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United States Department of Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Public Service Building

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 231 West Michigan Street N/A not for publication

city or town Milwaukee N/A vicinity

state Wisconsin code WI county Milwaukee code 079 zip code 53201

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Handwritten Signature]

4/13/98

Signature of certifying official/Title
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer-WI

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Public Service Building

Milwaukee Co.

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Erson A. Beall

5-20-98

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as
as apply)

private

public-local

public-State

public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

building(s)

district

structure

site

object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources
in the count)

contributing noncontributing

1 0 buildings

 sites

 structures

 objects

1 0 total

Name of related multiple property listing:
(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property
listing.)

None

**Number of contributing resources
is previously listed in the National Register**

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/Business

TRANSPORTATION/Rail-Related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/Business

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19 & 20 Century Revivals/Beaux Arts

Late 19 & 20 Century Revivals/ Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other Limestone

Narrative Description

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

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 1

Public Service Building
Milwaukee Co., WI

Narrative Description

(Describe present and historic physical appearance.)

The Public Service Building serves as the headquarters of the Wisconsin Energy Corporation, owner of the Wisconsin Electric Power Company and associated businesses. It is located on the south side of W. Michigan Street between N. Second and N. Third Streets. Constructed in the early twentieth century with elements of the Beaux Arts and Neo-Classical styles, the Public Service Building opened on January 1, 1905 as the main terminal of The Milwaukee Electric Railway and Light Co. (TMER&L), a predecessor of the present-day Wisconsin Energy Corporation. The remainder of the building was completed and opened in 1906.

The building is rectangular in plan, covering an entire city block. The original portion of the building is four stories in height. A fifth floor added in 1954 is currently being removed as part of a historic tax credit restoration/rehabilitation project. The building is constructed of tan brick with limestone ornamentation on a structural steel support system. The roof is flat.

The architectural style and ornamentation extends around all four sides of the building as their are four street facades. Common elements delineate portions of the composition on each level. The building rises from a limestone-faced, poured concrete foundation. The dressed limestone course extends around the entire building. The first floor is covered with dressed limestone blocks topped with a limestone beltcourse which also extends around the entire structure. The second and third floors are faced with tan brick and separated from the fourth floor by a second dressed limestone course. The fourth floor has the same brick face and is topped by a limestone cornice line which is denticulated along the western parts of the building which extends beyond the limits of the 1950's fifth floor addition.

In addition to these common features, each floor has its own level and type of ornamentation. The front elevation of the building is on W. Michigan Street and arranged symmetrically around a slightly projected two-story entrance pavilion. There are also four story projecting pavilions on each corner. The central pavilion on the front elevation features a two-story main entry which is inset from the street. The entry features two sets of double doors separated by a copper column with acanthus leaf relief work.

The transom area above each door consists of nine sets of windows, each of which has four panes of glass with copper mullions featuring a rose motif in the center of each set. A copper lintel above the transom features the words "Public Service Building". A limestone lintel separates the lower transom

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area from a large rounded transom with a similar pattern of windows and an operating clock set in the center of the lintel. A limestone arch surrounds the transom. There are two carved medallions on the limestone face; one depicts the horse powered traction when the company was founded in 1890 and the other the electrified street railway of 1905 when the terminal opened. A denticulated cornice above the transom supports a limestone balustrade which extends across the central pavilion. Two single doors flank the main entry and two windows flank the round transom on the second floor. All of these openings have carved limestone keystones over their centers. Third floor windows are slightly narrower with stone lintels. The three windows over the center of the pavilion are surrounded by stone while those on the fourth floor are not but have raised brick rectangles between them while the two flanking windows have carved columns of animal heads on either side.

On either side of the entry pavilion are sections which feature a series of five display windows on the ground floor; six pairs of windows with limestone lintels and keystones on the second and third floors; and six pairs of smaller windows with limestone lintels and keystones on the fourth floor.

The east and west ends of the front elevation project from the main face plane. Both have the same architectural features. The pavilions have three windows on each floor. The ground floor acts as the base for four limestone columns which rise two stories to an entablature supporting an ornate iron railing in front of the three windows on that level. Each of these windows has a carved stone surround with a carved limestone keystone. The carved animal head motif described earlier is found between each window and flanking the entire composition.

