

WISCONSIN WORD PROCESSOR FORMAT (1331D)
(Approved 3/87)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printer in 12 pitch, using an 85 space line and a 10 space left margin. Use only archival paper (20 pound, acid free paper with a 2% alkaline reserve).

1. Name of Property

historic name First German Reformed Church
other names/site number Erste Deutsche Reformite Kirche; Evangelical and Reformed Church of Christ

2. Location

street & number 413 Wisconsin Avenue N/A not for publication
city, town Waukesha N/A vicinity
state Wisconsin code WI county Waukesha code 133 zip code 53186

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
None

No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Materials

(enter categories from instructions)

<u>Late Victorian</u>	foundation	<u>Limestone</u>
	walls	<u>Brick</u>
		<u>Stucco</u>
	roof	<u>Asphalt</u>
	other	<u>Wood</u>
		<u>shingle</u>

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Description

This fine example of Victorian eclectic ecclesiastical design was built by the congregation of the First German Reformed Church in 1891 and it is sited on a large flat lot fronting on Wisconsin Avenue, one of the city of Waukesha's most important downtown thoroughfares. The earliest portion of the present church was built of cream brick on a limestone foundation in 1891 to the design of an unknown architect and it consists of a 39-foot-wide by 71-foot-long rectilinear plan nave whose principal north-facing facade is bisected by a centrally placed 108-foot steeple. A 33-foot-square addition of similar design and construction was added to the east elevation of the nave in 1924-25 and a large modern design T-plan brick-sided school and office addition was attached to the southwest corner of the west elevation in 1956. The church has been well maintained and is in excellent condition today.

The First German Reformed Church is located in an architecturally and historically significant urban residential neighborhood that is situated just to the south of Waukesha's downtown commercial section. The core of this neighborhood is formed by the public space known as Cutler's Park, originally a private park that contained the Greek Revival style house of Waukesha founder Morris D. Cutler.¹ Wisconsin Avenue forms the northern boundary of this park and during the period between 1868 and 1910, when Waukesha became a summer resort of importance in the Midwest, the city's most prominent citizens chose to build their homes in the area surrounding the park. These families lined the five-block length of the east-west running Wisconsin Avenue with impressive churches and homes designed in a variety of middle and late nineteenth century styles.

Waukesha's population grew from 2500 in 1870 to 8740 by 1910 due to the city's success as a summer resort during this period. By the turn-of-the-century, however, the importance of the resort industry began to decline and numerous manufacturing concerns took their place in the city's economy; transforming Waukesha's economic base in the process. This transformation, coupled with Waukesha's close proximity to the expanding Milwaukee metropolitan area, greatly increased the city's population, which by 1988 numbered 53,941, making it Wisconsin's eighth-largest city. This growth is now most evident in the many suburbs that surround the historic core of the city, but it has also had an impact on the downtown portion of the city as well. Over the years the commercial sector of the downtown has gradually encroached upon the northern, Wisconsin Avenue edge of the residential neighborhood surrounding

¹ This house was built in 1845. Later, it was moved to 401 Central Avenue and it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in October of 1983. Wisconsin Avenue forms the northern boundary of Cutler's Park, North Grand Avenue forms the eastern boundary, and the western boundary is formed by Maple Avenue. The First German Reformed Church is located on the south side of Wisconsin Avenue just to the west of Cutler's Park.

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Cutler Park, and many of the large residences that once lined this street have since been replaced with modern commercial buildings and parking lots. Fortunately, though, nearly all of this activity has occurred to the east of the park and that area surrounding the First German Reformed Church has stayed intact as a residential neighborhood. Consequently, the stretch of Wisconsin Avenue upon which the church is located still retains much of its historic appearance today.²

Waukesha is unusually fortunate in that it still retains almost all of its historically and architecturally significant downtown churches. Most of these churches are located within a few blocks of the First German Reformed Church and among this outstanding group are two other churches located on Wisconsin Avenue: the High Victorian Gothic style First Baptist Church (1872) located at 247 Wisconsin Avenue, corner of Wisconsin and North Grand Avenues; and the Richardsonian Romanesque style First Methodist Church (1895-8), located at 121 Wisconsin Avenue.³ The tall steeples of these three Wisconsin Avenue churches have long been prominent landmarks in the community and the nomination of the First German Reformed Church completes the process of placing this important group of buildings on the NRHP.

The 1891 Church Building

The 1891 church building forms the principal part of the church we see today and its exterior is still largely intact despite the two additions that were later attached to it. This building was built at a cost of \$8000* and is a fine example of Victorian eclectic architecture whose salient characteristic is the combining of elements associated with several different historic styles into buildings which clearly owe a debt to the past but which are, never-the-less, something quite new in themselves. As originally built the church consisted of a 39-foot-wide by 71-foot-long rectilinear plan one-story nave that rested on a raised basement story fashioned from coursed ashlar rock-faced Waukesha limestone blocks. The exterior walls of the nave above the basement story are sided in a cream brick veneer over a wood frame and the nave is then sheltered by a steeply pitched asphalt shingle-covered gable roof whose ridgeline runs north-south and whose gable ends face north and south as well. The principal facade of the nave faces north and fronts on Wisconsin Avenue and it is bisected by a large multi-part steeple. The east and west-facing side elevations of the nave were originally identical in design and were each five-bays-wide. The rear or south-facing elevation is three-bays-wide with most of it being given over to a gable-roofed one-story centrally placed ell.

² A group of four outstanding houses located across the street from the church was placed on the NRHP as the Wisconsin Avenue Historic District in October of 1983.

³ Both of these churches were also placed on the NRHP in October and December of 1983 as part of the Multiple Resources of Waukesha nomination.

⁴ Waukesha Freeman. January 7, 1892, Pg. 1.

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All the brick-clad wall surfaces on the north, east and west elevations of the 1891 church are divided into bays by thin projecting brick pilaster strips which are built out from the main wall surface and linked to one another by a similar projecting horizontal element placed just below the eaves or the roof above each bay, creating a panelized effect. The depth of the panel is then emphasized by the placement of two brick corbel courses below the underside of the horizontal framing element and by placing a projecting ashlar limestone pilaster base at the foot of each pilaster strip where the pilaster strip abuts the limestone construction basement story.

The main (north-facing) facade of the 1891 design is symmetrical and three-bays-wide. The rectilinear plan steeple forms the oversized center bay. The two side bays are each 11-feet-wide, are both enframed in the manner described above, and the upper member of the framework in both bays is angled sharply upward to reflect the steep pitch of the main roof. Each of these bays contains a single tall semi-circular arched window glazed in glass that is painted to depict scenes from the Bible. These windows each have a cut stone sill and help light the nave of the church. The 108-foot-tall steeple mass projects forward from the center of this facade. Its base measures 11-feet-deep by 17.5-feet-wide and rests on a raised limestone basement story that is a continuation of the coursed ashlar rock-faced Waukesha limestone basement story that supports the walls of the nave.

