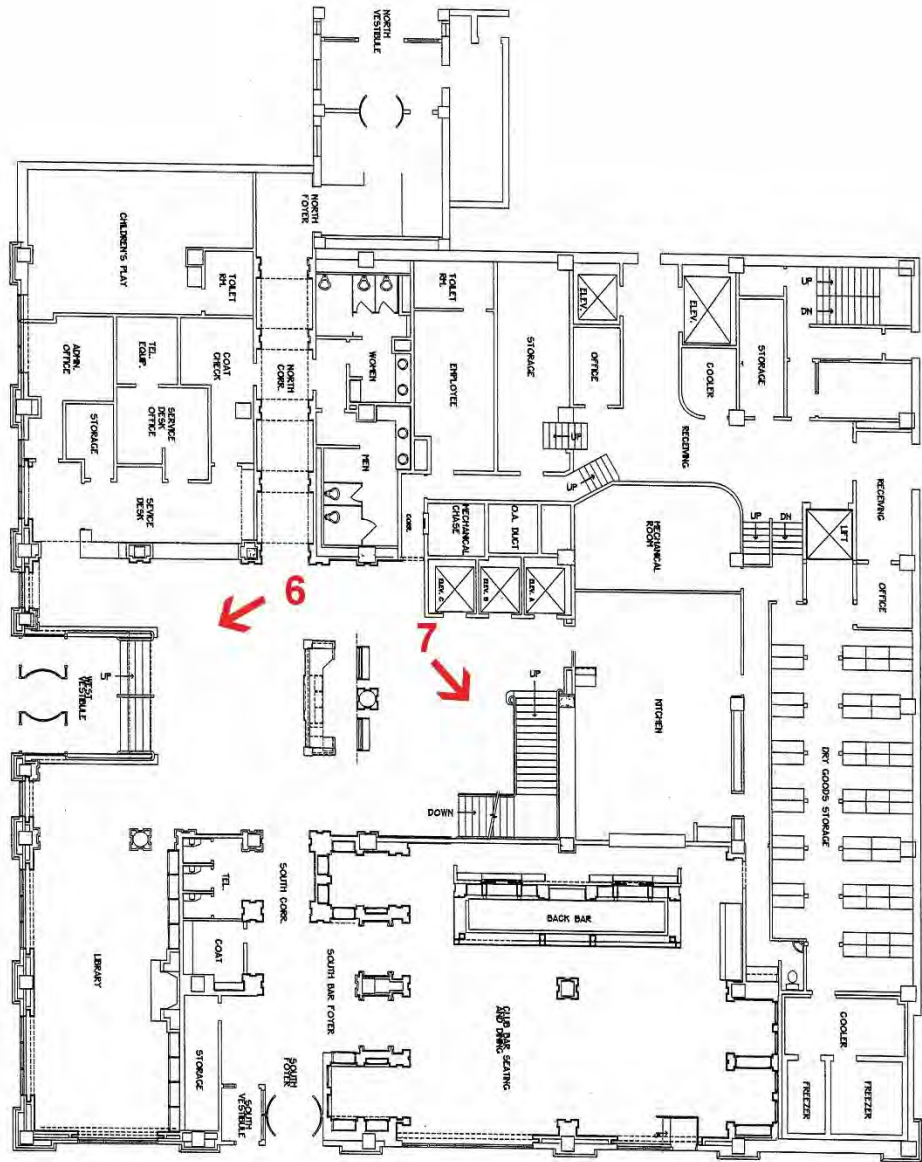
Figure 15: Basement Plan and Photo Key

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section figures Page 18

