

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Wilson House (Kemper Hall)

and/or common The Manor House (preferred)

**2. Location**

street & number 6536 Third Avenue not for publication

city, town Kenosha vicinity of congressional district First

state Wisconsin code 55 county Kenosha code 059

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Clifton E. Peterson, M.D.

street & number 1400 75th Street

city, town Kenosha vicinity of state Wisconsin 53140

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kenosha County Courthouse

street & number 912 56th Street

city, town Kenosha state Wisconsin 53140

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1971  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Manor House is a large, two-story-plus-attic brick residence with projecting hipped-roof end pavilions; the resulting U-shaped design includes a walled terrace (continuous with the full stone basement around the building) in the front, facing Kemper Hall and Lake Michigan to the east. The shingled gable roof covering the north-south expanse of the house between the pavilions contains two windowed shed dormers flanking a large gable dormer; an enclosed balcony at the top of a tower-like stone frontispiece in the center of the front facade is reached through a door in the dormer. Crests emblazon the tower above triple windows marking the master bedroom on the second story. A single large oak door provides the main entrance to the house; sidelights and an overlight are enclosed by a shouldered segmental canopy over the door. Simple stone arches echo the form of the center canopy over casement windows to either side. All other openings, symmetrically disposed to either side of the center (singly, in pairs, or tripled) are rectangular, leaded-glass sash with decorated stone lugsills. A small, buttressed projecting wing on the north end of the rear facade contains a garage with servants' quarters overhead. Landscaping to the rear includes a formal garden, and brick garden pavilion with pergolas to the sides.

Among the choice fittings of the interior are the slate-floored entry and hall, with groin-vaulted ceiling set with painted and gilded ornamental panels; the linenfold panelling, denticulated moldings, and polished-marble mantles in the dining room, parlor, and library; turned wood and ceramic tile mantles and full-height built-in closets and shelving in the second floor bedrooms; the squash court in the basement; and the attic ballroom with its decoratively-painted trussed ceiling.

Originally built for James T. Wilson, secretary, vice-president, and eventual chairman of the board of the Nash Motor Company of Racine, the Manor House has most recently been used again as a private residence. In the years between the death of Wilson and the closing of Kemper Hall in 1975, the house served as classroom space and residence of the headmaster and assistant headmaster. Like Wilson, who donated the house to the school, the present owner intends to donate the building to the present Kemper Center, contingent upon its inclusion in the National Register.

Since the present owner acquired the Manor House, all rehabilitative efforts have been undertaken only with the approval of Kemper School officials or directors of the present Kemper Center, Inc. All work has served only to restore the dignity and quality of the original Wilson House.

## 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" 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** 1926<sup>1</sup> **Builder/Architect** Pond & Pond, Chicago<sup>2</sup>

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Imposingly located opposite the campus of former female Episcopal Seminary Kemper Hall (NRHP 1976) on Third Avenue, the Manor House is the largest and most stately of a handful of Period-era twentieth-century manor houses in Kenosha. The one-time residence of the headmaster and the assistant headmaster of Kemper Hall, the house was commissioned by James T. Wilson, secretary, vice president, and eventual chairman of the board of the Nash Motor Company of Racine. Designed by well-known Chicago architects Pond & Pond of Chicago, the villa has a Renaissance "baronial" air not particular to any one national source. Features like the trussed-ceiling in the ballroom, servants' quarters over the garage, formal garden to the rear, and the quality of dressed-stone frontispiece and window surrounds are exceptional in an urban residence of the day. The dignity and quietude of the design, and specific elements of the decoration like the plaster ribbed barrel-vaulted ceiling in the library and linenfold panelling in the dining room, are reminiscent of Pond & Pond's ecclesiastical works.

Joining into partnership in 1886, brothers Irving K. and Allen B. Pond were both born and educated in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The elder Irving (1857–1939) earned a degree in Civil Engineering and worked in the Chicago offices of Mayor Jenny and S. S. Berman, while the younger Allen (1858–1929) was led into social/humanitarian interests as a result of assisting his father as warden of the State Prison in Jackson, Michigan. The two established a reputation in Chicago for their designs for Jane Adams's Hull House buildings (1895–1913), the City Club (1910–11), and the Ravenswood Baptist and Hyde Park Episcopal (1915) Churches. With plans completed in 1925, the Manor House would have been one of the last collaborative designs of the firm, which was dissolved in 1926. The Cooper House in Kenosha, with a similar hip-roofed symmetrical facade and pergolas, is typical of several large Colonial Revival residences designed by Pond & Pond a decade earlier.

<sup>1</sup>Original drawings; John A. Neuschwander, Ed., "Kenosha County in the Twentieth Century," p. 471.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



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WILSON HOUSE (KEMPER HALL)

Continuation sheet

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