The steeple is divided into three sections: tower; lantern; and spire. The tower section is two-stories in height and is sided in brick. Each of its three visible exterior walls is one-bay-wide and is enframed in the manner described above. Originally, the principal entrance to the nave of the church was via a large semi-circular arched opening placed in the center of the north-facing facade of the tower. Double doors then opened into a vestibule inside. The outline of this opening is still visible but the opening itself was filled in with lannon stone veneer when a new entrance vestibule was built on the west side of the nave in 1956 and a large stone cross was then affixed to this new stone surface. A commemorative tablet made of marble is attached to the wall just above this opening and upon it, done in bas-relief, are the words "Erste Deutsche Reformierte Kirche--1866, 1891." Above this tablet, centered in the second story of the tower, is a tall semi-circular arched window that is glazed in glass painted to depict a scene from the Bible. This window helps light a balcony that runs across the north end of the interior of the nave. Identical windows are also positioned in the centers of each of the two floors of the east and west-facing side elevations of the tower. Both the two first floor windows light the entrance vestibule inside while the second floor windows also light the balcony. The tower is then terminated approximately ten feet below the ridgeline of the roof of the nave by a pent roof that encircles its front and side elevations.

The lantern section of the steeple is slightly smaller in dimension than the tower section below it and it is one-story in height and is square in plan. This section is sided in clapboard and each of its four elevations consists of a single large panel of clapboard that is enframed with horizontal and vertical boards. Each panel

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is then further subdivided into three smaller sections (two wider side sections flanking a smaller center section) by two more vertical boards. There are no openings in any of the elevations of the lantern although the south-facing elevation is partially covered by the upper portion of the north-facing gable end of the main roof. This section is then surmounted by a wide wooden cornice which has a denticulated frieze board below it that is further enriched by small brackets placed directly above the vertical boards that subdivide and help enframe the clashboard panels below.

The steeple is crowned by a tall spire of complex design. The bottom section of the spire consists of a painted wood shingle-clad belfry whose lower half is square in plan and slightly smaller in dimension than the lantern section below it. Each of the four corners of the belfry is then chamfered inward about halfway up, giving the upper half of the belfry an octagonal shape, and these four corners are then embellished with corner posts surmounted by tapered wood-shingle clad finials. A tall semi-circular arched opening is then centered on each of the four main elevations of the belfry and these openings are each filled with latticework supported by wooden tracery having a bitoll shape. The octagonal upper portion of the belfry is then surmounted by a shallow bracketed cornice which is interrupted by four blind gablets, one of which is placed above each of the four large openings below. The steeple is then terminated by a tall, tapered octagonal plan spire covered in wood shingles and the spire is crowned with a cross.

Both the 71.5-foot-long east and west-facing side elevations of the nave were partially altered when later additions were placed across parts of them. Originally, both elevations were identical in design and five-bays-wide and each bay was enframed in the manner previously described, giving both elevations a pilastered appearance. Both elevations were also asymmetrical in design as well, with the northernmost bay of each being wider than the other four. In 1891 each of these ten bays contained a single tall semi-circular arched window opening, some of which were initially filled with clear glass. The two northernmost bays on each elevation also had a single two-over-two-light flat-arched double hung window placed in the raised basement story below while a pair of these windows was placed below each of the windows in the remaining three bays.

The rear (south-facing) elevation of the nave is symmetrical and three-bays-wide. A rectilinear plan ell forms the oversized center bay. The two side bays are each 6.5-foot-wide and each of these bays contains a single tall semi-circular arched memorial window glazed in glass that is painted to depict scenes from the Bible. These windows each have a cut stone sill and help light the nave of the church. The 11-foot-deep by 26.5-foot-wide gable roofed ell projects outward from the center of this elevation and its base rests on a raised limestone basement story that is a continuation of the coursed ashlar rock-faced Waukesha limestone basement story that supports the nave. The only openings in the south-facing elevation of this ell are

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two small square one-light windows placed in the raised basement story. Both the east and west-facing side elevations of the ell are each one-bay-wide, however, and they are both enframed in the same manner as the bays on the side elevations of the nave. Both of these bays also each contain a single tall semi-circular arched window opening filled with painted glass as well.

In its essentials, the interior of the 1891 church is still largely extant today. The nave of the church originally consisted of a single large rectilinear room whose principal illumination came from the ten windows on the side elevations and the two windows placed in the south wall of the nave. Banks of pews face the altar, which is placed in the center of a large apse-like space that is itself centered in the south wall of the nave. This space is defined by a large semi-circular arched opening in the south wall of the nave and is contained within the ell attached to the rear elevation of the nave. It was originally lit by the two windows on the sides of the ell. The north end of the nave is treated in a similar fashion. The two-story tower portion of the steeple creates a similar but narrower space that is centered in the north wall of the nave. This space is divided into two floors by a balcony that crosses the north end of the nave. The first floor of this space serves as the principal entrance vestibule of the church. Both floors of this space are lit by the windows placed in the walls of the steeple tower.

The gable roof of the nave is expressed in the interior of the church by leaving the ceiling open up to the collar beams that hold the principal rafters of the roof in place. A flat ceiling is then suspended on top of these beams, enclosing the space located in the apex of the roof above. A wide wooden cornice extends along both the long sides of the nave where the walls meet the sloping portion of the ceiling, and similar molding is placed at the junctures of the sloped and flat portions of the ceiling along the lengths of the purlins that are tied to the collar beams. Further emphasis is given to the shape of the ceiling by using heavy wooden ribs to divide the ceiling into a grid. These six pairs of ribs spring from massive carved wooden imposts that are positioned on the centers of the walls between each of the windows on the side elevations of the nave, and each of these imposts is decorated with an incised trefoil placed in a circle. The juncture of these ribs with the purlins above is also decorated by placing a wooden pendant at each of the intersections of the ceiling grid. The lower part of the nave is enriched by the use of a tall wainscotting made of thin, vertically placed tongue and groove boards that encircles the base of the plaster walls.

Once the church building was completed, no changes were made to its exterior until 1924. Some changes, however, were made to the interior during this period.