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin



First Floor  
Milwaukee Athletic Club

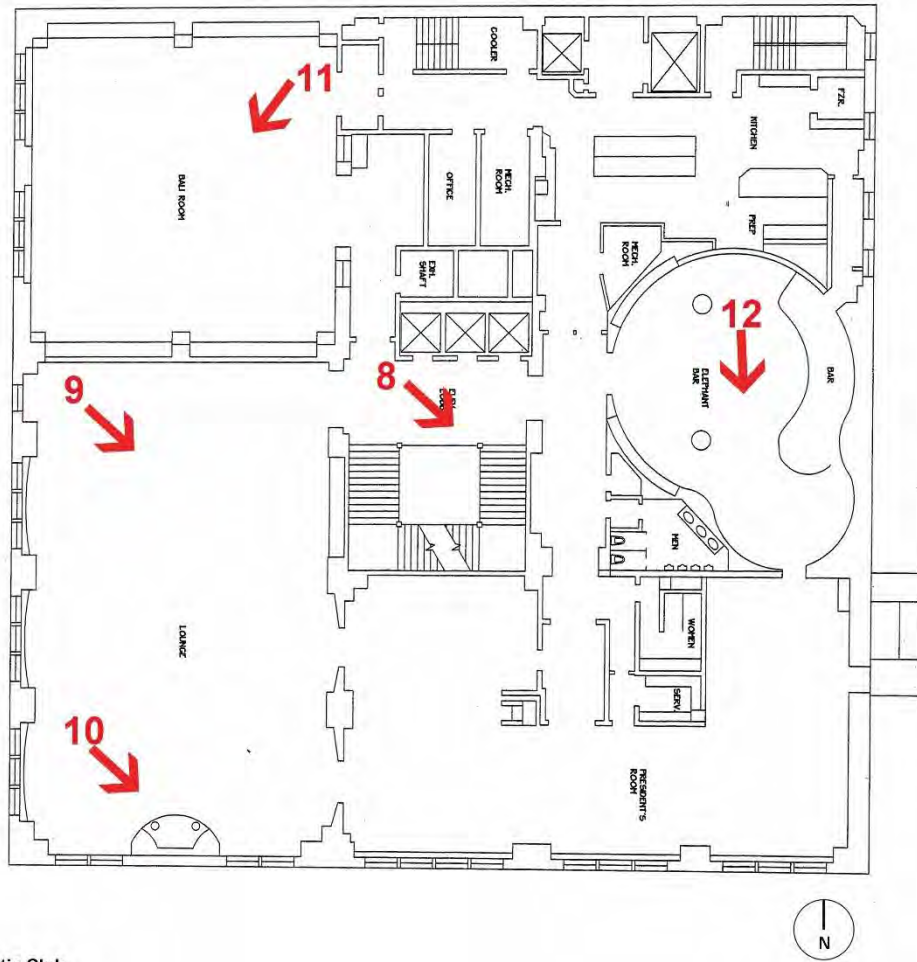
Figure 16: First Floor Plan and Photo Key

