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# INVENTORY FORM FOR NOMINATED PROPERTIES

Name of property: Highland Avenue Methodist Church

Owner: Rehoboth Apostolic Church

Address: 2024 West Highland Avenue

Owner's address: 2024 West Highland Avenue

City: Milwaukee,

Milwaukee, WI 53233

## REGISTRATION INFORMATION

160 NRHP Certification (date)

- Listed in NRHP (LI)
- Determined eligible in DOE process (DD)
- Determined eligible in nomination process (DN)
- Additional documentation added to nomination (AD)
- Boundary increased (BI)
- Boundary decreased (BD)
- Delisted (DL)

215 Criteria Considerations

- religious property (A)
- moved property (B)
- birthplace or grave (C)
- cemetery (D)
- reconstructed property (E)
- commemorative property (F)
- less than 50 years old (G)

170 Thematic or Multiple Resource Nomination Name (code)

220 Area of Significance (code)

180 NRHP List Name Highland Avenue Methodist Church

Architecture

190 Level of Significance

- national (NA)
- state (ST)
- local (LO)

Religion

200 District Classification

- pivotal (P)
- contributing (C)
- non-contributing (NC)

230 Period of Significance

1891-1934

210 Applicable Criteria

- event (A)
- person (B)
- architecture/engineering (C)
- information potential (D)

340 Review Board Date \_\_\_\_\_

70 USGS Quad Map

SW/4 Milwaukee 7.5 min 1:24,000

80 UTM Coordinates (Format: 99-999999-9999999)

16-423550-4765980

85 Listed Acreage less than one acre

60 Verbal Boundary Description Miner's Addition in northwest quarter sec. 30-7-22, Blk. 1, lots 18-19 & W. 6' of N. 54.7', Lot 21 and Lot 20 except east four feet of south 60.24 feet.

# Street

## ARCHITECTURE

450 Date of Construction (source)

1891-94 (C)

460 Dates of Alterations/Additions (source)

480 Builder (source)

490 and 500 Designer Type and Name (source)

architect: Charles D. Crane & Carl C. Barkhausen (C)

artist:

engineer:

interior designer:

landscape architect:

other:

510 Style or Form (code)

High Victorian Gothic

520 Building, Structure, Object or Site Type (code)

Church

530 Building Materials (code) Asbestos (roof)

stone (foundation)

brick terra/cotta stone (trim)

540 Interior Visited  Yes  No

550 Structural System (code)

560 Plan Configuration (code) irregular

# Address

570 Number of Stories

2

580 Roof Shape (code)

Gable

590 Additional Description

620 Condition

excellent  good  fair  poor  ruins

650 Related Buildings (code)

## HISTORY

430 Common/Current Name Solomon Community Temple

440 Historic Names (source) First German Methodist Episcopal Church (1894)(A); Highland Avenue Methodist Church (1894-1970) (B)

660 Associated Individual(s) (dates) (source)

670 Associated Event (source)

First German Methodist Congregation in Wisconsin-1846 (F)

680 Commercial/Industrial Historic Uses (source)

**STREET:** West Highland Avenue

**NUMBER:** 2024 aka 1102 N. 21st Street

**SHSW INTENSIVE  
SURVEY FORM**

**LOCATION**

10 County Milwaukee  
20 City or Village Milwaukee  
30 Civil Town \_\_\_\_\_  
35 Unincorporated Community \_\_\_\_\_  
40 Location 2024 West Highland Avenue aka  
1102 North 21st Street  
50 Town-Range-Section \_\_\_\_\_  
55 Quarter Sections \_\_\_\_\_  
60 Verbal Boundary Description Miner's Addition in northwest  
quarter section 30-7-22, block 1, lots 18-19 and  
west 6' of north 54.7 feet, lot 21 and lot 20 except  
east four feet of south 60.25 feet.