The [original] church building had a seating capacity of 480 and the commodious basement was divided into three rooms. One of these housed the Primary Department of the Sunday School, one the main school, and the third was used as a kitchen. These rooms were used to conduct the activities of the various organizations

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within the congregation. The total cost of the building amounted to the remarkably low sum of \$8000. During the pastorate of Rev. Wm. Diehm, which covered a period of twenty years (1900-1920), the church was equipped with a Wangerin-Weichardt organ at a cost of \$2100; the first bell, which had sustained a crack, was replaced with a new one costing \$475; the walls were redecorated; stained glass memorial windows were put in at a cost of \$660; a new heating and lighting system was installed and the basement received a new hardwood floor.⁵

1925 Alterations and Annex

The church congregation continued to expand in size during the ensuing decades and led to a decision in January, 1924 calling for the remodeling and renovating of the interior of the 1891 building and the construction of an annex.

Plans were drafted and subsequently carried out under the able supervision of the architect, Mr. H. C. Haeuser. Following are the specifications for the ground floor: The annex must provide a commodious committee room and a 33x33 foot chapel separated from the main auditorium by a Wilson sliding partition. ... The basement of the annex was to house a large and modernly equipped kitchen, a cloak room, and the new heating plant, consisting of two hot air blast furnaces and a three-horse power motor fan.⁶

The annex was attached to the rear part of the east-facing elevation of the nave of the 1891 building and this resulted in the removal of the three left-hand bays of this elevation and the loss of the windows they contained. Haeuser took care to design the annex in a style that was sympathetic with the older building and he also used identical materials in its construction. Consequently, the principal portion of the annex, the 33-foot-square chapel, bears a strong resemblance to the existing building and the annex is considered to be a contributing addition for that reason. The chapel is one-story in height and it rests on a tall random ashlar Waukesha limestone foundation. The walls are sided in cream brick and they rise up to the asphalt shingle-covered gable roof above whose ridge line runs east-west and whose single gable end faces east. As befits the chapel's subordinate status, its walls and ridge line are both shorter than those of the nave to which they are attached and the walls are not enframed by pilaster strips as are the walls of the nave.

⁵ Dedication Souvenir. First Reformed Church, Waukesha, Wisconsin, 1925, pg. 7. This is a thirty-four page pamphlet published by the church on the occasion of the dedication of its 1925 addition. A copy is in the collection of the Waukesha County Museum in Waukesha.

⁶ Ibid, pg. 11.

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The north-facing side elevation of the chapel is asymmetrical in design and is two-bays-wide. The left-hand bay features a single tall flat-arched window opening which is filled with a painted glass memorial window. Two conventional six-over-one-light double hung windows are placed in the raised basement story just below this window and a large stepped cream brick buttress that has a tall limestone base decorates the extreme left-hand edge of the bay. The right-hand bay consists of a 9-foot-deep by 16-foot-long rectangular plan side entrance vestibule that is placed in the corner formed by the intersection of the main wall of the nave and the north wall of the chapel. This vestibule has a shed roof covered in asphalt shingles whose slope descends from the roof of the chapel, and it is also sided in cream brick. The east-facing elevation of this vestibule contains a single flat-arched entrance door and the triangular portion of wall below the slope of the roof above is filled with stucco and false half-timber work. The north-facing elevation of the vestibule is itself asymmetrical in design and two-bays-wide and it also has a smaller stepped brick buttress decorating its extreme left-hand edge. The left-hand bay has a single one-over-one-light segmental arched window that illuminates the entrance while the right-hand bay has two vertically stacked windows of the same design; one of which illuminates the flight of steps leading up to the chapel and the other the flight leading down to the basement.

The principal east-facing facade of the chapel is one-bay-wide and it is also sided in cream brick and rests on a tall limestone covered basement story. This facade is dominated by a large triple window group consisting of tall semi-circular arched window openings that contain painted glass memorial windows. The middle window of this group is taller than the others and all three are joined by a common concrete sill. Five evenly distributed six-over-one-light flat-arched windows pierce the length of the tall basement story below and the upper part of the gable end that crowns this facade is filled with a panel of stucco and false half-timber work that is corbelled out from the main wall surface and is supported by five small brackets placed below it.

The rear or south-facing elevation of the chapel is almost totally covered by a rectangular plan salient that is 10.5-feet-deep by 32-feet-long, is one-story in height, and is surmounted by a hip roof.⁷ This addition is sided in cream brick, has a raised basement story, and its main floor is occupied by the committee room of the church. The roof of this salient is covered in asphalt shingles and it is pierced by a very tall cream brick chimney. The east-facing side elevation of this salient is one-bay-wide and it has a small segmental-arched two-light window centered in its basement story and two one-light casement windows are placed in the principal story above. The south-facing elevation of the salient is three-bays-wide and it is

⁷ The remaining one foot of the length of this elevation of the chapel consists of a tall stepped cream brick buttress, having a limestone base. This buttress is identical to the one occupying the same position on the north-facing elevation of the chapel.

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asymmetrical in design. The right-hand bay is 11-feet-wide and is essentially identical with the east elevation except that the basement window is not centered on the bay. The left-hand bay consists of a 6.5-foot-deep by 10-foot-wide hip-roofed entrance vestibule that is equal in height to the main salient. The segmental-arched entrance door faces south and it is flanked on the right by a one-over-one-light window of similar design. When added to the committee room portion of the salient this vestibule creates an L-plan structure and the middle bay of its south elevation consists of a shorter flat-roofed 6.5-foot-deep by 10-foot-long salient that is placed in the juncture formed by the other two walls.

The interior of the chapel is modeled on that of the nave of the 1891 church. The entrance from the nave to the chapel is through a nearly full-width rectangular opening that makes up the west wall of the chapel and sliding accordion-style wooden doors are used to separate the chapel from the nave. The most notable feature of the chapel is the large triple group of memorial windows that is centered on the east wall. Both the north and south walls are devoid of ornament and their spans are pierced solely by the single painted glass memorial window on the north wall and by secondary entrance doors placed at the west ends of each wall. These stairs lead down to the entrance vestibules located on the side elevations of the chapel.

The chapel ceiling is almost identical in design to that of the nave except that a second set of planes has been added between the wall cornice and the collar beams. This creates two sets of east-west running planes sloping away from the flat plane that is positioned above the collar beams and results in a five-part composition that is almost the equivalent of a barrel vault. Otherwise, the wall cornices, the purlins, the primary ribs, and the decorative elements used in the chapel are all identical in design to those used in the nave and they also divide the ceiling surface into grid-like patterns.

While the annex was being built, the 1891 church was also being renovated under the direction of H. C. Haeuser. The specifications for this renovation stated that:

The auditorium was to be improved by extensive alterations such as the enlargement of the choir loft, the extension of the pulpit platform, improvements on the balcony, upson-boarding and beaming of the ceiling, redecoration of the walls, refinishing of the pews, recarpeting of the floors, installation of four stained glass memorial windows, a new lighting system, the overhauling of the organ and installing of an additional stop, and other minor changes.