The east and west elevations of the building are identical. Both have projected end pavilions with features identical to those described in the preceding paragraph. Between each of the ground floor display windows are brass plaques, each with a raised wreath motif in the center. The remainder of these elevations feature two sections of three groups of three windows each. The ground floor features three large areas which were formerly trolley entrances into the terminal. Above each trolley entrance is a group of three windows with stone lintels like those found on the same floor of the front elevation. A set of inset stone quoins delineate a break between these sections. The rear section is identical to the areas just described.

The rear elevation features two main sections that are identical except for the stone cornice line which remains on the western half of the building. Each section consists of a column of inset quoins on the corner and a second set at the edge of the fenestrated area. There are five windows on each of the upper floors which alternate between wider and narrower windows. This pattern is repeated twice

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on each section. Between the two sections is an infilled former light well. The ground floor has a series of inset access doors.

A modern skywalk, constructed in 1986, breaks through this elevation on the second floor to connect the Public Service Building with a recent Wisconsin Electric Power Company office building to the south.

A State Historical Society of Wisconsin Historic Marker is attached to the front of the building citing its role as the Milwaukee Interurban Terminal from 1905 to 1951. A second plaque commemorates the building as the birthplace of the Wisconsin Department of the American Legion in 1919.

The exterior of the building retains most of its original architectural character; however, some changes have been made over time. Most notable was the addition of a partial fifth floor in 1954, which resulted in the removal of part of the decorative cornice. The fifth floor addition has since been removed as part of the current tax credit project. The building was also originally constructed with three light wells on the south (rear) elevation. These have subsequently been filled in with additional office areas, as has the large portion of the first floor originally used as a trolley station. All but one of the twelve (six on the east and six on the west) trolley bays were walled off in 1954 and converted to office areas. This was used as a small interior executive parking area until 1995 when the area was incorporated into renovated interior office spaces. Finally, the company replaced the original double-hung windows with single fixed pane windows in 1988, although none of the window openings on the building have been changed.

The building is located on W. Michigan Street which is one block south of Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee's traditional retail and office core. Due to redevelopment activities in the area, the Public Service Building is now in an area of the City characterized by relatively new office developments and parking structures. To the immediate north across Michigan Street is a parking structure associated with the Grand Avenue retail mall. To the south is a new Wisconsin Electric office building. An open parking lot to the east and Zeidler Park, a small one square block area, to the west give the area a sense of open space. The Public Service Building would have to be considered the most prominent building in the area.

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Public Service Building
Milwaukee Co., WI

Prominent Interior Spaces

The Public Service Building was designed to make a grand statement about the company it housed. Therefore, it stands to reason that some of the interior spaces also make that statement. Although many changes have been made over the years to accommodate the needs of the utility company, there are still several spaces worth noting in the building. The three most noteworthy are the lobby area on the first and second floors, the auditorium on the second floor, and the Chairman's suite including the Board Room on the fourth floor.

The lobby area is two stories in height and clad in marble. Marble columns with simple capitals and square, marble clad piers support the second floor, which extends around the perimeter of the lobby area. Marble columns also support the second floor ceiling, some of which still has the original coffered ceiling with ornamental plaster molding. A marble balustrade surrounds the lobby at the second floor level. The north wall of the lobby is dominated by large transom windows described earlier in this section. There is a marble arch with a carved keystone over the upper window and the area which corresponds with the clock face on the exterior which contains a copper relief of a beehive with bees buzzing about it. This was apparently intended as a symbol to describe the level of activity in the building and the company.

The south wall of the lobby is dominated by a marble staircase with a marble balustrade. The staircase proceeds up to a landing and then breaks to both east and west to proceed to the second floor. The mid-floor landing features an oval stained glass skylight manufactured by the Tiffany Company in New York and lit by interior electric light. Marble arches frame the entry to the staircase off the landing. The staircase to the third floor follows the same pattern except it is open to the second floor hallway area. Hallways extend to the rest of the building to the east and west.

The second interior space worth noting is the Auditorium, located on the second floor behind the main staircase. This space is original to the building and was intended for use as a public auditorium when the upper floors of the building were opened in 1906, as well as for company events. The Auditorium space has remained intact; however, the Company completely remodeled the facility in 1941 in the Modern style popular at the time. The result is a remarkable room that has been preserved in a relatively rare style in the Milwaukee area. As the photographs for the building show, the room features the curved surfaces identified with that style at doorways, corners and in the circular light and

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ventilator structures in the ceiling. The lower eight feet of wall are covered in wood paneling while the upper sections are plaster.