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

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

Section figures Page 19

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin



Third Floor  
Milwaukee Athletic Club

Figure 17: Third Floor Plan and Photo Key

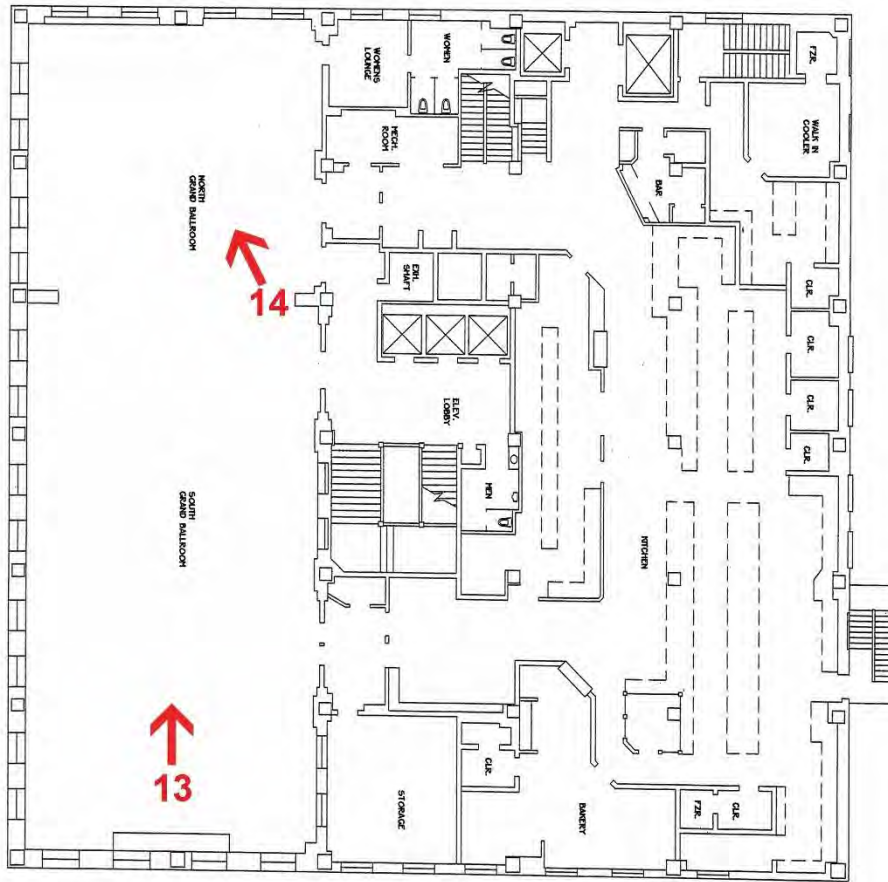


**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section figures Page 20

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin



Fourth Floor  
Milwaukee Athletic Club

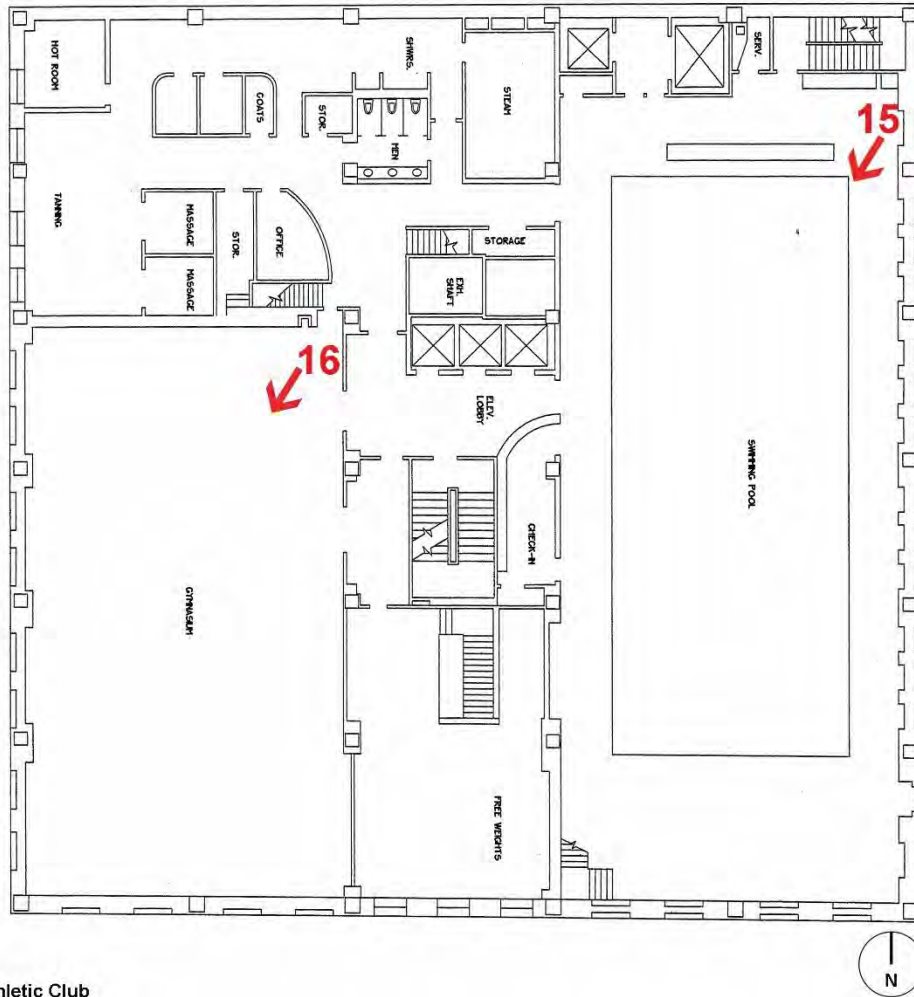
Figure 18: Fourth Floor Plan and Photo Key