The old basement was to be enlarged and improved by the removal of the old furnaces and all partition walls, the installation of two accordion-door partitions (by means of which the large room might be converted into three smaller compartments), the painting of the walls, the installation of a new plumbing and lighting system together with additional windows and other minor changes.

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The exterior of the old building was to be improved by roofing, painting, installation of new gutters and repairs to the tower.⁸

Work on the renovations to the original church and the new annex was completed at a cost of \$36,000 and the annex was dedicated on July 21, 1925.⁹ During the following years few changes were made to the church itself with the exception of the remodeling of the organ, which was rebuilt with a new console, electrified and equipped with new stops and chimes in 1951.¹⁰ The continuing expansion of the church congregation, however, led to the purchase of a new parsonage on the corner of Wisconsin and Maple avenues just after the end of WWII. The old parsonage (built in 1892 for \$1500) was then reused as a parish house and the church office was located in this building and Sunday School classes were also held there. By the mid 1950s, though, the church had 1045 members and a decision was made to erect a new education and office building on the site of the old parsonage. This building was razed in 1955 and work on the new building was then begun.

1956 Education Building Addition and Alterations

The education building addition is a T-plan building designed in a vernacular version of the Modern Movement style. Its exterior walls are veneered in a reddish-orange brick over a steel frame that is two-stories in height over a raised basement story and the building is surmounted by a flat roof hidden by a plain, shallow brick parapet topped with concrete coping. This addition measures 48-feet-wide by 52-feet-deep and it is attached to the southwestern corner of the nave, covering the original right-hand bay of the nave's west-facing elevation in the process. All windows in this addition are rectilinear in shape, and they have aluminum sash with a sliding middle section that gives each window the appearance of having three horizontal muntins when closed.

The building provides space for third, fourth, fifth and sixth grade rooms in the basement, and for the nursery and kindergarten departments on the first floor.

The second floor houses the primary department, the church office, pastor's study and conference room.¹¹

These three floors contain 10,000 square feet of space and the building was completed at a cost of \$125,000 and opened to the public in October of 1956. At the same time, the congregation also embarked on a program of renovating the original church building. The most evident result of this program was the closing up of the

⁸ Dedication Souvenir. First Reformed Church, Waukesha, Wisconsin, 1925, pg. 11.

⁹ One Hundredth Anniversary: 1866-1966. Evangelical and Reformed United Church of Christ, Waukesha, Wisconsin, 1966, pg. 6.

¹⁰ Waukesha Freeman. October 12, 1951.

¹¹ Ibid. October 6, 1956.

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the original main entrance located in the base of the steeple. This entrance was then replaced by a new 24-foot-long by 15-foot-wide rectangular plan flat-roofed entrance vestibule that covers most of the lower portion of the left-hand bay on the west elevation of the nave.

The original entrance opening was closed with a recessed lannon stone veneered panel to which a large brushed finish metal cross of simple modern design was then affixed. Filling this opening in this manner did not seriously effect the original design of the church because the design is simple and the lannon stone relates well to the more rough-hewn limestone that covers the base of the steeple. The new entrance vestibule is more obstrusive, however, and its boxy appearance and its stepped, flat-roof design clearly reflect its early 1950s date of construction. Fortunately, this vestibule is also sided in lannon stone and the use of this material helps both to soften its modern design and allows it to relate to the nave to which it is attached. The new vestibule is also very well built and high quality stained glass is used to fill its window openings, providing an appropriate transition into the main sanctuary.

In addition to these changes, the exterior of the old church was sandblasted and repointed and the interior was repainted, new pews, hanging lights, and linoleum flooring were added and new carpeting was placed over the aisles. A stainless steel handrail was also placed along the top of the balcony in the nave at this time.

Since 1956 the only change of note to the church has been the replacement of the original organ with a new instrument constructed by the Wicks Organ Co. of Highland, Illinois in 1980. This is "a two manual and pedal instrument with 20 ranks, 11 voices and 1169 pipes."¹²

The First German Reformed Church has long benefited from excellent maintenance programs and it is currently in excellent condition. Never-the-less, the education building addition constructed in 1956 is considered to be non-contributing to the church for NR purposes because of its unexceptional design and because it fails to pass the 50 year test for significance established by the National Park Service.

¹² Waukesha Freeman. September 13, 1980.

B. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: _____ nationally _____ statewide X locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B X C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) X A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
<u> ARCHITECTURE </u>	<u> 1891-1925 </u>	<u> 1891¹³ </u> <u> 1925¹⁴ </u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	Cultural Affiliation	_____
_____	<u> N/A </u>	_____
_____	_____	_____

Significant Person	Architect/Builder
<u> N/A </u>	<u> Hugo C. Haeuser/Architect¹⁵ (addition) </u> <u> George Ward/Contractor¹⁶ </u>

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The First German Reformed Church is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as a building of potentially local significance under National Register (NR) criterion C as affected by criterion consideration A. Research designed to assess the church's potential for nomination was undertaken using the NR significance area of Architecture, a theme that is also identified in the State of Wisconsin's Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP). This research centered on evaluating the church by utilizing the High Victorian Gothic and Italianate subsection of the Architectural Styles study unit of the CRMP.¹⁷ Other research was also undertaken to assess the importance of the church by comparing it with other churches in the city of Waukesha. The results of this research is detailed below and demonstrates that the First German Reformed Church is locally significant under National Register criterion C as a fine example of High Victorian Eclectic ecclesiastical design. The original portion of the church was built in 1891. It was later expanded by the addition of a chapel designed by prominent Milwaukee church architect Hugo C. Haeuser in 1925 and by an attached education building addition in 1956. The church fronts on Wisconsin Avenue and its 108-foot spire has been a visual landmark in the neighborhood for nearly a century. Almost all of Waukesha's other architecturally significant downtown churches are also located within a few blocks of the First German church on either Wisconsin or North East avenues where they are intermixed with the surviving examples of some of Waukesha's finest nineteenth

¹³ Waukesha Freeman. May 14, 1891, pg. 1. There is also a carved cornerstone dated A.D. 1891 placed near the base of the left-hand corner of the north-facing main facade of the nave of the church.

¹⁴ Dedication Souvenir. First Reformed Church, Waukesha, Wisconsin, 1925, pg. 15.

¹⁵ Ibid, pg. 11.

¹⁶ Ibid, pg. 33.

¹⁷ Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin. Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, 1986. Vol. 2, 2-10 (Architecture).