When the room was remodeled, the larger windows into the original light wells were removed (as were the light wells). A lighting system which state-of-the-art for its era was installed as an example of the wonders of electricity and to exhibit the types of effects modern lighting could create. This system is still intact and operable. The Auditorium is currently is mostly used for training and other Company functions.

A related area is found in the lobby to the Auditorium where the original ticket booth window remains intact. Across the lobby from the ticket booth is the women's restroom and lounge which was remodeled at the same time as the Auditorium. These rooms are also largely intact and reflect the Moderne style of design.

The last interior space of note is the Chairman's Suite and the Board Room on the northwest corner of the fourth floor of the building. This suite has been maintained close to its original grandeur. The suite consists of an entry hallway; secretary's office; Chairman's office, private office, and bath; and the Board Room. Of these, only the Board Room has undergone extensive changes. Several years ago, the room was subdivided into modern offices and all the original features covered; however, that remodeling was undone in 1989 and the room restored to its original condition.

The rooms in the Chairman's suite are all paneled in Philippine mahogany and all the floors are parquet with a different inlaid pattern in each room. Original hardware features a fist clenching lightning bolts. Of note in the secretary's office is a safe with a paneled wood door and a carved, operating wall clock above. The suite features a large fireplace in the Chairman's office with mahogany pillars on either side.

The lavatory in the Chairman's office is also worth noting. It is paneled in marble with terra cotta ornamentation and features another Tiffany stained glass oval skylight similar to one in the Chairman's outer waiting room and on the main staircase on the first floor.

The Board Room is entered from either an outer hallway or the Chairman's office. The lower half of the room is paneled in Philippine and the upper half plastered. A large fireplace is centered at one end of the room flanked by bookcases with leaded glass doors. Large Japanese urns flank the marble hearth. The room also features a coffered ceiling with ornate plaster work.

Public Service Building
Name of Property

Milwaukee Co.
County and State

Wisconsin

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Transportation

Period of Significance

1902-1946

Significant Dates

1902-06

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Esser, Herman J.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

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Section 8 Page 1

Public Service Building
Milwaukee Co., WI

Narrative Statement of Significance

(State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas of Periods of Significance noted Above).

The Public Service Building is considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, Transportation, for its role as a regional center for transit development in southeastern Wisconsin and under Criteria C, Architecture, as an excellent example of an early twentieth century office building designed with elements of the Neo-Classical and Beaux Arts styles. The intact nature of this building may make it the best remaining example of this style and type of building in the community.

Historic Context

The Public Service Building (known colloquially as the PSB) was constructed over the period 1902 to 1906 as the grand headquarters of The Milwaukee Electric Railway and Light Company (TMER&L) and of its dynamic second President, James I. Beggs. (Gurda, p.64) The architectural statement made in the building was a very personal reflection of Beggs' vision for the Company at that time and its design included many of his personal touches.

The historical context within which the PSB was constructed dates back to the Civil War era and the beginnings of transit in the City of Milwaukee. The first street railway systems were horsedrawn and covered relatively limited areas in much smaller communities. George Walker, founder of the Walker's Point section of Milwaukee, started the first street railway line in 1859. Other ventures opened other routes and there was a great deal of competition between promoters. By 1880, three companies had emerged, each with a defined territory, which represented about thirty miles of track. (Gurda, p.19)

During the 1880's, competition continued to grow between street railway companies. At the same time efforts were being made to develop electric power utilities in the City, generally to provide street illumination. It was, perhaps, inevitable that these two efforts should become linked. The first small electric power plants were built in the City in the mid-1880's. In 1886, the Badger Illuminating Company built the Commerce Street plant to provide electric power for a street lighting system. The Edison Electric Illuminating Company built another street lighting power plant on the Milwaukee River north of Wells Street in 1890. (Gurda, p.16)

The late 1880's are characterized as the end of an era of tight political control. A reform Common Council was elected in 1890 which granted franchises liberally. This allowed a number of business consolidations to take place. In the mid-1880's, railroad financier Henry Villard entered into partnership with a local businessman, Henry Payne, to develop and control the power and traction utilities in Milwaukee. In 1888, these two bought the largest of the existing traction companies, the Milwaukee City Railway. In 1889, they formed the Edison Electric Illuminating Company mentioned above. In the spring of 1890, a Pittsburgh consortium purchased the Cream City Railroad and Henry Payne was named its President. (Gurda, pp.33-4) This group actually represented Villard money.

