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JAN 16 1986

## INVENTORY FORM FOR NOMINATED PROPERTIES

Name of property: Grand Avenue Congregational Church

Owner: Grand Avenue Congregational Church

Address: 2133 West Wisconsin Avenue

Owner's address: 2133 West Wisconsin Avenue

City: Milwaukee

Milwaukee, WI 53233

### REGISTRATION INFORMATION

160 NRHP Certification (date)

- Listed in NRHP (LI)
- Determined eligible in DOE process (DD)
- Determined eligible in nomination process (DN)
- Additional documentation added to nomination (AD)
- Boundary increased (BI)
- Boundary decreased (BD)
- Delisted (DL)

170 Thematic or Multiple Resource Nomination Name (code)

180 NRHP List Name Grand Avenue Congregational Church

190 Level of Significance

- national (NA)
- state (ST)
- local (LO)

200 District Classification

- pivotal (P)
- contributing (C)
- non-contributing (NC)

210 Applicable Criteria

- event (A)
- person (B)
- architecture/engineering (C)
- information potential (D)

215 Criteria Considerations

- religious property (A)
- moved property (B)
- birthplace or grave (C)
- cemetery (D)
- reconstructed property (E)
- commemorative property (F)
- less than 50 years old (G)

220 Area of Significance (code)

Architecture

230 Period of Significance

The date of construction is 1888.

340 Review Board Date

70 USGS Quad Map

SW/4 Milwaukee 7.5 min 1:24,000

80 UTM Coordinates (Format: 99-999999-9999999)

16-423400-4765300

85 Listed Acreage Less than one acre

60 Verbal Boundary Description Grand Avenue Heights in

SW quarter Sec. 30-7-22, block 1, lot 3-West  
35 Feet, lot 2-East 35 feet and lot 4

**Street**

**Address** 2133 West Wisconsin Avenue

**ARCHITECTURE**

450 Date of Construction (source)

1888 (A)

460 Dates of Alterations/Additions (source)

1907 (A)

480 Bullder (source) Riesen & Wilke (A)

490 and 500 Designer Type and Name (source)

\_\_\_ architect: E.T. Mix & Co. (A)/H.A. Betts (1907)(A)

\_\_\_ artist: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ engineer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ interior designer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ landscape architect: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ other: \_\_\_\_\_

510 Style or Form (code)

Richardsonian Romanesque

520 Building, Structure, Object or Site Type (code)

Church

530 Building Materials (code) \_\_\_\_\_ (roof)

\_\_\_\_\_ (foundation)

Brick/Cut Stone \_\_\_\_\_ (trim)

540 Interior Visited \_\_\_ Yes X No

550 Structural System (code) \_\_\_\_\_

560 Plan Configuration (code) \_\_\_\_\_

570 Number of Stories \_\_\_\_\_

580 Roof Shape (code) \_\_\_\_\_

590 Additional Description \_\_\_\_\_

620 Condition

X excellent \_\_\_ good \_\_\_ fair \_\_\_ poor \_\_\_ ruins

650 Related Buildings (code)

**HISTORY**

430 Common/Current Name Grand Avenue Congregational Church

440 Historic Names (source) Same (A)

660 Associated Individual(s) (dates) (source)

670 Associated Event (source)

680 Commercial/Industrial Historic Uses (source)

**STREET:** West Wisconsin Avenue

**NUMBER:** 2133

**SHSW INTENSIVE  
SURVEY FORM**

**LOCATION**

10 County Milwaukee  
20 City or Village Milwaukee  
30 Civil Town \_\_\_\_\_  
35 Unincorporated Community \_\_\_\_\_  
40 Location 2133 West Wisconsin Avenue  
50 Town-Range-Section \_\_\_\_\_  
55 Quarter Sections \_\_\_\_\_  
60 Verbal Boundary Description Grand Ave Hights in SW quarter  
Sec. 30-7-22, block 1, lot 3-West 35 feet, lot 2-East  
35 feet and lot 4

**PROGRAM REVIEW**

250 Tax Case Number \_\_\_\_\_  
260 Compliance Case Number \_\_\_\_\_  
270 A or D Grant  Yes  No  
275 Covenant/Easement Dates \_\_\_\_\_  
320 Ownership  
 private (P)  
 local-public (L)  
 state-public (S)  
 federal-public (F)  
 mixed, private-public (M)  
330 Lead Agency (code) \_\_\_\_\_

**SURVEY**

90 Photo Codes MI 103-25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 20, 31  
100 Survey Map 400  
110 Map Code 103-25  
120 Reconnaissance Survey Date 1979  
130 Reconnaissance Surveyor Wenger/Hunton/Jensen  
140 Intensive Survey Name (code) Westside  
150 Intensive Surveyor Wenger/Hatala  
155 Intensive Survey FY 1983  
235 Survey Evaluation  
 eligible (E)  not eligible (N)  
237 Survey District Classification  
 pivotal (P)  non-contributing (NC)  
 contributing (C)  
240 Survey Level of Significance  
 national (NA)  local (LO)  
 state (ST)  
243 Survey Evaluation Criteria  
 event (A)  architectural/engineering (C)  
 person (B)  information potential (D)  
245 Proposed District \_\_\_\_\_  
280 NHL Date \_\_\_\_\_  
290 HABS No. \_\_\_\_\_ 300 HAER No. \_\_\_\_\_  
310 Local Landmark (code) \_\_\_\_\_  
315 Associated Archeological Site(s) \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIPTION

Grand Avenue Congregational Church is a Romanesque Revival Structure of pressed brick, rock-faced Wauwatosa limestone and Indiana cut stone. Third oldest of Wisconsin Avenue's remaining churches, Grand Avenue Congregational was built in 1887-1888 on what had been Milwaukee's premier residential street.