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such as Milwaukee, Kenosha and Racine. Soon new immigrants began to travel inland and congregations began to be established in centers away from the coast in communities such as Waukesha.

The German Evangelical Reform Church (sic) was organized (in Waukesha) in the year 1866, by Prof. H. Kurtz, who was sent to Waukesha from the interior of Germany as a missionary. Prof. Kurtz presided over his flock for two years, after which he retired to seek other fields, and was followed by Rev. H. Hanhart, who also preached to this congregation for two years, and now resides in Cincinnati, Ohio, where he was called to another parish. In 1870, Rev. C. R. Hinske took charge of the church, and for six years preached and labored with his people with much success. The work of the church becoming too laborious, he resigned his charge for rest and to regain failing health. Prof. H. Kurtz is now (1880) located at Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and is one of the Principals of the Theological Seminary in that place. Rev. Frederick Kuenzler, who has presided over the church for the last four years, is a very popular preacher, and a great favorite among his church members. Since Rev. Mr. Keunzler has had charge of the church, he has increased its membership to one hundred and ninety communicants. He has a large Sabbath school, with an average attendance of ninety, over which he presides on the Sabbath.

The Trustees of the church are Louis Janke, Fer. Brueger and William Niedermeyer. The church has no indebtedness and is constantly increasing in members. The society owns the building, which is a handsome large stone building, built many years ago as the Prairieville Academy, and was used afterwards as a Female Seminary. The grounds are spacious and liberally supplied with shade and ornamental trees, and are kept in very choice order. Adjoining the church is the parsonage, a neat little dwelling, which is in keeping with the church.

In speaking of this church, it is but proper to say that the project of organizing a German Evangelical Reform Church in Waukesha was first suggested by Rev. Mr. Fliesene, a somewhat noted exhorter, as early as 1851; but the matter was abandoned for the time, and for reasons he left for parts unknown.²²

The foregoing was written in 1880 and the old Prairieville Academy building then occupied by the church was even at that date one of Waukesha's most historically and architecturally significant buildings.

(It [the Academy Building] was begun in June 1840, and is reputed to have been the first structure wholly of stone, erected in the state. It was the first academy building of any kind in the state, and was erected by Wm. T. Bidwell, a schoolteacher without a school, and Lyman Goodnow, the proprietor of a stone

²² Butterfield, Consul W. (Ed.). The History of Waukesha County, Wisconsin. Western Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois, 1880, pg. 656.

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quarry with no market for its products. Morris D. Cutler gave two lots for the site. The academy added largely to the respect in which waukesha was held by its neighbors and became a prominent institution.

In 1846 the management of the institution was reorganized and the name changed to Carroll College, but in 1849 the name of Prairieville Academy was restored. In 1847 the first term of the territorial court was held in this building. During later years the building was used for all sorts of purposes. Most of the church societies in town have at one time or another occupied it.²³

Under the leadership of Rev. Kuenzler the relatively small academy building was soon hard pressed to contain the expanding congregation of the church. One reason for this expansion was the normal growth of the congregation and of the city of waukesha during this period. The expansion was also aided, however, by the enormous influx of German immigrants into Wisconsin between 1880 and 1893. From the onset, the services of the First German Reformed Church of Waukesha were conducted entirely in the German language and the congregation itself was almost entirely German in origin or from German speaking areas of other European countries. As a result, new arrivals from these countries felt at home in the church and they added their numbers to the congregation.

When the First German Reformed Church of Waukesha was founded in 1866 it was under the aegis of the newly formed German Synod of the Northwest. By 1881 the growth within the Synod had been such as to warrant splitting the Synod in two and Waukesha became part of the Wisconsin-based Northwestern Synod.²⁴ Growth was rapid on the local level as well. In 1882 the congregation authorized the construction of a new frame parsonage costing \$1500 which was located just to the west of the academy building. Rev. Kuenzler died in 1890 and he was replaced by Rev. Jacob Herzog. By this time the need for a larger church had become acute and the congregation reluctantly made the decision to tear down the old academy building and construct a new one that could seat 480. It is the new church that is the subject of this nomination. It was built at a cost of \$8000 and dedicated on September 13, 1891.

Rev. Herzog stayed in Waukesha until 1900 at which time he was replaced by Rev. William Diehm who held the position at Waukesha until 1920. During this period

²³ Waukesha Freeman. April 9, 1891, pg. 1. This building was situated on Wisconsin Avenue and was located on the exact same site as the present church. Surviving photographs show it to have been a rectilinear plan two-story building having a tall raised basement story and measuring approximately 45-feet-long by 30-feet-wide. The exterior walls were constructed of small, roughly fashioned limestone blocks and these walls rose up to a hip roof crowned by a cupola.

²⁴ Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin. Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, 1986. Vol. 3, 17-4 (Religion).

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English was introduced both in teaching and in preaching and the church gradually began to move in the direction of bilingual services. Rev. Dienm removed to St. Paul, Minnesota in 1920 and his place was taken by Rev. Henry Settlage, who remained with the church in Waukesha until 1945.

During this time, English became the predominant language and the church grew to be one of the largest and most influential in the South Wisconsin Synod. Because membership had increased from 271 to 716 an annex was added to the church. Dedicated on July 21, 1925, it cost \$36,000.²⁵

The South Wisconsin Synod was the organizational district of the Reformed (German) Church to which the Waukesha church belonged in 1925. In 1934 the Reformed (German) Church merged with the German Evangelical Synod of North America, another denomination of German Calvinistic origin, creating a new denomination known as the Evangelical and Reformed Church.²⁶ As a result, the Waukesha church was renamed the First Evangelical and Reformed Church of Waukesha.

On November 1, 1945, the Rev. Ralph P. Ley came with his wife Ruth and family as our eighth pastor. Church membership continued to grow, reaching 1045 communicant members in the mid 1950s. ... Church services were broadcast the second Sunday of the month and a church monthly entitled the "Trumpet," was issued with news of the congregation.

Soon after Rev. Ley's arrival, it was decided that the church facilities would have to be increased. First, a house was purchased on the corner of Wisconsin and Maple avenues for a parsonage. The old parsonage was remodeled into a parish house, while the old garage was converted into a youth cottage. Several classes of the Sunday school used the parish house and the church was located there.

Plans were then made for an educational building west of the church on the site of the old parsonage.²⁷

The new educational building was built at a cost of \$125,000 and was dedicated September 30, 1956. In the following year, the Evangelical and Reformed Church merged with the Congregational and Christian Churches to form the United Church of Christ and the Waukesha church was renamed the Evangelical and Reformed Church of Christ--the name it bears today. The church continued to grow following the merger and in 1962 the present pastor, Rev. Howard Kusler, became the ninth pastor to serve this historic church.