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Section 8 Page 2

Public Service Building
Milwaukee Co., WI

In June of 1890, Villard chartered the North American Company as a holding company for the two traction companies and the electric power company. During the same time, he created the Edison General Electric Company of which he became President. Villard had a vision of controlling electric power production for a large part of the country, a plan not shared by Thomas Edison and the other investors in General Electric. Therefore, Villard's North American Company could serve the power generation industry. He selected Milwaukee as the first City in which he would try to create a power and traction monopoly. Later that year, financial reverses stripped North American of most of its assets; Villard was left with two power stations, Cincinnati and Milwaukee. (Gurda, p.36) Villard put his considerable remaining assets into consolidating transit and lighting services in Milwaukee. He formed the Milwaukee Street Railway Company in December 1890 which immediately acquired his two existing traction companies and the Edison Illuminating operation. He also purchased Badger Illuminating Company and the Milwaukee Electric Light Company as well as several other, smaller transit lines. By the end of 1891, the pieces were coming into place for the creation of a transit and electric power monopoly in Milwaukee. (Gurda, p.37)

Milwaukee Street Railway grew quickly in the first years of the 1890's. The consolidation of the electric power companies gave Milwaukee the first unified electric power utility in the nation. By the end of 1892, over 150 miles of electric railway served the City and the extension of transit was responsible for the development of new suburban areas. However, the national Panic of 1893 had a major impact on the company. By 1895, the company had defaulted on all of its bonds and the North American Company put the utility into receivership. (Gurda, p.45)

In January 1896, the North American Company created The Milwaukee Electric Railway and Light Company (TMER&L) out of the old Milwaukee Street Railway Company. The new venture was capitalized with \$14 million and became its expansion program again. It is this corporate entity that built the Public Service Building and, in 1938, changed its name to the Wisconsin Electric Power Company.

John I. Beggs, the man responsible for the construction of the PSB, joined TMER&L in 1896 and replaced Payne as President of the Milwaukee operation in 1897. Beggs was responsible for the creation of the Milwaukee Light, Heat and Traction Company (MLH&T) in December 1896. This company provided the same services TMER&L did outside Milwaukee County, building a system known as the "interurban" which peaked with 232 miles of track in 1909. Together, these two companies began to build a transit and electric power network that, at its height, would serve an area of 12,000 square miles in southeastern Wisconsin. (Gurda, p.57)

TMER&L continued to operate as the only Milwaukee transit firm through the remainder of its life. Throughout the first several decades of this century, service continued to expand in the metropolitan area but the peak expansion for the interurban system was reached by 1909. Interurban service continued into the 1950's but links in the network were slowly cut back as automobile use grew.

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Public Service Building
Milwaukee Co., WI

In the meantime, the electric power generation portion of the business continued to grow as TMER&L's service area grew. When the company was founded, power generation was seen as the means to power the transit and illuminate streets. By the early twentieth century, electric service was being delivered to every home, office, store and factory. As the metropolitan community grew, the demand for power grew also.

By 1938, the respective roles of the two utilities had switched. Under Beggs leadership, the company had concentrated on transit growth; however, after his retirement in 1911, his successors correctly saw the importance of electric power and reversed that policy. In 1938, in a major financial restructuring of the firm, TMER&L became Wisconsin Electric Power Company (WEPCO) and the transit operation became a wholly-owned subsidiary called the Milwaukee Electric Railway & Transport Company. The name change also signified the beginning of a trend to switch over to buses which would eventually replace the electric trolley. ("Outlet", 1971)

In the 1940's, WEPCO became an independent corporation as federal regulations caused the North American Company to divest its holdings. Wisconsin Electric sold off its transit system to the Milwaukee and Suburban Transport Company in 1952. The transit system is currently operated by MCTS, a private corporation, under franchise to Milwaukee County. Wisconsin Electric Power Company remains as the primary power utility in southeastern Wisconsin. In 1987, Wisconsin Electric formed a new holding company, the Wisconsin Energy Corporation, which allowed it to diversify into the areas of economic development and technology development. Wisconsin Energy and Northern States Power Company recently announced a merger which is still in progress. The PSB continues to serve as the headquarters for Wisconsin Energy and is presently undergoing a major restoration/renovation project employing the Historic Preservation Tax Credits.