**PROGRAM REVIEW**

250 Tax Case Number \_\_\_\_\_  
260 Compliance Case Number \_\_\_\_\_  
270 A or D Grant  Yes  No  
275 Covenant/Easement Dates \_\_\_\_\_  
320 Ownership  
 private (P)  
 local-public (L)  
 state-public (S)  
 federal-public (F)  
 mixed, private-public (M)  
330 Lead Agency (code) \_\_\_\_\_

**SURVEY**

90 Photo Codes MI 69-8  
100 Survey Map 398  
110 Map Code 69-8  
120 Reconnaissance Survey Date 1979  
130 Reconnaissance Surveyor Wenger/Hunton/Jensen  
140 Intensive Survey Name (code) Westside  
150 Intensive Surveyor Wenger/Hatala  
155 Intensive Survey FY 1983  
235 Survey Evaluation  
 eligible (E)  not eligible (N)  
237 Survey District Classification  
 pivotal (P)  non-contributing (NC)  
 contributing (C)  
240 Survey Level of Significance  
 national (NA)  local (LO)  
 state (ST)  
243 Survey Evaluation Criteria  
 event (A)  architectural/engineering (C)  
 person (B)  information potential (D)  
245 Proposed District \_\_\_\_\_  
280 NHL Date \_\_\_\_\_  
290 HABS No. \_\_\_\_\_ 300 HAER No. \_\_\_\_\_  
310 Local Landmark (code) \_\_\_\_\_  
315 Associated Archeological Site(s) \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIPTION

The Highland Avenue Methodist Church is a distinctive single-towered German Gothic church of irregular cruciform plan built for Milwaukee's first German Methodist Congregation in 1891. The principal or Highland Avenue facade features a broad low gable with hooded entry to the east and a low, squat tower to the west. The tower is broken into several horizontal registers by a band of arched openings at the lower level and a single vertical window above. A stone plaque between the two elements once read Erste Deutsche Bischofliche Methodisten Kirche but is now covered with a sign that reads Solomon Community Temple. Corbelling and decorative brick work in diamond pattern ornament the tower at the base of the spire. The steeple makes the transition from square to octagonal by splitting into one large and four small spires. Two parapet-like gables with oculi abut the steeple on the east and west faces. The primary wall of the church's main facade is dominated by a traceried stain-glass window. The topmost section of the gable features an oculus, crockets and crosses. The two windows are separated by a corbelled band of the same type as used on the tower, thus unifying the tower and the main body of the church. The west facade also features a large, traceried window. A hooded entrance supported by columns is located at the tower and a smaller, unornamented entrance is situated to the north. A gabled addition at the north end of the structure runs perpendicular to the main body of the church.

The nave is almost square in plan and of the Akron type in which the pews are arranged in a series of concentric segmental curves focusing on the raised dais at the corner of the nave containing the lectern, communion table and choir.

ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Normally religious properties are excluded from listing in the National Register, but the Highland Avenue Methodist Church is architecturally significant as an example of the German Gothic style in Milwaukee. Two other churches in Milwaukee were built in this style and have suffered losses of integrity, unlike Highland Avenue, which remains largely intact. Local architectural historian Richard Perrin notes that use of terra cotta with brick as in Highland Avenue Methodist had its origins in the North German Gothic churches of the 15th century. Despite the large German population in Milwaukee, this style is rare.

690 BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES (SOURCES)

- A. Milwaukee City Building Permits.
- B. Colver, J. Newton, ed. One Hundred Years of Methodism In Greater Milwaukee. Milwaukee: General Committee of Milwaukee's Methodist Centennial, 1935. pp. 30-31.
- C. Perrin, Richard W.E. Milwaukee Landmarks. 2nd. ed. Milwaukee Public Museum Publication in History. No. 9. Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Museum, 1979. pp. 28-29.
- D. Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places. Notes on the First German Methodist Church.
- E. Young, George W. and Powell, Rees E., comp. Historical Review of Grand Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church. 1836 to 1916.
- F. Bennett, A.M., P.S., Rev. and Lawson, James, Rev. History of Methodism in Wisconsin. Cincinnati: Cranston & Stowe, 1890. pp. 453-55.