²⁵ One Hundredth Anniversary: 1866-1966. Evangelical and Reformed United Church of Christ, Waukesha, Wisconsin, 1966, pg. 6.

²⁶ Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin. Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, 1986. Vol. 3, 17-5 (Religion).

²⁷ One Hundredth Anniversary: 1866-1966, op. cit., pg. 7.

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Architecture

The original portion of the First German Reformed Church of Waukesha was built in 1891 to the design of an unknown architect and its architectural significance lies primarily in its being a fine, largely intact example of High Victorian eclectic ecclesiastical design and Waukesha's only church designed in this style.

High Victorian eclectic is just one of the many stylistic designations that have been developed to differentiate between the bewildering profusion of new architectural styles that developed in this country between the end of the Civil War and the turn-of-the-century. This span of years is known as the Late Victorian period and some of the styles that originated within this period, such as the High Victorian Gothic style and the High Victorian Italianate style, are clearly later examples or revival styles which had their origins earlier in the century. Both of these styles have features such as pointed arch windows and overscaled and highly elaborate cornices that make them relatively easy to identify. Unlike other Late Victorian styles, however, examples of High Victorian eclectic are more difficult to characterize since their most distinguishing characteristic is the eclectic use of elements combined from other styles. This almost exuberant borrowing of stylistic elements is also a characteristic of the period as a whole and one that is mentioned in the opening to the High Victorian Gothic and Italianate subsection of the Architectural Styles theme portion of the CRMP.

During the High Victorian period (1865-1900), eclecticism was the order of the day. Features of Gothic Revival, Italianate, Romanesque, or Second Empire were often combined, resulting in picturesque facades.²⁰

Waukesha possesses two fine churches designed in the High Victorian Gothic style: the First Baptist Church (1872), designed by prominent Milwaukee architect Edward Townsend Mix; and St. Joseph's Catholic Church (1888), designed by Chicago architect A. Druiding. Both of these churches were placed on the NR in 1983 and their massive, heavily articulated limestone facades and pointed arch windows mark them as typical examples of the style. The original 1891 portion of the First German Reformed Church, on the other hand, is the work of an unknown architect, and its design appears almost restrained in comparison with its High Victorian Gothic contemporaries. Never-the-less, while its design is not unusually elaborate the First Reformed Church still contains a mixture of features that can only be classified under the somewhat amorphous heading of the High Victorian Eclectic style. All of the windows, doors, and other openings on the nave and steeple of the First German church have semi-circular arches, a characteristic of the Romanesque Revival style. The upper portion of the bell chamber of the steeple, however,

²⁰ Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin. Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, 1986. Vol. 2, 2-10 (Architecture).

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is embellished with four gables having steeply sloping roofs and with corner posts surmounted with exaggerated tapering finials, both elements that are more characteristic of the Gothic Revival style. Combining these elements into a picturesque whole points to the hand of an experienced architect and one who was also able to achieve a satisfactory result within the congregation's rather modest \$8000 budget.

The First German Reformed Church's decision to build a new church in 1891 came at a time when most of the other pioneer churches in Waukesha were also experiencing growth problems and were solving them in a similar fashion. The first congregation to demolish its original church and rebuild was the First Baptist Church (247 Wisconsin Avenue, NRHP-1983) in 1872. They were followed by the congregations of St. Matthias Episcopal Church (111 East Main Street, NRHP-1983), which added a chapel to its 1851 Gothic Revival style church in 1887; St. Joseph's Catholic Church (818 North East Avenue, NRHP-1983), whose original church was almost completely replaced by the much larger present church built between 1888-1890; First Methodist Church (121 Wisconsin Avenue, NRHP-1983), whose earlier churches were destroyed by fire and whose massive Richardsonian Romanesque style was built between 1895 and 1898; and the First Congregational Church (100 East Broadway, nomination pending), who rebuilt and enlarged their 1867 church in 1899.²⁹

By 1920 the need for more space was again being almost universally felt among Waukesha's churches. The first congregation to build was that of St. Joseph's Catholic Church, which constructed a large new school building next door to the existing church in 1917. They were followed by the First Congregational Church and the First Baptist Church, both of which added annexes to their main buildings in 1922, and by the First Methodist Church, which added an annex in 1925.³⁰ The architect for the First Methodist Church annex was H. C. Haeuser, a rising young Milwaukee architect who was also chosen by the congregation of the First German Reformed Church to design their new chapel annex, which was also built in 1925.

Hugo Charles Haeuser (1882-1951) was a native of Milwaukee who began his architectural career as an apprentice draftsman in the Milwaukee architectural firm of Ferry and Clas in 1898. He was subsequently employed in the office of Milwaukee architect Alexander C. Eschweiler where he eventually became chief designer before starting his own practice in 1919.³¹ Like most architects, Haeuser's early practice was a varied one and although his office was in Milwaukee he executed a number of

²⁹ Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff. Spring City's Past: A Thematic History of Waukesha and the Final Report of Waukesha's Intensive Resources Survey. Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1982, pgs. 63-74.

³⁰ Intensive Survey Forms. Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff, 1982. On file with the State Historic Preservation Office located in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

³¹ Milwaukee Journal. October 19, 1951. Obituary of H.C. Haeuser.

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projects in Waukesha in the first decade of his practice. His earliest known project in Waukesha was the design in 1920-1921 of the new National Exchange Bank building (309-311 W. Main Street, NRHP-1983) completed in 1921.³² In the same year Haeuser also produced a design for the remodeling of the Waukesha County District 6 country schoolhouse³³ and in the following year he was chosen to design major additions and alterations for the First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha (809 Martin Street).³⁴ The year 1922 also saw Haeuser designing an 8-room \$50,000 addition to the Fifth Ward School in Waukesha as well but it was the success of his Presbyterian Church project that cemented his reputation in the city.³⁵ Haeuser began to make a specialty of church design around this time and in 1925 he designed additions for both the First Methodist Church in Waukesha and the First German Reformed Church. His design for the Reformed Church in particular was a conscious effort at blending the new with the old within the framework of a modest budget. Using the same materials as were used in the 1891 church, Haeuser fashioned a chapel addition that had just enough of such Tudor Revival style details as stucco and half-timber work panels and corner buttresses to give the chapel a somewhat more modern period revival appearance while still respecting the design and scale of the original work. The result is an exercise in contextually sensitive eclecticism that is completely appropriate for an addition to a design such as the First German Reform Church and as a consequence, the chapel is considered to be a contributing addition to this church.