Significance

The Public Service Building was conceived by John I. Beggs as the center of the transportation network he was developing in southeastern Wisconsin. It remains today as one of the last, and certainly most prominent, reminders of that system. As such, it is considered eligible for listing in the NRHP for its association with the development of the transportation system in southeastern Wisconsin. It is also considered eligible under Criteria C, Architecture, for its design, as an excellent, and increasingly rare, example of an early twentieth century multiple use commercial facility, including some prominent interior spaces which have remained intact.

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Public Service Building
Milwaukee Co., WI

Today the Public Service Building functions entirely as an office building serving the needs of WEPCO and the other subsidiaries of Wisconsin Energy Corporation. However, the building, as designed by architect Herman J. Esser, was originally intended as a multiple use facility with transportation, commercial, office, industrial and power generation functions. This unusual combination of activities was the cause of an article on the building in the April 1908 edition of Architectural Record. The lead paragraph of that article stated:

“The Public Service Building of the Milwaukee Electric Railway and Light Company has a peculiar interest because of the many different purposes to which it is put. Below its roof is conducted every kind of business directly or remotely involved by the work of a large public service corporation.”

Later, the article claims that “under its roof are carried on a greater variety of occupations than in any other building in the country.”

Beggs believed that the PSB should be the central focus of all parts of TMER&L's business. Plans for the building published in the July 14, 1906 edition of the Street Railway Journal illustrate the variety of uses in the building. A power plant was located in the basement which not only generated electrical power for the building and neighboring areas but also provided steam heat for part of the downtown and, as such, was on of the first cogeneration plants in the area.

The first floor functioned as the central terminal for the TMER&L transit system. As the building was located next to the Union Station, the PSB functioned as a major transportation transfer point for travelers entering or leaving the region. Although the six large train bays have been converted to office space, their location is still very apparent on the exterior of the building. The front portion of the first floor included a waiting room and ticket booth to the west of the main entrance. An electrical appliance store was located in the northeast corner of the building and the space at the northwest corner was also designed as a retail outlet. (SRJ, p.62).

The second floor featured a variety of uses. The accounting and auditing offices of the Company were located on this floor. However, the largest part of the floor was dedicated to employee facilities including the Trainmen's Room which was a break area for operators whose trains were in the station between runs. It also included locker room, lavatories, and a food service. The Company also provided a suite of rooms for off-duty employees which included a library, billiard room, barber shop and club room. A bowling alley was located on the west side of the building. (SRJ, p.62)

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Public Service Building
Milwaukee Co., WI

In addition to these business and personnel functions, the ornate PSB auditorium was also located on this floor. Originally decorated in the style of the building, the auditorium was remodeled in 1941, as discussed above. The auditorium was designed for two distinct functions. Although used as a Company facility, the auditorium was also intended for public use and one article referred to it as a convention facility for the City. (Architectural Record, 1908) This space was used extensively by the community in the first several decades after the building opened. A plaque on the exterior of the building notes that the Department of Wisconsin of the American Legion was formed in the auditorium in 1919.

The third floor of the building was used as a manufacturing facility to construct and test electrical equipment used by the Company. The legal and claims departments were also located on this floor as was a full-service medical department which included an operating room. The fourth floor was largely vacant when the building opened except for the President's suite and the boardroom, the purchasing department and a printing plant. (SJR, p.63) It was anticipated that additional TMER&L offices would be located in this space as the Company grew. One article of the time also noted that the structural system in the building was such that an additional four stories could be added if the success of the business warranted it (Architectural Record, 1908). A partial fifth floor, since removed, was constructed in the 1950's.

In addition to the uses originally in the building, the richness of its architectural character also needs to be noted. This building remains as an excellent example of an early twentieth century corporate headquarters which has largely retained its architectural integrity. Although many of the office areas have been remodeled over the years, several key interior spaces retain their architectural significance including the lobby and President's (now Chairman's) suite from the period of construction, and the auditorium with its rare 1941 Moderne interpretation.