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section figures Page 21

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin



Sixth Floor  
Milwaukee Athletic Club

Figure 19: Sixth Floor Plan and Photo Key

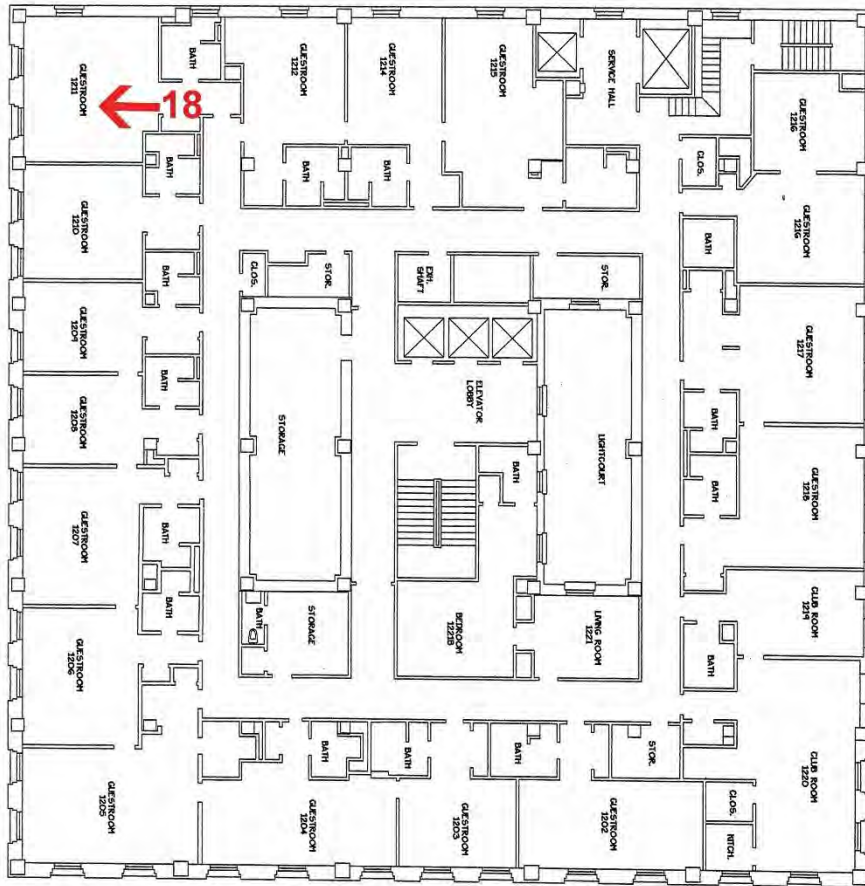


**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Section figures Page 22



Twelfth Floor  
Milwaukee Athletic Club



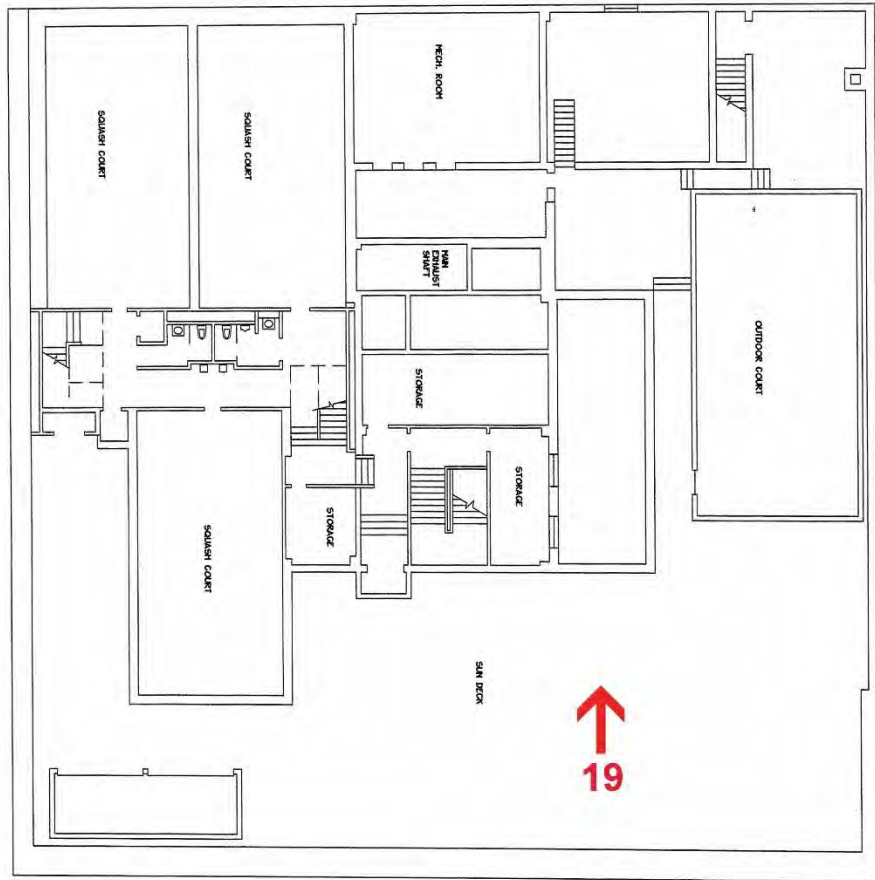
Figure 20: Twelfth Floor Plan and Photo Key