Haeuser became a well known specialist in church design in the Midwest and at the time of his death in 1951 his obituary noted that he had designed over 300 churches in Wisconsin and elsewhere. This number included his fine small stone church for the First Church of Christ Scientist in Waukesha (1941) located at 600 Maple Avenue around the block from the First German Reformed Church,³⁶ and he was especially noted for his design for Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. At the time of his death Haeuser had three churches under construction including the Hales Corners Lutheran Church, the First Evangelical United Brethren church at North 56th Street and West Capitol Drive in Milwaukee, and his biggest project, Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, located at North 31th Street and West Wisconsin Avenue, also in Milwaukee.

Waukesha's enormous population growth following WWII once again created a need for more space in area churches and the need was especially acute for education and school annexes to house the children of the post war baby boom. Thus, the late

³² Waukesha Freeman. December 30, 1920, pg. 5. Includes a rendering of the bank.

³³ Ibid. October 20, 1921. Includes a rendering of the school.

³⁴ Ibid. March 2, 1922, pg. 7. Includes a rendering of the church.

³⁵ Ibid. March 9, 1922, pg. 1.

³⁶ Loerke, Jean Penn. The Spires of Waukesha: Ten Churches Plus One. May, 1975, pg. 2. A two page annotated listing written by the director of the Waukesha County Museum.

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1950s saw every church along Wisconsin and North East Avenues constructing a school wing to meet this need. The first congregation to do so was St. Matthias in 1951. They were followed by the First German Reform Church in 1956; St. Joseph's in 1958; both First Baptist and First Methodist in 1959; and the First Congregational Church in 1960.³⁷ All of these additions are substantial in size, being at least equal in dimension to the main church building they serve, and each has at least two stories of usable space. Their placement varies, depending on the configuration and size of the lots available to the individual congregation involved, but in every case the addition is placed contiguous to the existing church and it is connected directly to the older structure.

None of these additions are in themselves architecturally significant nor do they pass the 50 year rule for eligibility established by the National Park Service. Consequently, they are all considered to be non-contributing additions to their respective churches and the education wing of the First German Reform Church is no exception. It is clear from viewing the other churches in the area already on the NRHP, however, that the existence of such an addition is not in and of itself detrimental to NR listing.

Like Waukesha's other architecturally significant High Victorian churches, the First German church still retains most of its historic exterior appearance despite the presence of subsequent additions. This significance is further enhanced by the largely intact interior of the church and both the interior and the exterior have benefitted by the excellent maintenance provided by the congregation.

The year 1991 marks the one-hundredth anniversary of the construction of the First German Reformed Church and this building continues to serve its historic function as the house of worship of the descendants of the congregation that built it. The church also serves as both a visual and as an institutional landmark in its neighborhood and its continued presence in this location has been an influential factor in stabilizing the residential area around it.

Archeological Potential

The extent of possible archeological resources on this site is unknown at the present time. It is known that an important earlier building, the Prairieville Academy, occupied this site from 1840-1890, but this building was said to have occupied the exact site of the present church, a contention supported by Sanborn-Perris fire insurance maps of the block.³⁸ Consequently, any trace of the older building was probably destroyed when the newer and much larger basement of the present church was excavated. This and later excavation activities would almost certainly have also destroyed any artifacts associated with pre-European cultures located on this site.

³⁷ Intensive Survey Forms. Howard. Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff, 1982.

³⁸ Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Maps of Waukesha, Wisconsin. Sanborn-Perris Map Company, New York, NY, 1890, 1895, 1929.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Dedication Souvenir. First Reformed Church, Waukesha, Wisconsin, 1925.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

See continuation sheet

- 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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than 1.00 acre

UTM References

A	<u>1/6</u>	<u>3/9/9/3/5/0</u>	<u>4/7/6/2/3/9/0</u>	B	<u>/</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>/</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	D	<u>/</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The land the church and its additions occupies is described as: the N 150' of Lot 2, W 37' of S 150' of Lot 2 & E 23' of Lot 10, Block 5 of Cutler's Addition to the Village of Waukesha. Part of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ & NE $\frac{1}{4}$, Section 3 T6N, R19E.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries enclose that parcel of land which has been historically associated with the First German Reformed Church of Waukesha.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Timothy F. Hegglund/Consultant

For: The City Plan Commission, City of Waukesha

organization 201 Delafield St. Waukesha, WI date January 23, 1990

street & number 1 Langdon Street, Apt. 406 telephone (608) 251-9450

city or town Madison state WI zip code 53703

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Loerke, Jean Penn. The Spires of Waukesha: Ten Churches Plus One. May, 1975.

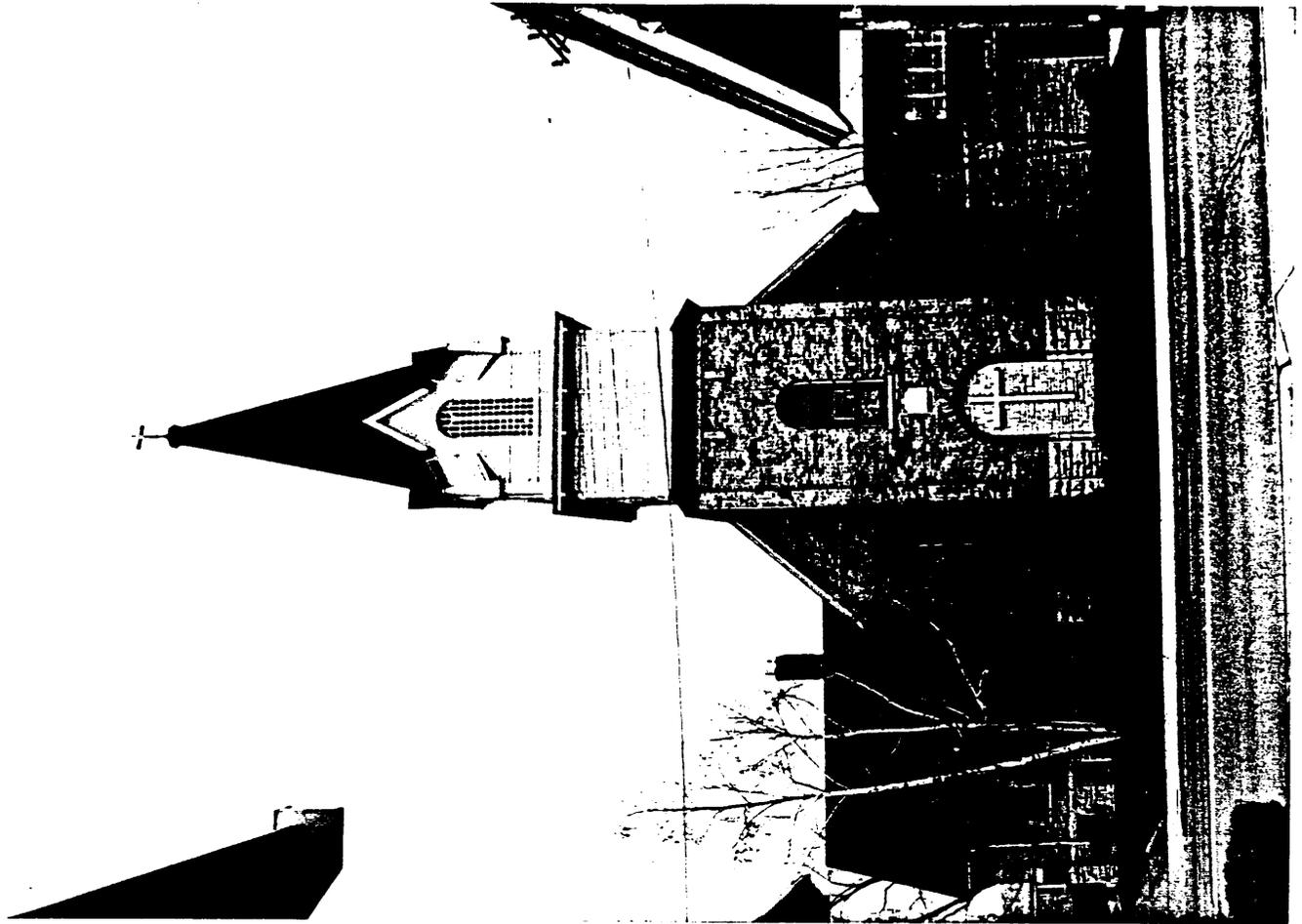
Milwaukee Journal. October 19, 1951.