Herman Esser

Herman Esser was born in 1865 in Madison, Wisconsin. After graduating from Cornell University, Esser worked for several years for architectural firms in New York. Circa 1888, he established himself as an architect in Milwaukee. From 1891 to 1898 Esser practiced with veteran Milwaukee architect Henry C. Koch. Dating from their partnership are a number of prominent Milwaukee buildings, including the Milwaukee City Hall (1893, NRHP), the Pfister Hotel (1893), the Roman Catholic Church of the Gesu (1892, Esser also designed the 1902 alterations to the NR listed building), and the Milwaukee Protestant Home for the Aged (1892). Like the majority of architects of

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Public Service Building
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his day, Esser designed buildings in a variety of styles. A number of his works are listed on the National Register. Individually listed is the 1900 Georgian Revival style Oneida Street Power Station. Included as contributing resources in Milwaukee historic districts are the 1915 Craftsman style William Hanson House, the 1899 Neo-Classical Wisconsin Telephone Company First Branch Telephone Exchange, and the 1912 Neo-Classical style Pfister and Vogel Leather Company Office. Esser registered as an architect with the State Wisconsin in 1917. He retired from practice in the 1930s. Esser died on 17 January 1957 at the age of 91.

Architecture

The Public Service Building was designed in a combination of the Beaux-Arts and the Neo-Classical Revival styles. Certain elements of the composition are found in both of these styles, which were concurrently popular and drawn from classical precedents. These basic elements include a five-part composition, absolute symmetry of the façade, and a corniced roofline. The overall massing of the Public Service Building, the use of single Ionic pilasters, and the unadorned roofline are drawn from the Neo-Classical Revival. Other features depart from the strict classical application found in the Neo-Classical Revival. In this example, Esser has exaggerated certain architectural members, such as the keystones, corbels, and quoins. Esser also employed elements of the Beaux-Arts to add visual interest to the broad expanses of wall of the Public Service Building. These elements include the use of a variety of materials and the application of decorative features, such as the lions' heads with garlands found on the upper story. Also drawn from the Beaux-Arts is the arched entry pavilion, which projects from the wall plane and has its own cornice and balustraded parapet. The interior of the building is richly decorated with stained glass, marble, and classical detailing. The intact nature of both the interior and of the exterior of the building renders it a good example of the opulence of material and ornamentation found in the larger corporate headquarters and major public and private buildings at the turn of the century.

Public Service Building Milwaukee Co. wisconsin
 Name of Property County and State

9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less Than One Acre

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

1	<u>1/6</u>	<u>4/2/5/5/0/0</u>	<u>4/7/6/5/1/5/0</u>	3	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Charles W. Caesar, AICP/Historian	date	9/19/96
organization	HNTB	telephone	414-359-2300
street & number	11270 West Park Place	zip code	53224
city or town	Milwaukee	state	Wisconsin

**United States Department of the Interior
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9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

"The Building of the Public Service Corporation of Milwaukee." Architectural Record, April 1908.

Gurda, John, "100th Anniversary History of Wisconsin Electric Power Company," unpub. mss., October 1994.

"H.J. Esser, an Architect, Dies at Home." Milwaukee Journal, 17 January 1957.

"Herman Esser, Architect, Dies." Milwaukee Sentinel, 18 January 1957.

"The New Public Service Building of the Milwaukee Electric Railway and Light Company." Street Railway Journal, Vol. XXVIII, July 14, 1906, pp. 58-67.

"75 Years of Existing Service." The Outlet, Wisconsin Electric Power Company, Jan. - Feb. 1971, pp. 2-16.

Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places Inventory Form.

Wisconsin Electric Power Company Records.

Wyatt, Barbara L., ed. Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin. Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.

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National Park Service**

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated area corresponds with the property lines of 231 West Michigan Street in the City of Milwaukee. This is a full City block bounded by W. Michigan Street on the north, Electric Street on the south, N. 2nd Street on the east and N. 3rd Street on the west.

Boundary Justification

This boundary encompasses the Public Service Building proper and is the parcel historically associated with the building.

Public Service Building

Milwaukee Co.

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title	Wisconsin Energy Corporation		
organization	231 W. Michigan Street	date	9/10/96
street&number	231 West Michigan Street	telephone	414-221-2949
city or town	Milwaukee	state	Wisconsin
		zip code	53201

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.