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section figures Page 23

Milwaukee Athletic Club  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin



Thirteenth Floor  
Milwaukee Athletic Club

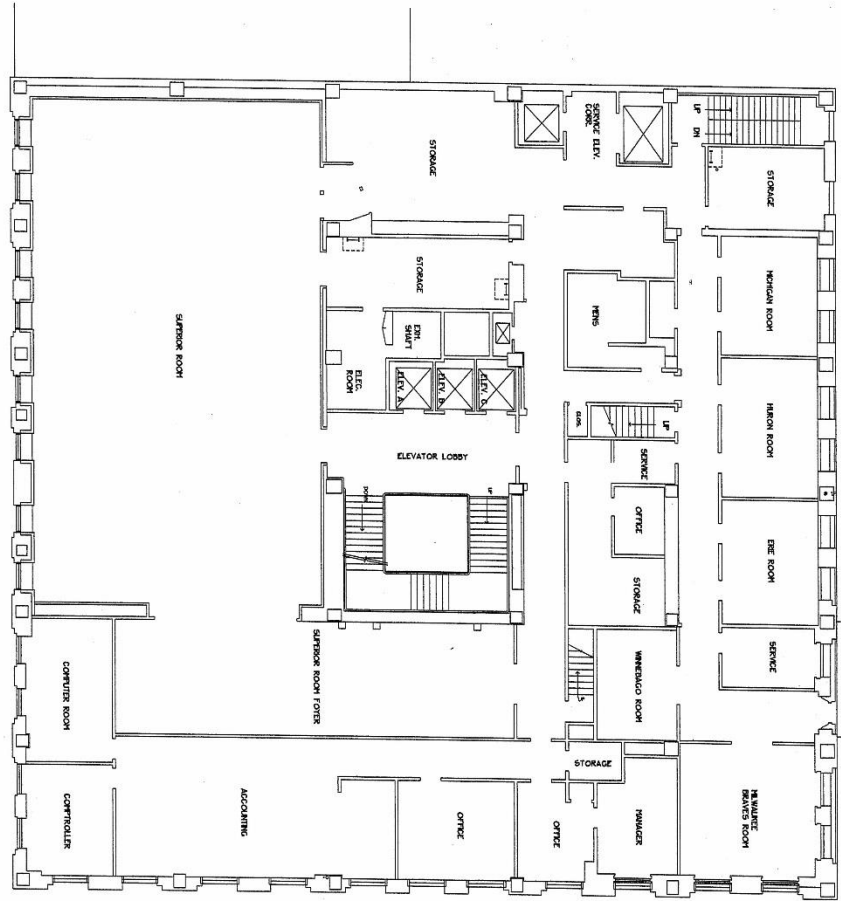


Figure 21: Roof Plan and Photo Key

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section figures Page 24



Second Floor  
Milwaukee Athletic Club

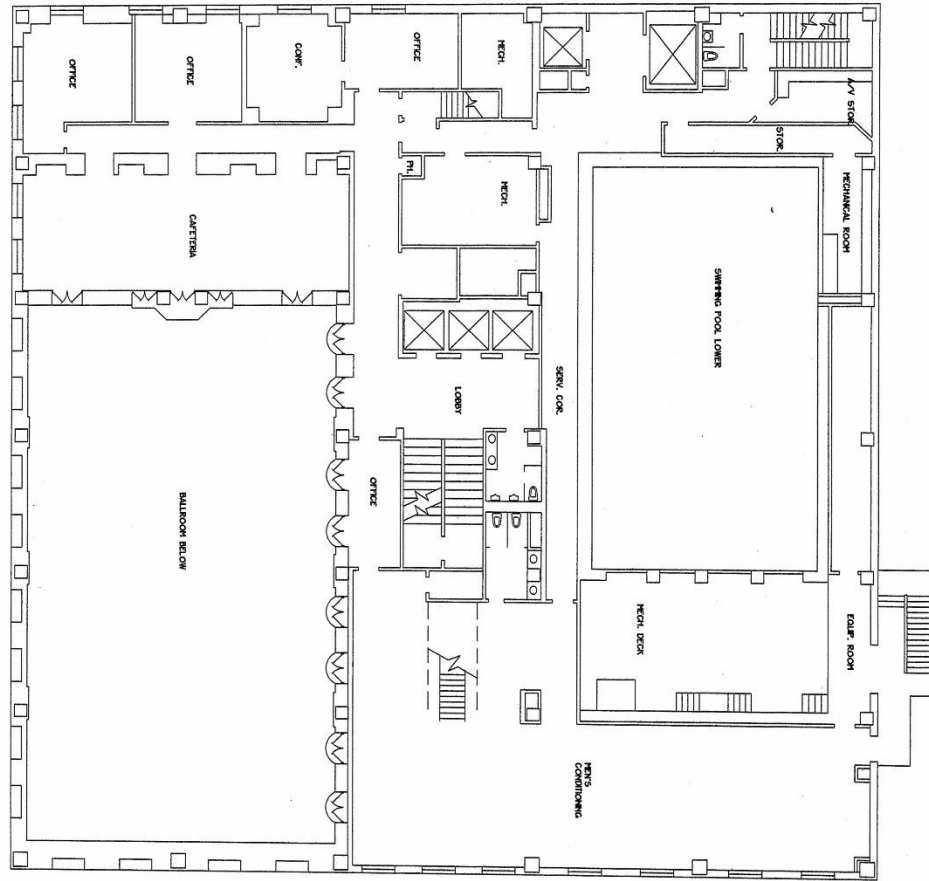