The distinctive towerless facade is divided into three bays. The lower level is composed of alternating bands of brick and dressed stone while the upper level is of cream brick with windows accented with stone jambs, mullions and voussoirs. Two small side bays are separated from the large central bay by projecting spire-topped piers. The central gabled bay is dominated by a large Diocletian window of leaded glass. The main entrance, slightly recessed, is centrally located below this window. An additional, gabled entrance is located in the west bay.

Grand Avenue Congregational is cruciform in plan and has a slate roof of steeply pitched, intersecting gables. The interior features a semi-circular auditorium with floors that slope gently down toward the pulpit platform on the south wall. Galleries are located on all four walls. Seating capacity is 1200, but up to 1500 persons can be accommodated. Beginning in 1907, various additions have been built to the rear including offices and rooms for various church functions. These do not mar the original church design.

ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Normally religious properties are excluded from listing in the National Register, but the Grand Avenue Congregational Church is being nominated for its local architectural significance. It is significant as an example of a Romanesque Revival church in Milwaukee designed by master architect Edward Townsend Mix. The majority of Mix's ecclesiastical designs in Wisconsin are of Gothic derivation with towered facades and basilica plans. Grand Avenue Congregational, in contrast, is a highly original structure in the Romanesque style.

Although Mix designed other structures in the Romanesque manner including clubhouses, Grand Avenue Congregational is one of his few churches in the style. Compared to his more Richardsonian ecclesiastical work, such as

690 BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES (SOURCES)

(continued)

- A. Milwaukee City Building Permits
- B. Blix, Ovid B.; Dysart, Lulu; Gay, Greta; Reed, Anna; Stacy, Alice; Hughes, Mrs. Edgar. eds. One Hundred Years of Christian Service 1847-1947. Grand Avenue Congregational Church, 1947. pp. 9,12,13,23,33,48,52.
- C. Boardman, Mrs. M.A. comp. Historical Sketch Grand Avenue Congregational Church of Milwaukee 1847-1907.
- D. Milwaukee Sentinel November 23, 1886 3/1; January 31, 1887 8/1; February 12, 1887 3/1; July 8, 1887 4/5; May 14, 1888 3/1.

700 STUDY UNITS (CODE)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

360 Demolished

360 Date Demolished

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Architectural/Engineering Statement of Significance Cont.

Milwaukee's St. Paul's Episcopal Church (1883-84), Grand Avenue is a startlingly original structure. Its abstracted facade composition and lack of a tower make it one of the more unusual of Milwaukee's major Victorian churches.

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Grand Avenue Congregational was originally known as the Free Congregational Church and was founded in 1847 by a union of dissident members from the First Presbyterian Church and First Congregational Church. The new congregation had strong abolitionist sentiments and frequently extended their pulpit to traveling abolitionist speakers.

The Free Congregational Church met initially in a rented building downtown on Broadway, between Mason and Wells Streets. Subsequent relocations led to name changes in 1852 (Spring Street Congregational) and 1881 (Grand Avenue Congregational). By 1887, the congregation was considering moving from its downtown location. Some members felt that a separate new congregation should be established at the western city limits and Grand Avenue Church should continue at its 6th and Wisconsin location. Others thought that the church should relocate further west since 930 of its parishioners lived west of 6th Street while only sixty (60) lived to the east. The majority ruled and a parcel 120' by 176' was purchased on Wisconsin Avenue near 22nd Street for \$13,200. Milwaukee architect E.T. Mix designed the new \$40,000 structure which was dedicated in May of 1888. The building had a normal seating capacity of 1200 but up to 1500 people could be accommodated upon demand. Through the 1940s Grand Avenue's church auditorium was the largest of any Protestant Church in the city. By 1903, Grand Avenue ranked as the second largest of Wisconsin's Congregational churches. The church still houses its original congregation although it has dwindled in size in recent years.

Grand Avenue Congregational has had a long history of social involvement. The Milwaukee Female Seminary for young ladies was founded by Pastor Parson's wife Lucy in 1848. The school eventually merged with Downer College of Fox Lake to form Milwaukee-Downer College in 1890. Congregationalism on the whole was responsible for founding more colleges in the United States in the early nineteenth century than any other organization. Temperance was required by the early covenants of the church and Grand Avenue Congregational took the lead in this cause in 1850 by hosting 1200 area residents in a protest against public drunkenness and violence. Members of Grand Avenue Congregational also started the Ladies Association for Aide of Military Hospitals in 1861 which grew into the

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HISTORICAL STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

city-wide Ladies Soldiers Aid Society of Milwaukee in 1862. This group was instrumental in the establishment of the National Soldiers Home at Wood, Wisconsin (VA Hospital today) after the Civil War. From 1894 through March, 1899, Grand Avenue's West Side Literary Club sponsored entertainments that included essays, music, tableaux and costumed parties. Membership was open to all regardless of religious backgrounds. Attendance often reached 450 or more per meeting.

Ecumenicism has long been an integral part of Grand Avenue's operation. In 1902 a joint Thanksgiving service, comprised of Christians and Jews, was held at the church. It was believed to be the first such service held in Milwaukee. In 1945 a joint service was held with the Black congregation of St. Mark's African Methodist Church. Grand Avenue has also provided meeting facilities for other religious groups temporarily without quarters such as the Finnish Congregational Church (1932) and more recently Central United Methodist (1980-1982). (B,C)