

PH0662551

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED FEB 10 1978  
DATE ENTERED MAY 23 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  
Joseph B. Kalvelage House  
AND/OR COMMON

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
2432 West Kilbourn Avenue  
CITY, TOWN  
Milwaukee  
STATE  
Wisconsin  
VICINITY OF  
CODE  
055  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Fifth  
COUNTY  
Milwaukee  
CODE  
079

**CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
Gregory K. Filardo  
STREET & NUMBER  
2432 West Kilbourn Avenue  
CITY, TOWN  
Milwaukee  
VICINITY OF  
STATE  
Wisconsin 53233

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
Milwaukee County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER  
901 North Ninth Street  
CITY, TOWN  
Milwaukee  
STATE  
Wisconsin

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
designated Milwaukee City Landmark  
DATE  
May 16, 1975  
DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS  
Milwaukee Landmarks Commission  
CITY, TOWN  
Milwaukee  
STATE  
Wisconsin  
\_FEDERAL \_STATE \_COUNTY  LOCAL

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT                       DETERIORATED  
 GOOD                                 RUINS  
 FAIR                                  UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built in 1896-1898 the Kalvelage house is a two-and-one-half story German Baroque Revival house of tan pressed brick. The facade is formal and symmetrical. Brick laid in a striped pattern marks the first floor walls which are pierced by large elliptically-arched windows trimmed with terra cotta molding and foliated cartouches from which project women's heads. On the second floor level, more carved heads surmount the rectangular sash windows which also are trimmed by terra cotta moldings and rest on sills supported by foliated consoles. Above, a wide cornice with an interlaced scroll frieze forms the base for a curved mansard roof. The original slate shingles on the roof were covered over with asbestos shingles in the late 1960's. Pressed tin lions watch over the house from each corner of the cornice.

The major feature of the facade is a German-parapet-gabled central pavilion and a monumental one-story entrance porch. The porch is decorated with eight half-figure atlantes of terra cotta. Other terra cotta trim on the porch includes carved consoles, garlands, cartouches and dentils decorating the elliptical arches and pilasters. A piazza extends from the porch across the front of the house with a flowing staircase on the southeast corner. A similar staircase once graced the southwest corner, too, but was removed, probably when the large apartment building to the west was built. Wrought iron railings in the form of entwined leaves and grotesque heads finish off the piazza and also trim the porch balcony, the smaller ballroom balcony, and one over the east bay.

The east and west ends of the house are crowned by German parapet gables similar to that of the central pavilion which is trimmed with terra cotta strapwork, garlanded pilasters and a bearded head forming the keystone to the round-arched ballroom window.

Equally elaborate decoration graces the interior of the house. Oak floors are bordered with cherry parquetry, several ceilings are of beamed and paneled oak, and the hardware is elaborately decorated brass. Most of the original combination gas and electric lighting fixtures remain in operable condition. The seven bathrooms retain their marble sinks and pull-chain toilets. Seven fireplaces warmed the house.

The first floor plan is conservatively formal. A large stained-glass window at the landing of the symmetrical divided staircase lights the dark central entrance hall. Carved lions guard the staircase. To the east of the hall are the library, featuring baroque carved oak woodwork and original stretched felt brocade wallpaper, and the music room which has plaster trim in the form of garlands of musical instruments, a scrolled frieze and decorative plaster moldings. To the west is the parlor, the wooden trim of which was destroyed by fire in 1962 (the original fireplace was removed but remains in storage in the basement). Behind the parlor is the dining room decorated with elaborately carved breakfronts. On the north end of the dining room two columns frame a brightly-lit musicians gallery/breakfast nook with its own small fireplace. The service facilities remain in nearly-original condition, with walk-in coolers off the butler's pantry, large brown marble sinks and rust-colored tile wainscoting.

The second floor contains five bedrooms with a dayroom between the two front bedrooms, many built-in closets and large bathrooms. The fireplace in the master bedroom has a split flue to accommodate a round stained-glass window over the hearth. A large ballroom with vaulted ceiling and servants quarters comprise the third floor.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1896-1898<sup>1</sup>

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Otto Strack<sup>2</sup>

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joseph B. Kalvelage house is an excellent example of a late Victorian version of the German Baroque style. The fine and artistic execution of every detail makes the Kalvelage house a showcase of late Victorian decorative arts. Its Germanic design influences are particularly significant in Milwaukee, a city proud of its German heritage and eager to display it in its fine arts.

Kalvelage selected Otto Strack to design his mansion. Strack came to Milwaukee in 1888 from Hamburg, Germany, where he had studied carpentry, masonry and blacksmithing before studying architecture at the Berlin and Vienna polytechnical schools. In Milwaukee Strack became the supervising architect for the Pabst Brewery, designing many of its towered and castellated brewery buildings and taverns, parts of the Pabst mansion and the Pabst Theater, in addition to private commissions for residences, commercial and industrial buildings. The Kalvelage house is the most striking of Strack's residential designs, according to Perrin, who states, "Otto Strack evidently loved baroque architecture, and in the Kalvelage House he indulged his flair for the ornamental in a baroque fantasy of carvings and figures."<sup>3</sup> Strack was an expert in the engineering facets of construction and moved to New York city shortly after he designed the Kalvelage house to pursue a career in civil engineering. However, his strongly Germanic designs made a dynamic impact on Milwaukee. According to his pupils, "much of the old world charm of many older Milwaukee buildings was due to Strack's influence."<sup>4</sup>

The finely executed wrought iron which decorates the exterior of the Kalvelage house was crafted by Cyril Colnik, a young master craftsman who moved to the United States in 1893 to display his work at the German exhibit of the World's Columbian Exposition. His grand awards led to many American commissions so he decided to move to Milwaukee to help "make it as beautiful as Europe made her cities."<sup>5</sup> Examples of his handiwork were soon found "in the palatial homes of most of the millionaires residing [in Milwaukee],"<sup>6</sup> and he gained a national reputation for his work. Zimmermann states that "nowhere in Milwaukee can such a generous display of his work be found" than at the Kalvelage house and that it is "among the finest remaining examples of this craft in the city."<sup>7</sup>

The son of German immigrants, Kalvelage married Miss Dorothea Hoffmann in 1878 and subsequently became the secretary-treasurer of the Hoffmann and Billings Manufacturing Company, which produced plumbing fixtures. It is no doubt because of this that his house has seven bathrooms. Kalvelage built his house on what was then called "Cedar Street." Nearby, German residents had recently built a street of Victorian mansions, which earned the nickname, "Sauerkraut Boulevard." Kalvelage hoped that Cedar would become another street of fine houses. "As fate would have it, however, the street's popularity never met his expectations, and the house stood then as it does today, a castle among cottages."<sup>8</sup> In 1924, the house was sold to the Milwaukee Ku Klux Klan.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Aikens, Andrew J., and Proctor, Lewis A., eds., Men of Progress, Milwaukee: The Evening Wisconsin Co., 1897, pp. 532-533.  
 Bruce, William G., History of Milwaukee City and County, Chicago: 1922, p. 340.  
 Building permits and other records, General Office, Building Inspection Dept., City of Milwaukee.  
 Crawford, Susan, "Home's His Castle: Amateur Craftsman Restoring Mansion," Milwaukee Journal, July 26, 1977.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.172 acres  
 UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>1,6</u>	<u>4,2,3,1,1,0</u>	<u>4,7,6,5,6,7,0</u>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

City lot 27 and 23.34' of lot 26 in block 269, Hawley's Subdivision.

## LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Gregory K. Filardo, owner

ORGANIZATION

DATE

November 15, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

2432 West Kilbourn Avenue

414-931-0982

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Milwaukee

Wisconsin 53233

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Richard Henry*

TITLE Director

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE

2/3/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

*Walter Cole*  
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

REGISTER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

5-23-78

DATE

5-12-78

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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See  
CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM NUMBER below PAGE 1

Item 6:

Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places  
1973  
State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Madison

State

Wisconsin 53706

Item 7:

The house stands many feet above street level on a high terrace, enhancing its majestic appearance in a lower middle class downtown neighborhood of late nineteenth century two-flats and later apartment buildings.

Item 8:

In 1926, it became a hospital and home for the aged. In 1947, it was converted into a rooming house. Recently it was bought by one of the roomers to save the interior trim from being stripped and sold to antique shops.

Despite its unusual history, the high cost of its maintenance, and its location in an unprestigious neighborhood in a city not particularly attuned to preservation, the splendor of the Kalvelage house has almost miraculously been preserved.

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<sup>1</sup>General Office, Building Inspection Department, City of Milwaukee.

<sup>2</sup>Andrew J. Aikens and Lewis A. Proctor, ed., Men of Progress, p. 532.

<sup>3</sup>Richard W. E. Perrin, Milwaukee Landmarks, p. 80.

<sup>4</sup>"Noted Builder, Strack, Dead," Milwaukee Journal, October 12, 1935.

<sup>5</sup>Cyril Colnik, quoted in John Gregory, History Of Milwaukee, p. 103.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>7</sup>Henry Russell Zimmermann, "Showpiece Mansion on Cedar Street Now Shaded by Patina of Time," Milwaukee Journal, May 28, 1967; and, Zimmermann, The Heritage Guidebook, p. 141.

<sup>8</sup>Zimmermann, "Showpiece."

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CONTINUATION SHEET See  
ITEM NUMBER below PAGE 2

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Item 9:

Gregory, John G., History of Milwaukee, Milwaukee: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1931, v. 4, pp. 102-104.

Milwaukee City Directories.

"Noted Builder, Strack, Dead," Milwaukee Journal, October 12, 1935.

Perrin, Richard W. E., Milwaukee Landmarks, Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Museum, 1968, pp. 80-81.

Records of Ownership, Records and Research, Milwaukee.

Zimmermann, Henry Russell, The Heritage Guidebook: Landmarks and Historical Sites in Southeastern Wisconsin, Milwaukee: Heritage Banks, 1976.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Showpiece Mansion on Cedar St. Now Shaded by Patina of Time," Milwaukee Journal, May 28, 1967.

Item 11:

Katherine E. Hundt, Architectural Historian  
State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
816 State Street  
Madison

January 6, 1977  
608/262-2970  
Wisconsin 53706