

City, Village or Town:

Milwaukee ✓

County:

Milwaukee ✓

Surveyor:

Resource Design Group

Date:

11/27/82

Street Address:

1702 N. 4th. St. ✓

Legal Description:

ORIGINAL PLAT W OF RIVER IN SEC (20+29) -7-22  
V 1 P3. BLOCK 5 LOTS 3+6 COM W  
PLUS SIDE LOT N OF SW CORNER

Acreage:

LESS THAN  
1/2 ACR

Current Name & Use:

Wisconsin House Tavern

Current Owner:

Joseph C. HIRSHMAN & Helen

Film Roll No.

MI 25

Negative No.

1

Facade Orient.



Current Owner's Address:

1702 N. 4th ST. MILW 53212

Special Features Not Visible In Photographs:

UTM Reference: 16/425 540/4766860 ✓

Interior visited?  Yes  No

Street  
N. Fourth

Number  
1702

Town

Range

Section

Map Name

Historic Brewers' Hill 1982

Map Code

25-1

2 Original Name & Use:  
Baasen House/  
German YMCA - ✓

Source

C

Previous Owners

Dates

Uses

Source

Dates of Construction /Alteration

Source

1874; Period of significance: 1874-1912

A

Architect and/or Builder:

Source

C.A. GOMBERT

A

3 Architectural Significance

- Represents work of a master
- Possesses high artistic values
- Represents a type, period, or method of construction
- Is a visual landmark in the area
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- None

4 Historical Significance

- Assoc. with lives of significant persons
- Assoc. with significant historical events
- Assoc. with development of a locality
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- None

Architectural Statement:

see continuation sheet

Historical Statement:

see continuation sheet

5 Sources of Information (Reference to Above)

A Tax Program

B BUILDING PERMITS

C CITY DIRECTORIES

D

E

F

6 Representation in Previous Surveys

- HABS  NAER  WIHP  NRHP  landmark
- other:

7 Condition

- excellent  good  fair  poor  ruins

8 District:

- pivotal  contributing  non-contributing

initials: RDG

date: 5-1-83

9 Opinion of National Register Eligibility

- eligible  not eligible  unknown

national  state  local initials: RDG

BAASEN HOUSE/HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (Period: 1874-1912)  
(1702 North Fourth Street)

ARCHITECTURAL STATEMENT:

Description: The building is a three-story masonry design with a one-story gable roofed wing extending to the north; this is a 44' x 48' brick veneer addition. The building is executed in Milwaukee "cream city" brick. It is located on the corner of North Fourth and West Walnut Streets, incorporating both flat and round arch window openings. The west front elevation of the three-story portion is a symmetrical arrangement with center entry and flanking linteled windows. Openings are repeated directly above those on the ground reflecting the wider entry opening below. The facade is split horizontally into discernible floors by belt courses extending around the building. A wide overhanging cornice shelters the shorter third floor windows. The entry is projected out from the building and executed in wood, including a flat roof with half-round topped parapet. The one-story portion has tall pairs of double-hung window sashes alternating between pilasters which divide it into four bays. The interior has undergone extensive alteration. A gymnasium addition was constructed in 1889; a third floor was added in 1907 and the gymnasium converted into a hospital. First floor partitions were removed in 1933 to allow for a tavern. The Walnut Street Front had been adapted into storefronts in the 1930's. (1982 photo - 25 - 1).

The Baasen House is an architecturally interesting example of Italian Villa design in the area. Such residences were more associated with the City's Yankee Hill area and the development along West Wisconsin Avenue. Situated prominently at the intersection of two streets (North Fourth and East Walnut) it is one of the few brick residences constructed in Brewers' Hill at that time. Designed by architect, Charles A. Gombert, he was proficient in many styles and is most well known for his Gothic Water Tower (of 1873) on the bluff at the City's east side Sentinel's yearly architectural surveys, Gombert appears among the list of ten most active architects throughout the 1880's.

HISTORICAL STATEMENT:

The Baasen House is significant because it is associated with the social and religious development of Brewers' Hill. The building was constructed in 1874 as a residence for John F. Baasen, a prominent early citizen of Milwaukee. He served as one of the directors of the Milwaukee-Horicon Railroad and the Berlin and Lake Superior Railroad. Baasen was influential in getting the Capuchin Monastery of St. Francis of Assisi established in the area. (See historical statement St. Francis of Assisi Complex). He also was one of three residents who collected signatures and petitioned for the organization of St. Francis parish on the monastery grounds. Baasen died in 1874 at age 80, as one of the oldest settlers in the community. His wife Mary Sibylla Baasen died in 1878 and the house became the property of his daughter Elise. Ms. Baasen remained a member of the St. Francis Parish and contributed to church furnishings and participated in various church organizations. By 1883 Ms. Baasen and her brother Michael A.J. Baasen moved out of the house and into a dwelling immediately to the east.

The headquarters of the German Branch of the YMCA were located in the house from 1888 to 1893. The German Branch was formalized as part of the Young Men's Christian Association in January, 1881 after several years of informal association. Their activities were centered around the old LaCrosse Depot at 340 Third Street until 1883. After several years of fund raising, they were able to acquire the former Baasen House and convert it into their headquarters. In 1889 the single-story wing to the north was added and served as their gymnasium. In 1893, it was decided to discontinue activities out of this

HISTORICAL STATEMENT: (Continued)

location. The German Branch as a whole was discontinued and members were transferred to the central association.

The house was then leased by the YMCA to the House of Mercy for use in its philanthropic activities. From 1905 to 1912 the Mt. Sinai Hospital used the building. Mt. Sinai was organized by prosperous Jewish citizens to serve the needs of the poor Russian and Eastern European Jews who were beginning to settle in large numbers in the area. A 1907 alteration raised the roof and added the present third floor. In 1919 the building became the Wisconsin House Hotel. Through the 1930's the Walnut Street side was occupied by several shops including ladies apparel, restaurant, cigar store and photo studio. It was first used as a tavern in 1933 by owner Joe Kerscher.

Sources: Conard, Howard Louis. History of Milwaukee County. Vol. II. Chicago: American Biographical Publishing Company, No Date.