One Hundredth Anniversary: 1866-1966. Evangelical and Reformed United Church of Christ, Waukesha, Wisconsin, 1966.

Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Maps of Waukesha, Wisconsin. Sanborn-Perris Map Company, New York, NY, 1890, 1895, 1929.

Waukesha Freeman. April 9, 1891; May 14, 1891; January 7, 1892; December 30, 1920; October 20, 1921; March 2, 1922; March 9, 1922; October 12, 1951; October 6, 1956; September 13, 1980.

Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin. Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, 1986.



EXTERIOR, LOOKING SOUTHWEST



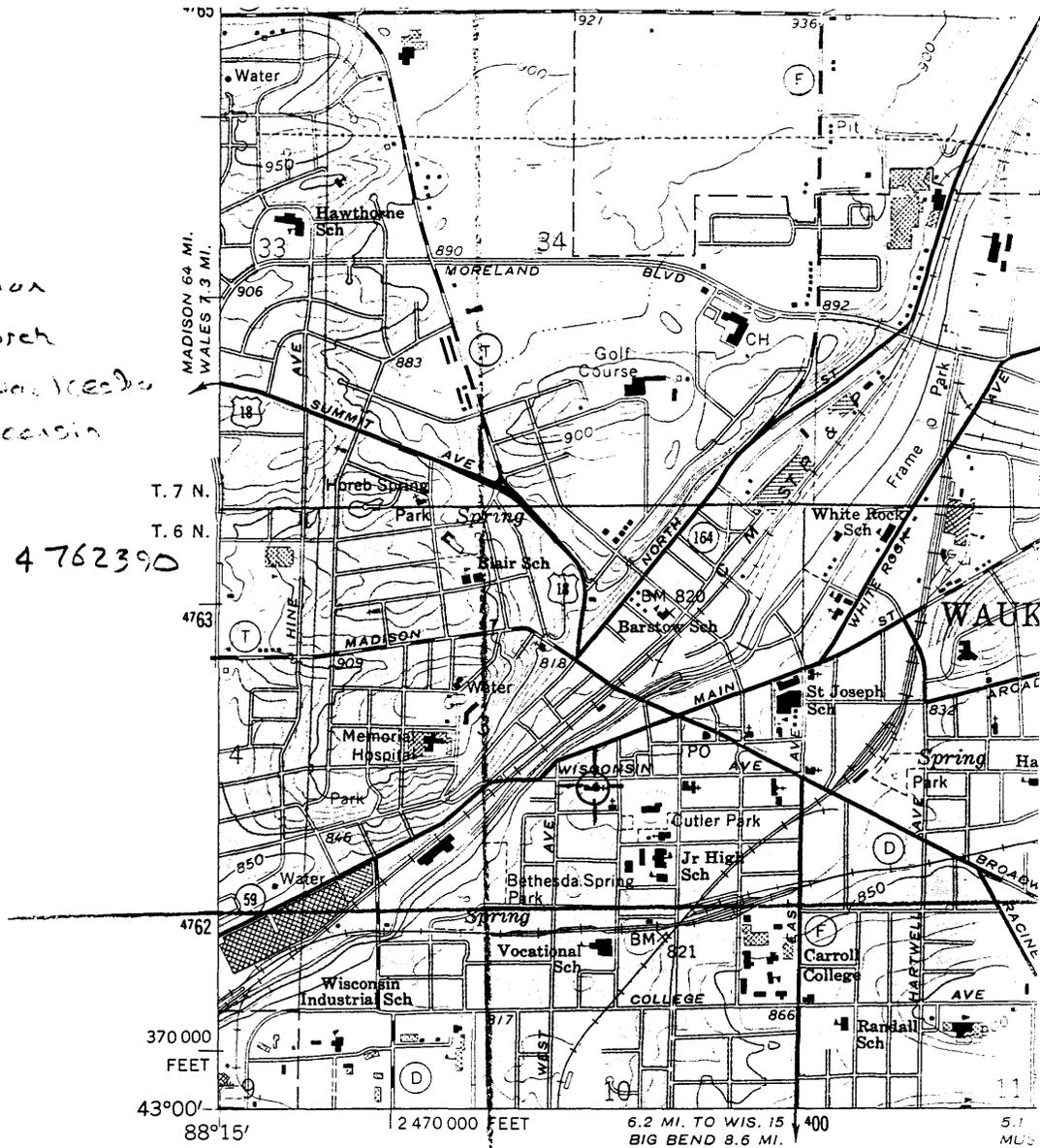


INTERIOR LOOKING SOUTH



First German
Reformed Church
Waukesha, Waukesha
County, Wisconsin

UTM
16 399350 4762390



(GENESEE)
3369 IV NE

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography from aerial photographs by photogrammetric methods and in part by the City of Brookfield. Aerial photographs taken 1954-1955. Field check 1958-1959

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Wisconsin coordinate system, south zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 16, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1971. This information not field checked

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

UTM GRID AND DECLINATION

0°49'
14 MI.