Figure 22: Second Floor Plan

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

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

Section figures Page 25



Fifth Floor  
Milwaukee Athletic Club



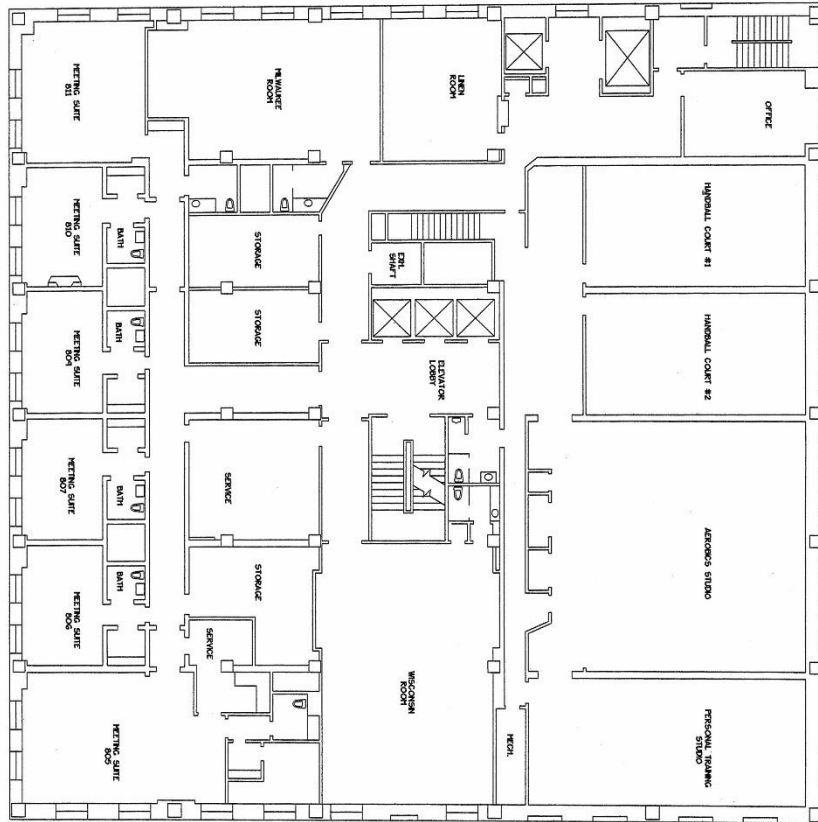
Figure 23: Fifth Floor Plan



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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section figures Page 27