360 Demolished

360 Date Demolished

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

Highland Avenue Methodist Church, designed by the firm of Crane and Barkhausen, was the first of Milwaukee's German Gothic Churches, built in 1891. Friedens Evangelical, also on the West Side, was built in 1905 and Grace Lutheran was built in 1900 in today's central business district. All three were constructed for German-speaking congregations and all three were mother churches of their denomination: Grace Lutheran for Wisconsin Synod Lutheranism, Friedens for the Evangelical-Reformed (now United Church of Christ) and Highland Avenue Methodist for German Methodism.

Highland Avenue Methodist Church is the smallest of the the three and the most unique as well as most intact. Both Friedens and Grace Lutheran feature twin towers of unequal height flanking central, triple-openings porticos. The Highland Avenue Church has only one tower, and has entries to the side and in the tower protected by gabled hoods with bargeboard trim. Friedens and Grace Lutheran both make use of a more traditional ground plan with nave and transept. The Highland Avenue church, however, has a more centralized plan with a short transept and almost square interior space. Grace Lutheran has suffered the loss of its terra cotta finials at the base of each spire and Friedens lost its west spire due to storm damage several years ago. Highland Avenue Methodist, in contrast, remains intact and its north addition, built approximately 1907, does not mar the integrity of the structure.

Highland Avenue Methodist church is the only known ecclesiastical structure done by the firm of Crane and Barkhausen in Milwaukee. The firm chiefly designed residences or schools (German-English Academy 1890, and Friedens School 1896). The Highland Avenue church is typical of their German influenced buildings of the 1890's.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The mother church of German Methodism in Wisconsin was the Highland Avenue Methodist Church at 2064 West Highland. German Methodism in America had begun in the 1830's and was administered separately from English speaking congregations through a German Conference, one branch of which coordinated activities in Wisconsin, Illinois and the Northwest. By 1916 German Methodists represented approximately 28% of all Methodist in Milwaukee. It was not until 1933 that the German and English conferences consolidated.

Milwaukee's first German Methodist congregation was established in 1846 at a site on the banks of the Milwaukee River south of the present Kilbourn Avenue bridge. In 1848 a brick church was built on North 5th Street but it was replaced with a new brick sanctuary in 1872 at the southeast corner of West Juneau Avenue and 11th Street. This structure was sold to the adjacent Pabst Brewing Company in 1896 when the congregation moved further west to the northeast corner of 21st Street and Highland Avenue. The congregation changed its name to Highland Avenue church and began to serve the community with English language services. The Highland Avenue church was responsible for the founding of Milwaukee's five other German Methodist congregations. After World War I it merged with the congregation of the Third German Methodist church and the resulting congregation met at the Highland Avenue church.

In the 1960's the Highland Avenue Methodist Church disbanded. The building subsequently reverted to the Methodist-Episcopal Conference. Attempts to convert the church into a community center were unsuccessful and it was eventually occupied by a black congregation. In 1970 a new congregation, the Church for All People, moved into the building. A few years later it merged with a Black Methodist Congregation to become the Solomon Community Temple which still occupies the old Highland Avenue Church. (B,D,E,F)

### HISTORICAL STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Highland Avenue Methodist Church is of statewide historical significance. Founded in 1846, it was the mother church of German Methodism in Wisconsin. Begun by Reverend William Schreck, a missionary pastor from Quincy, Illinois, it spawned other German Methodist congregations, including five in Milwaukee and others in West Bend, Watertown, Manitowoc, Oshkosh, Columbus and Wausau. The Highland Avenue church building was the fourth and last structure of the congregation. Originally known as the German Methodist church (1846-1869) and then as the First German Methodist Episcopal church (1870-1894) its name was changed to Highland Avenue Methodist when it moved to this site in 1894. This name change reflected the addition of English language services, even though the congregation remained in the German Methodist conference until 1933 when the latter merged with the English conference. (B,F)