**Eighth Floor  
Milwaukee Athletic Club**

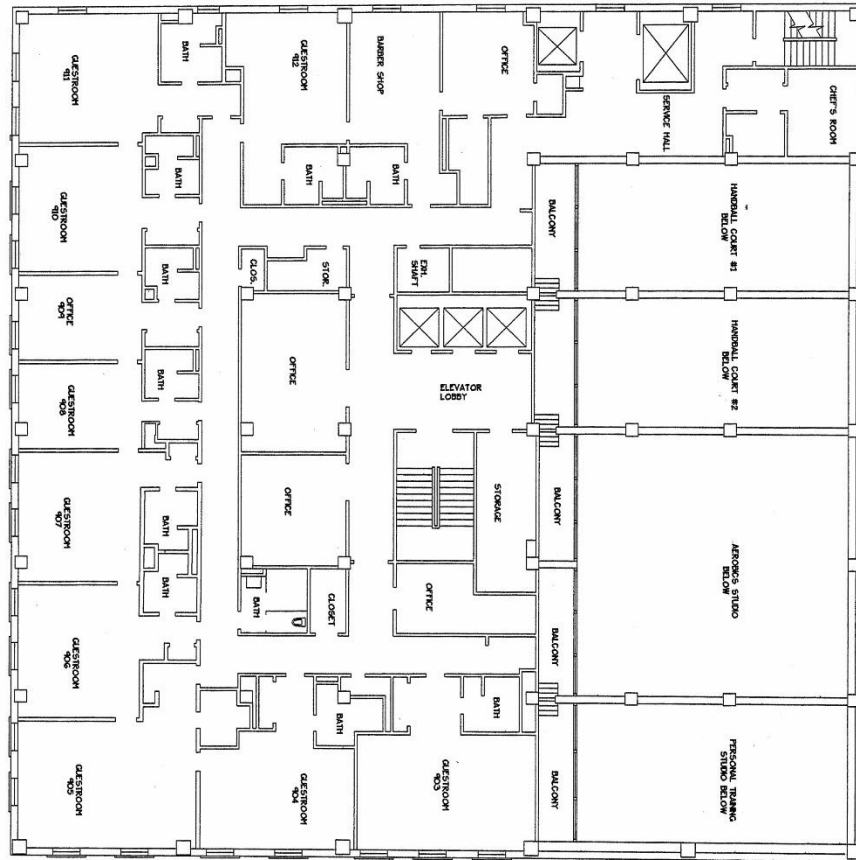


Figure 25: Eighth Floor Plan

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

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

Section figures Page 28



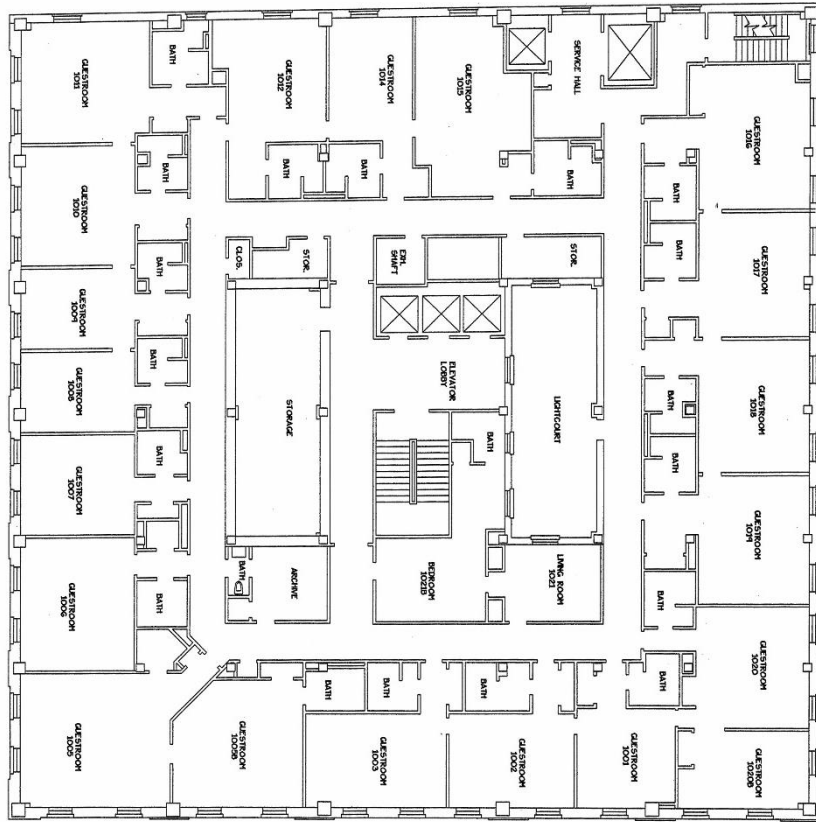
Ninth Floor  
Milwaukee Athletic Club

Figure 26: Ninth Floor Plan

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section figures Page 29



Tenth Floor  
Milwaukee Athletic Club

Figure 27: Tenth Floor Plan









MILWAUKEE ATHLETIC CLUB

ONLY

ROAD CLOSED TO THRU TRAFFIC

NO TRUCKS





NIMLG

UTILITY WORK AHEAD

LUCKY PARKING

BARBECUE RESTAURANT

NO PARKING

HOLTON  
377-7887





MILWAUKEE ATHLETIC CLUB

758

HIGHER LEARNING



MILWAUKEE ATHLETIC CLUB

MILWAUKEE ATHLETIC CLUB

MILWAUKEE ATHLETIC CLUB

MILWAUKEE ATHLETIC CLUB

MILWAUKEE ATHLETIC CLUB

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MILWAUKEE ATHLETIC CLUB









1691













































Spring League Champions 2016  
Fall League Champions 2015

Spring League Champions 2015  
Winter League Champions 2015  
Turkey Tournament Champions 2014  
Fall League Champions 2014  
Winter League Champions 2014  
Spring League Champions 2014

Spring League Champions 2013  
Winter League Champions 2013  
Turkey Tournament Champions 2013  
Fall League Champions 2013  
Winter League Champions 2013  
Spring League Champions 2013  
Turkey Tournament Champions 2012  
Fall League Champions 2012  
Winter League Champions 2012  
Spring League Champions 2012  
Turkey Tournament Champions 2011  
Fall League Champions 2011  
Winter League Champions 2011  
Spring League Champions 2011  
Turkey Tournament Champions 2010  
Fall League Champions 2010  
Winter League Champions 2010

Home  
Guests  
period

Winter League Champions 2009  
Spring League Champions 2009  
Turkey Tournament Champions 2009  
Fall League Champions 2009  
Winter League Champions 2010  
Spring League Champions 2010  
Fall League Champions 2010  
Turkey Tournament Champions 2010

FIDUCIARY  
MANAGEMENT, INC.  
FUNDSDS.COM













UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 2/12/2019      Date of Pending List: 3/7/2019      Date of 16th Day: 3/22/2019      Date of 45th Day: 3/29/2019      Date of Weekly List: 4/5/2019

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- |                                       |  |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver       | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other        | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years      |
|                                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CLG  |  |

Accept       Return       Reject      3/28/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Barbara Wyatt      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2252      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.





# CHRIS LARSON

## STATE SENATOR

NOV 13 2018

November 5, 2018

Wisconsin Historic Preservation Review Board  
c/o Peggy Veregin  
Wisconsin Historical Society  
816 State Street  
Madison, WI 53706



Dear Ms. Veregin,

I am writing to express my support for the nomination of the Milwaukee Athletic Club to the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places and National Register of Historic Places. This will ensure that Milwaukee's rich historical heritage is protected and preserved for generations to come.

Designed by Armand Koch in 1917, this beautiful and historic building stands in the heart of downtown Milwaukee. Its twelve floors rise up to provide members and guests a view of Lake Michigan and the bustling cityscape. For over 100 years, this club has been a top destination for those who want to experience the charm and excellence of all that Milwaukee has to offer.

Designating the Milwaukee Athletic Club as a State and National Historic Place would cement its importance to Milwaukee as well as Wisconsin's history and indicate its stature as a site worthy of preservation. I encourage the State Historic Preservation Review Board to approve the Milwaukee Athletic Club's nomination to the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places and National Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

Chris Larson  
State Senator

CJL:GH:CR

WISCONSIN STATE CAPITOL  
P.O. Box 7882 • MADISON, WISCONSIN 53707-7882  
(608) 266-7505 • (800) 361-5487 • FAX: (608) 282-3547  
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RECEIVED  
NOV 15 2018

BY: \_\_\_\_\_

Office of the City Clerk

**Jim Owczarski**  
City Clerk  
jowcza@milwaukee.gov

**Richard G. Pfaff**  
Deputy City Clerk  
rpfaff@milwaukee.gov

November 5, 2018

Peggy Veregin  
National Register Coordinator  
Wisconsin Historical Society  
Division of Historic Preservation and Public History  
816 State Street  
Madison, WI 53706

RECEIVED 0280  
NOV 15 2018

Dear Ms. Veregin:

RE: CLG Review of the National Register Nomination for the Milwaukee Athletic Club, 758 North Broadway

In accordance with the provisions of the Certified Local Government Agreement between the City of Milwaukee and Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office, the Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission has reviewed the National Register nomination of the Milwaukee Athletic Club. The Commission determined that the property met the Statement of Significance as outlined in the application and voted to support the nomination on November 5, 2018.

Milwaukee has been lucky to have a number of monumental club buildings all built to high standards and with quality materials. They have frequently served as visual landmarks for their neighborhoods. They represent the importance club life had in Milwaukee's cultural and recreation history and the need for gathering places that removed members from the humdrum of everyday life. Many of the buildings have been challenged in recent years as memberships decreased in the wake of alternative forms of socializing and entertainment and many have undergone changes of use or even abandonment. Thankfully, the Milwaukee Athletic Club has remained a viable institution and its building has had consistent stewardship over its century of use. The Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission is pleased to see the club seeking National Register recognition.

If you need additional information or have any questions please feel free to contact the Historic Preservation Commission staff at (414) 286-5722.

Sincerely,

Alderman Robert Bauman, Chair  
Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission





WISCONSIN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY



TO: Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Peggy Veregin  
National Register Coordinator

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination

The following materials are submitted on this Thirty-first day of January 2019, for the nomination of the Milwaukee Athletic Club to the National Register of Historic Places:

<u>1</u>	Original National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form
<u>1</u>	CD with NRHP Nomination form PDF
<u>        </u>	Multiple Property Nomination form
<u>19</u>	Photograph(s)
<u>1</u>	CD with image files
<u>1</u>	Map(s)
<u>28</u>	Sketch map(s)/figures(s)/exhibit(s)
<u>2</u>	Piece(s) of correspondence
<u>        </u>	Other:

COMMENTS:

<u>        </u>	Please ensure that this nomination is reviewed
<u>x</u>	This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
<u>        </u>	The enclosed owner objection(s) do or do not constitute a majority of property owners
<u>        </u>	Other: