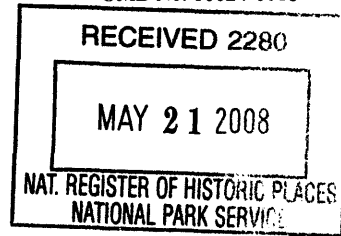


606



**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

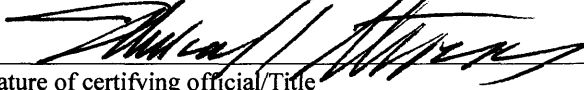
historic name Saint James Court Apartments
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number	831 West Wisconsin Avenue	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Milwaukee	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI	county Milwaukee	code 079
			zip code 53233

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.)

Signature of certifying official/Title  Date 5/13/08

State Historic Preservation Officer - WI

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

Saint James Court Apartments

Milwaukee

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:)

Edson H. Beall

7-2-08

for

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes 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	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.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources is previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/ multiple dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/ multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Synthetics

other Stone

Narrative Description

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

Saint James Court Apartments)
Name of Property

Milwaukee
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

Period of Significance

1903

Significant Dates

1903

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Ferry and Clas

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Saint James Court Apartments
Name of Property

Milwaukee
County and State

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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 16 424890 4765250
 Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
 Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
 Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
 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	M. Caren Connolly, Associate	date	June 27, 2007
organization	Louis Wasserman and Associates	telephone	414-271-6474
street & number	828 N. Broadway Suite 601	zip code	53202
city or town	Milwaukee	state	WI

Saint James Court Apartments

Milwaukee

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	John Hennessy	date	January 18, 2008
organization	Hennessy Group, Inc.	telephone	414-276-9094
street&number	831 West Wisconsin Avenue	zip code	53233
city or town	Milwaukee	state	WI

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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Saint James Court Apartments
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 1

INTRODUCTION

The St. James Court Apartments is a six-story apartment building faced in brick with cut stone and metal detailing. The foundation is poured concrete. A parapet obscures the flat rubber roof. The two major elevations are embellished with a decorative sheet metal cornice while the minor elevations are not. The Neo-Classical Beaux Arts influenced building was designed in 1895 by the prominent Milwaukee architectural firm of Ferry and Clas. Alfred C. Clas was also the developer. Louis Clas, Alfred Clas' brother was the carpenter.¹ The apartments were eventually built in 1903 when land became available adjacent to the still extant St. James Episcopal Church.

DESCRIPTION

The St. James Court Apartments is located on the southeast side of the 800 block of Wisconsin Avenue, formerly known as Grand Avenue. The 800 and 900 blocks of Wisconsin Avenue are dominated by historic structures, dating from the late 1890s and early 1900s. These buildings will be discussed in more detail later in the text. The Marquette University dormitory is a renovated YMCA that was built in 1954 on the former site of the Aberdeen Hotel.

The broad grassy median in the center of Wisconsin Avenue is known as the Court of Honor and dates from the 1890s. It features sculptures that glorify Wisconsin's semi-centennial, President George Washington, and Civil War veterans. Additional statuary to commemorate the Spanish-American War was placed in 1932. The rebuilt Wisconsin Avenue bridge over the I94 freeway re-opened in 2007 and the avenue is presently undergoing a major streetscape project. The Court of Honor will once again act as an important visual portal to the downtown after many years of neglect and decline.

The St. James Court Apartments is offset slightly from the public sidewalk line of Wisconsin Avenue. The lot measures 60.64 feet (N) x 150 feet (W) x 59.58 feet (S) and 160.70 feet (E). (Source 1993 survey Mark L. Wertz Land Surveyor)

The resident's entry to the court is through a gateway comprised of brick piers and ornamental iron fencing topped by lanterns. Two low ornamental iron gates doors swing inward. Four steps lead up to the long narrow court. The original copper date plaque is inscribed *St James Court, 1903* in Roman numerals and has an egg and dart border. The plaque is mounted on the western pier.

To the west of the concrete walkway is a long narrow lawn and extensive seasonal plantings, creating a linear garden court between the Apartments and the St. James Episcopal Church. To the east of the

¹ Hennessy, John. Current owner of Saint James Court Historic Apartments. Copy of original building permit.

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Saint James Court Apartments
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

building is a concrete alley and asphalt surfaced parking lot. Another concrete alley runs behind the building to the south along the asphalt parking lot for the Eighth Street School (1884), the oldest extant building in the Milwaukee Public Schools System.

The St. James Court Apartments is a rectangular truncated "L" in plan, measuring 45 feet east west on short axis of the north elevation facing Wisconsin Avenue. The north elevation currently has an accessible entry to the offices located in the basement and an elevated entrance to the rental office on the first floor. The long axis is the east elevation; it measures 133 feet (north -south). The southern (rear elevation) measures 59 feet (east-west). The "L" measures 13.5 feet on the north elevation and 27.8 feet on the west elevation. The court, comprised of the truncated "L," measures 103 feet 6 inches north south and 13 feet 6 inches east west. (Source 1993 survey, Mark L. Wertz Land Surveyor)

The major contributing western and northern elevations are embellished with brick quoins and a cornice enriched with compound classical moldings and modillion blocks. A band of wood dentils run under the modillions. Stone and brick belt courses clearly define the building's base, middle and top. The articulated masonry at the corners and the horizontal stone belting at the first and sixth story reinforce the building's Renaissance and Neoclassic/Mannerist precursors. The hierarchical organization of the fenestration employs symmetry and asymmetry to create restrained yet enlivened elevations with a limited palette of materials.

The west elevation is one of two the major contributing elevations. It is asymmetrical and hierarchical with a clearly defined base, middle, and top. Consistent use of running bond gray brick provides a unified appearance. The shadows created by the combination of alternating advancing and receding brick courses and deep-set windows create the appearance of a rusticated base. This base treatment is very similar to the stone base of the Central Milwaukee Public Library directly across the street. (Ferry and Clas, 1895) The rectangular six over one double-hung wood windows in the building base have stone sills and topped by a flat brick soldier course. Rectangular basement wood windows below the stone belt course also have stone sills and lintels.

The building's mid section is four stories in height. Two polygonal projecting bays enhance the western elevation. The northern bay springs from a corbelled stone apron from the third floor and terminates with a projecting stone belt course. The southern bay springs from the basement and terminates with a stone belt course that runs the entire width of the western elevation. Double-hung wood windows in the mid section differ from the base windows in several ways. The rectangular windows are topped by a variegated segmental brick soldier course. Beneath the stone sill, a projecting brick veneer ornaments the elevation. The southern bay has four over one windows on all three sides. The sets of three windows illuminating the staircase on each floor create the illusion of a bay, with a

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Saint James Court Apartments
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

pair of narrow four over one windows flanking a larger six over one window.

The apartment entrance is centrally located on the west elevation facing the courtyard. The centrally located grand story-and-a-half entrance stone surround arched portal is reminiscent of entryways of the Milwaukee mansions and monumental buildings for which Ferry and Clas are renowned. The single door is embraced by two sidelights, topped by a decorative frieze ornamented with carved wood fronds and capped with a wood dentil. Within the arch is a tri-part semi arch leaded stained glass window. The semi-circular stilted stone archivolt is embellished with five pateras. Lanterns hung from two carved stone festoons are on either side of the doorway. Tucked behind the projecting arch are two orb topped stone urns. The base of the segmented arch and the stone belt course define the transition from building base to mid section. An interesting detail is the corner treatment of the full building height bay where the bricks meet in a dogtooth pattern. This arresting pattern calls attention to the corner in a different manner than the quoins on the north and west, but is just as visually compelling.

The other major contributing elevation is the north, or Wisconsin Avenue, elevation. The rectangular symmetrical elevation is an excellent example of City Beautiful aesthetics that reject a return to an Arcadian past in favor of harmonious relationships of buildings and their urban environment.² The courtyard walkway is slightly off axis with the monument to George Washington in the Court of Honor. The north elevation shares the same architectural vocabulary and much of the ornamentation of the west elevation, though this elevation is more formal and less expressive than the west elevation. Two polygonal bays mimic the northern bay of the west elevation. The windows, cornice, dentils, and base articulation are similar to those on the west elevation. The articulated quoins draw attention to both north and west elevations as a single architectural composition.

The east elevation and south elevations are the minor elevations. Prior to the construction of the Saint James Court Apartments, the land to the east of the apartments was vacant. The simple functional nature of this elevation indicates the assumption that another large building would occupy the neighboring eastern lot. The elevation is utilitarian, faced with common yellow brick. The elaborate cornice and ornamental brick patterns of the west and north elevations terminate after the northern window bay. The simple one over one double-hung wood windows have stone sills and a triple course segmented arch with the short end of the brick exposed. The window array signifies interior plan rather than a designed elevation. Service porches occur in the center of the east elevation. Corbelled brick supports poured concrete porch decks. The porches on the first and second floor have chain link railing. From the third floor to the sixth floor a more decorative picket railing is employed. A metal fire ladder terminates at the second floor porch landing. Each porch has a wood and glass three over four door and

² Wilson, William H. The City Beautiful Movement. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989. p. 78.

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Saint James Court Apartments
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two flanking windows.

The south elevation is very plain. A blank wall shows where large southeast corner unit balconies used to hang. The windows and their surrounds are similar to those on the east with the exception of a return to the six over one double hung. The egress door from the fire stair is in the southeast notch atop a concrete loading dock.

ALTERATIONS

Very few alterations have been made to the exterior of the building.³ It was built as an apartment building with a professional office in the basement and has remained so. The major changes have occurred on the north and south elevations. In the 1970s a stair and a double door entry were added on the north elevation for access to a first floor office. The double door replaced double windows. Under previous ownership, building maintenance was neglected and deferred. The south exterior balconies were removed decades ago. The current owner is conscientious about appropriate and necessary renovations: painting, brick cleaning, and tuck pointing, repair of deteriorated window sills, glazing, and sash. The ornate wood entry was repainted and repaired. Historically appropriate security lighting was installed. New rain gutters and a new rubber roof were installed.

City of Milwaukee Building Inspection and Safety Engineering records show that between 1903 and 1922 permits were taken out for elevator repairs, and in 1937 for converting one apartment into two units. Further remodeling of units took place in 1955. The decades of 1960s and 1970s were the time of most change. Several permits were pulled for fire alarm and sprinkler diagrams. A special privilege permit for a new entry was granted in June of 1970. Additional work was done on the elevator. During this time some apartments on the first floor were remodeled into offices. Both the electrical and heating system were updated and the southern balconies were removed. The elevator was inoperable for years. When the present owner had the new smaller elevator installed, care was taken to replicate the original cage details and appearance, within economic reason.

In 1994, exterior work was executed that met the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation."⁴ The masonry was cleaned with moderate water spray of 200-600 psi at 4 gallons a minute. Re-pointing was completed with hand tools to match existing joints. Non-decorative glazing in doorways was replaced with safety glazing. Existing exterior lighting was retained or replaced with matching lights.

³ City of Milwaukee Building Inspection and Safety Engineering Records. Multiple years.

⁴ Louis Wasserman and Associates office records. Multiple years.

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Saint James Court Apartments
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The interior is remarkably intact. The original plans show 24 units, four on each floor; now there are 30. On each floor the original large, nine room apartments with an interior servant hallway, were subdivided into two smaller apartments for a total of five apartments per floor. The basement has undergone the most changes in character and will be discussed later in more detail.

Compared to an early photograph in current owner's possession, the impressive entry hall looks remarkably as it did in the early days. The current owner chose a more colorful, but period appropriate, color scheme than the white scheme shown in the photograph. The open spindle stair is large and airy, lit in part by the main entry's fan leaded window. A trio of tall windows light landings on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th floor. A pair of windows lights the sixth floor landing.

Larger units all have formal dining rooms with built in china cabinets and evidence of a servant's bell in the floor. The maid's room was off the pantry near the kitchen. According to Elizabeth Collins Cromley in her 1990 book Alone Together: A History of New York's Early Apartments, at the turn of the century many architectural plans had a room labeled "Maid", but more often than not it was an affectation intended to appeal to the upper middle class. By the early 1900s, many maids in New York "lived out."⁵ In the Saint James Court Apartments the help lived in, the larger units in particular were designed to accommodate the maids' privacy and anonymity. All maids' rooms had sinks. Many of the bedrooms in the large units still have these original sinks. All the kitchens still have the original wall-hung sinks and walk-in pantry. The majority of the bathrooms have the original basins and claw foot tubs. Much of the original woodwork, floors and trim still exist and have been refinished or painted. Many of the original interior stained glass leaded windows remain. Three of the four original apartments on each floor have gas fireplaces. The charming fireplaces are no longer operational but they add authenticity and charm. Interior windows borrow light from other rooms to light the hallways. Deep bays from the third to the fifth floor create ample interiors for units looking north to Wisconsin Avenue and the Central Public Library. Ornamental plaster moldings of crown, dentil, egg and dart, as well as some plaster floral garlands on hall ceilings, along with decorative brackets, show the influence of the Beaux Arts. Historically appropriate light fixtures replace inappropriate fixtures when new fixtures are required. Original skylights top the roof access penthouse units; ceilings and floors are poured concrete with soundproof filler and finished with oak and maple hardwoods.

The basement is now used for storage. The original plans show a Doctor's office with a lower level

⁵ Cromley, Elizabeth C. Alone Together: A History of New York's Early Apartments. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990, p.118.

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Saint James Court Apartments
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entrance off Grand (Wisconsin) Avenue complete with a pantry, bathroom, and closet. A kitchen and pantry were located off the center hallway. In addition to a large laundry room there were 23 storage units, a servants' bathroom, with tub, and the coal, boiler, and fuel room. The basement was accessible by four stairs and the elevator. Exterior window wells with operable windows provided air circulation and daylight into the basement level. The two-bedroom janitor suite had a living room, and bathroom. A kitchen and pantry were located across the hallway. A comfortable janitor suite was critical to the success of this new building type, the upper class apartment building. The janitor was the eyes and ears of the building and took care of apartments when the tenants traveled or needed to receive packages or let workmen into a unit. Today two offices occupy the former janitor suite and doctor's office.

The building maintains very good integrity to its period of significance.

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Saint James Court Apartments
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Section 8 Page 1

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: SUMMARY

The Saint James Court Apartments are significant at the local level under Criterion C as a fine example of a building type, the early twentieth century, modern apartment building. The Saint James Court Apartment building is an excellent example of a building that helped create and define urban upper middle class neighborhoods in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the United States. The Neo-Classical Revival and Beaux Arts detailing exemplifies the overwhelming influence of the Eastern establishment architects on architects in the Midwest after the Chicago World's Columbia Exposition in 1893. City Beautiful proponents also promoted the Neo-Classic style, as a style that was both aesthetically pleasing and economically viable, creating the proper tenor for a polite society.⁶ The Saint James Court Apartment building is a remarkable example due to its interior and exterior architectural integrity. The building's period of significance is 1903; it corresponds to the building's date of construction. The amenities originally included in the 1895 plans included 24 units, an elevator, maids' rooms, fireplaces, elaborate built-ins, leaded windows, hot and cold running water, complete bathrooms and kitchens, janitor suite, basement laundry, individual tenant storage, and a lower level professional office; these features clearly define this building as an upper middle class apartment building. These amenities differentiate the Saint James from four-story walk up apartments and from the Chicago tenement style flat apartment that pervaded the Milwaukee rental market in the 1890s and early 1900s.

Also of interest is the fact that Alfred C. Clas, who in addition to being the architect and developer, lived in the building from 1909 to 1920 when he moved into the Cudahy Apartments, then known as Buena Vista Flats on Prospect Avenue. Ferry and Clas designed the Buena Vista Flats in 1909. Two subsequent building additions have radically altered both the interior and exterior of the Cudahy Apartments from Ferry and Clas' original design.

Clas, in his association with George B. Ferry designed over 300 buildings in the state of Wisconsin, many of which are on the National Register. In Milwaukee, the firm designed many civic, commercial, cultural, and residential buildings that remain vibrant and functioning. The Milwaukee Central Library, the Auditorium, the Woman's Club of Wisconsin, the Forest Home Cemetery chapel, and the Northern

⁶ Wilson, William H. The City Beautiful Movement. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989, pp. 78-86.

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Trust Bank are part of contemporary Milwaukee's social and commercial life. The former Frederick Pabst mansion is now a museum but other homes are still enjoyed as private homes including the Emil Ott residence. Several large Ferry and Clas homes are facing development pressure, in particular the Frederick Goll house on Prospect Avenue. The firm of Ferry and Clas trained many architects who went on to make their own imprint on the city of Milwaukee including Richard Phillip, Peter Brust and Elmer Grey.⁷ In addition, Clas served on the Board of Parks Commission for fifteen years and was instrumental in the realization of the Olmsted planning document for Lake Park.⁸ Clas is responsible for the design of many structures in parks citywide. Clas' proposal for the design of Lincoln Memorial Drive was never completely realized but it was the impetus for the current drive. Clas Park, a small park very near to Saint James Court Apartments, is named in his honor.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

After the Civil War the quiet character of the west side of Milwaukee began to change and street names changed as well. Beer barons, meat packers, industrialists, and bankers were busily building mansions west of the downtown. Mr. Shelbourne S. Merrill, manager of the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul railroad made a proposal that the name of Spring Street be changed to Grand Avenue to reflect the new magnificence of the mansion building boom. The name was changed in 1867. Mr. Merrill's mansion was built at 33rd and West Grand (now Wisconsin) in 1870. In the 1880s, the most exclusive Milwaukee neighborhoods were Yankee Hill, Prospect Avenue, and the newly named Grand Avenue. By the time the Saint James Court Apartments were built in 1903, the 800 and 900 blocks of Grand Avenue were already prestigious addresses.⁹

Alexander Mitchell was ahead of the west end building boom in 1859 when he built a modest brick home on 9th and Spring Street (later Grand and then Wisconsin Avenues). During the next 17 years Mitchell's house underwent several renovations and additions. As he bought neighboring properties his large landscaped estate grew to include a lagoon, greenhouses, gardens and a gazebo all enclosed with a decorative wrought iron fence. He eventually owned the entire block. Mitchell's first home is attributed to builder John Bentley. Various other additions occurred from 1860-1876. Architect Edward Townsend Mix designed the Second Empire tower and mansard roof in 1876. In 1891 the property was

⁷ Passante, Anna Marie. *A God-Given Talent: Peter J. Brust, Architect: His Work and Legacy 1906-2006*. p. 7

⁸ Landscape Research. *Built in Milwaukee: an Architectural View of the City*. Milwaukee: City of Milwaukee, [1981?], pp. 121-125.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

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Saint James Court Apartments

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Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

sold to the Deustcher Club. The social club's name was changed to the Wisconsin Club during the nationalistic fervor of World War I. The building still functions as a social club. Parts of the original holdings of the estate were sold as a site for the Ferry and Clas designed Central Library and Public Museum.

On the south side of Spring Street was the estate of John Kneeland. Kneeland, a New York native who moved to Milwaukee in 1841 was storeowner, businessman, railroad promoter, politician, the founder of Milwaukee Gas and Electric and a real estate developer. In 1878 Kneeland tore down his house and developed the Aberdeen Hotel, which stood until 1954 when it was torn down for the new YMCA building. The YMCA building was recently renovated for a dormitory for Marquette University students. The Aberdeen, originally known as the Grand Hotel, was expanded from 22 to 90 rooms in 1880. The four-story masonry building was a thoroughly modern apartment hotel.¹⁰ Conveniences included hot and cold running water, in house laundry, kitchen facilities, and even telephones. The tenants are listed as physicians, manufacturers, real estate and insurance agents, clerks, and clerics in Wrights Milwaukee City Directory. The Calvary Presbyterian Church was built to the west of the Aberdeen Hotel on land purchased from John Kneeland. The prominent local architect H. C. Koch designed the Gothic church in 1870. The exceptionally tall spire is still considered an urban landmark and the Church interior has recently undergone a major renovation.¹¹

Saint James Episcopal Church was built to the east of the Aberdeen Hotel in 1867. The local architect was Edward Townsend Mix. To the east of the church was the Spring Hill Cemetery. Post Civil War land development pressure resulted in bodies being disinterred and reburied in Forest Home Cemetery and other church graveyards.¹² The Saint James Court Apartments are located east of Saint James Episcopal Church.

To the west of 8th Street were the Belvedere Flats, built in 1885-1886, designed by Edward Townsend Mix. It is considered to be one of the first apartment flats in Milwaukee. The five-story apartment flat gained quickly acceptance with upper middle class professionals.¹³

¹⁰ Anello, Arthur P. An Eclectic History of Milwaukee. Elm Grove, WI: Erickson and Rice, 1983, p. 82.

¹¹ Gould, Whitney. "Pastor Green's Idea Could Renew Gothic Revival Church." Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, January 29, 2007.

¹² Anello, An Eclectic History of Milwaukee, pp. 81-82.

¹³ Department of City Development. "Prospect Avenue Apartment Building Historic District Nomination." April 4, 1990, p.11.

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Milwaukee's Court of Honor is a wide grassy median on West Wisconsin Avenue. Originally the green space was to be called Washington Park in honor of Elizabeth Plankington's 1885 donation of a statue of George Washington, designed by Richard H. Parks of Chicago, but the name was never made official. It is likely the name Court of Honor reflected Milwaukee's excitement about The Court of Honor at the Columbia Exposition. Diane Buck and Virginia Palmer in their book, *Outdoor Sculpture in Milwaukee*, suggest that the midsummer celebration held on Grand Avenue and the Court of Honor could be considered the precursor to Milwaukee's world famous Summerfest. In 1898, the Carnival Association proposed a weeklong festival to draw tourists to Milwaukee to celebrate the semi-centennial of Wisconsin.¹⁴

The Milwaukee Public Library Digital Collection has early photographs that show The Court of Honor over time. One image around 1900 shows two colonnades of plaster pillars book-ending the Court. Gas lighting illuminated the night landscape and large trees provided shade during the day. In 1900, Alfred C. Clas of Ferry and Clas was commissioned by the Carnival Association to design the Carnival Column to commemorate the Carnival King. His design of a Corinthian column on a metal base was crowned with an eagle hovering over a globe. The eagle is a companion to the eagle perched over the main entrance of the Ferry and Clas designed Central Milwaukee Public Library. In 1942 the eagle and the metal base were removed due to maintenance too long deferred.¹⁵

A 1960s roadway project to accommodate increased automobile traffic from the new Freeway off ramp considerably altered the character of the Court of Honor, reducing it to a traffic island. The original design Court of Honor was a true expression of the City Beautiful principles of the Columbia Exposition and the appropriate 'front yard' for Ferry and Clas' monumental Neo Classical apartment building. A major streetscape project, including plantings and new lighting, is underway at this time.

Sharon J. Lynch of Historic Milwaukee writes that an historic title search shows that Alfred Clas bought the property for the Saint James Court Apartments for \$15,000 from Saint James Episcopal Church on February 7, 1903. The current owner, John Hennessy, has records that show the cost of construction was \$65,000. These same records show that on February 9, 1903 Alfred and his wife Lucille Clas sold a portion of the land to Emil H. Ott, President of the William Steinmeyer Company, and his wife Ida (nee Steinmeyer) for \$7,500. Ms. Lynch states that the Otts assumed full ownership

¹⁴ Buck, Diane M. and Palmer, Virginia A. *Outdoor Sculpture in Milwaukee*. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1995, p. 57.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

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Saint James Court Apartments
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shortly after the building was fully completed in 1904. Ferry and Clas were the architects for the Emil H. Ott residence at 2121 E. Lafayette Place in 1907. The firm also designed the Steinmeyer Building, a wholesale and retail grocery at 1050 N. 3rd Street, for Mr. Ott's father-in-law in 1893.

SIGNIFICANCE: ARCHITECTURE

A considerable history of apartment development in Milwaukee is outlined in the Department of City Development City of Milwaukee National Register of Historic Places "Prospect Avenue Apartment Building Historic District" nomination. That nomination also includes a great deal of information on the development of New York City apartments in the 1880s. Upper middle class apartment living gained acceptance in Milwaukee about the same time. Listings for apartments grew significantly in Wright's Milwaukee City Directory between 1895 and 1910. In 1903, when the Saint James Court Apartments were built, 67 flat type apartment buildings were listed in the directory; the previous year 58 apartments were listed. By 1905, 158 apartment buildings were listed. The numbers remain relatively stable after 1910, when suburban development began in earnest. According to the Prospect Avenue Historic District nomination the first apartment building built in the Prospect Avenue district in 1903 was the Nunnemacher/Sorrento at 1816 East Kane. The four story eight unit masonry building is still an apartment building today. It is considerably more modest than the Saint James Court in both scale and in its walk up Chicago tenement style architecture.

Saint James Court Apartments were, as previously stated, designed in 1895 but not built until 1903. Ferry and Clas, as were many other architects, were strongly influenced by the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago. The firm won a Gold Medal at the Fair for their design for the new Milwaukee Central Library and Public Museum. They were exposed to ideas, technology and the impact the Exposition had on the city of Chicago. As detailed in Erik Larson's very popular contemporary book, *Devil in the White City*, apartment building was booming, something Milwaukee architects could not help to take note of. It is estimated that one quarter of the American population attended the Exposition and when they returned home they wanted their cities to look like what they saw at the Fair.

The Columbia Exposition, with its emphasis on the possibilities of urban living, convinced people that downtown living was exciting. Electrified trolley cars stopping directly outside the apartment door provided convenient and reliable transportation- from Milwaukee one could ride all the way to West Allis or to Whitefish Bay. Electric street lighting extended day into night and made the downtown appear safer. The apartment building was another aspect of the new "22."¹⁶ Grand Avenue was a major

¹⁶ Ibid., p.27.

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transportation spine, for pedestrians, streetcars and the new mode of transportation -- the automobile. The Neo Classical style of the Saint James Court Apartments was a statement about downtown Milwaukee as an urbane place to live. To quote Elizabeth Cromley, "This new classical style presented the apartment house as a unified whole rather than a series of fragments. The need to individualize details to mark out their own part of a big building gradually faded into the background." Ferry and Clas designed many mansions for Milwaukee's business elite in many historic styles. The design of the Saint James Court Apartments took them from eclectic to classical design. Ferry and Clas, along with architects Edward Townsend Mix, and H.C. Koch, dominated the era of new Civic Architecture and their buildings dominated the 800 and 900 blocks of Grand Avenue during the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Milwaukee, with its abundance of land area and tradition of close knit ethnic neighborhoods did not face the pressure to rapidly house waves of immigrants that cities on East coast experienced. Jobs for immigrants were plentiful in Milwaukee and most newly arrived immigrants could own their own home or live with relatives in duplexes within a relatively short time. Apartment living in Milwaukee was a middle class choice, not a necessity. Wealthy east side mansion dwellers liked the new technological conveniences and the excitement of urban living that the new housing form provided.¹⁷

As mentioned previously, Wright's Milwaukee City Directory shows the rapid growth of apartment buildings between 1895 and 1910. After this time, the creation of new village governments by Shorewood, Bay View and Whitefish Bay, the development of the trolley car, and automobile ownership made suburban development opportunities more attractive than urban living. The short time frame of apartment building in Milwaukee really provides a sharply focused snapshot into history.

Milwaukee is overshadowed by cities such as Denver, Dallas, Kansas City, and Seattle, in academic texts concerning the history of the City Beautiful movement. Contemporary Milwaukee retains more City Beautiful planning principles than many of those cities do.¹⁸ Clas, recognizing the importance of urban design, proposed an elegant plan for downtown Milwaukee that was not realized. Wisconsin Avenue, with its Court of Honor, churches, the heavily used monumental Central Library, the popular Wisconsin Club, and the Saint James Court Apartment building is a testament of how built examples of City Beautiful principles continue to combine aesthetics and function to create a framework for society.

¹⁷ Gurda, John. The Making of Milwaukee. Milwaukee: Milwaukee County Historical Society, 1999.

¹⁸ Wilson, William H. The City Beautiful Movement. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.

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Saint James Court Apartments
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APARTMENT BUILDINGS

New York was the first city to broadly embrace apartment living. However, even there, early apartment living was seen as morally dubious. Changes began after Civil War with the introduction of "French flats" and the construction of several small upscale apartment buildings. As more members of the middle and upper classes moved to apartment buildings, and as the availability of servants became more of a luxury, apartment living became more attractive. The concentration of apartment buildings in the heart of the city allowed for greater access to stores and businesses and to mass transit. In addition, the buildings had the advantage of modern conveniences usually only found in the homes of wealthy residents, such as electricity, central heating, telephone service, hot-water heaters, refrigeration, storage rooms, laundry machines, and clothes drying equipment, which made these properties attractive as middle class residences. By 1910, apartment buildings had replaced single-family house construction in Manhattan and became the basis for residential living.¹⁹

According to Elizabeth Cromley's research, St. James Court would be defined as an example of the modern apartment house. These evolved between the 1890s and 1910, and were functionally modern in plan and conveniences. They increasingly separated the social, sleeping and service zones within the apartment, much as they were separated in a house.

They were spatially organized around notions of function still current in the late twentieth century, they depended on an assumption of technological aides replacing servants' labor, they celebrated convenience, and they both shifted and clarified the pace of privacy as the centerpiece of homelife. Apartment houses had opened up a view of efficient, modern living that appealed to many and the apartment itself was recognized as enabling this particular rationalized modernity to come into being.²⁰

At the St. James, the front doors of the apartments opened into vestibule areas that led directly into the public spaces of the apartment. In the larger apartments, the bedrooms and bathrooms were clearly set off from the public rooms, and a servant's room was tucked next to the kitchen.

Cromley points out that the inclusion of the elevator was the "social leveler."²¹ In walk up apartments,

¹⁹ Day, Jared N. Urban Castles: Tenement Housing and Landlord Activism in New York City 1890-1943. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

²⁰ Cromley, Elizabeth C. Alone Together: A History of New York's Early Apartments. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990, p. 173.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

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the cheapest and least desirable apartments were on the top floor and wealthier tenants felt "inconvenienced" by the constant traffic of the poorer tenants traipsing up and down the shared staircase. The elevator made the equalization (and raising) of rents possible. The elevator allowed the top floor, where in most cases there was better exposure to light, air, and view to become the most desirable (and expensive) units. The rental market was literally turned upside down. St. James Court Apartments were among the first apartments in Milwaukee to have an elevator that was included in the original 1895 plans.

St. James Court Apartments are also a variant of the courtyard style apartment block. Evolving from European models, this type of apartment building had the appeal of creating a private space for the residents of the building. While in larger buildings found in cities such as New York, the courtyard is completely encircled by the apartment block, St. James Court is built with a truncated "L" plan, with fencing and the adjacent church completing the enclosure. The entrance to the block is through this private garden space, not directly from the street.

ARCHITECTS

George Bowman Ferry
1851-1918

George Ferry was born in Springfield, Massachusetts. Ferry attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from 1871 to 1872. Following his marriage in 1880 he moved to Milwaukee in 1881. Historian Richard Perrin calls the firm of Ferry and Clas one of Milwaukee's "Big Three" architectural firms at the turn of the century. Ferry was respected for his Beaux Arts training and his understanding of historical styles. He died in Milwaukee in 1918.

Alfred Charles Clas
1859-1942

Alfred Clas was born in Sauk City, Wisconsin. Clas worked as a messenger in the state senate in Madison before becoming an apprentice to a Milwaukee architect. He moved to California for two years and gained experience with a Stockton, California architect. He moved back to Wisconsin and became a partner in 1881 with Milwaukee architect James Douglas. Douglas was a builder who specialized in residential design. The partnership dissolved in 1886. Clas then had a solo practice for four years. In 1890 he and George Bowman Ferry formed a partnership. For the next 20+ years the

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architectural firm of Ferry and Clas was one of the most prominent in Milwaukee. After the partnership ended in 1912, Clas once again had a solo practice until his son, Angelo Robert Clas, joined him. Later, another son, Ruben Frederick Clas, along with John S. Shepherd, joined in a partnership known as Clas, Shepherd, Clas. Angelo Clas moved to the Washington D. C. to work as the Director of Housing and Assistant Administrator of Public Works, a position he held from 1934-1938. A firm bearing his name is still in practice in Beltsville, Maryland. In 1930 the firm became Clas and Clas. This firm dissolved with Alfred Clas' retirement; Rueben Clas continued the practice into the 1940s. From 1924-1929 the firm did a substantial number of lavish residential projects in Sarasota, Florida, including a Ringling mansion. Alfred Clas died in Dousman, Wisconsin in 1942.

CONCLUSION

The Saint James Court Apartment building has served its original use for 103 years throughout social and urban changes common to the American urban environment. In some ways the deferred maintenance and lack of modernizing by previous owners kept the building intact stylistically. The current owner has spent the last decade reviving the faded glory of this fine example of Beaux-Arts inspired classicism. As such, this twentieth century apartment building is an excellent example of the City Beautiful Movement. It is eligible at the local level for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, as an example of a modern, high-end apartment building built as a modified courtyard style apartment block that provided its tenants with the amenities of urban living without the individual care needed for a house.

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- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. West elevation - printed reduction of original elevation | City of Milwaukee Archives |
| 2. 2 nd Floor - printed reduction of original 2 nd floor plan | City of Milwaukee Archives |
| 3. 2 nd Floor - printed reduction of current status of 2 nd floor plan | Louis Wasserman |
| 4. 4 th Floor - printed reduction of original 4 th floor plan | City of Milwaukee Archives |
| 5. 4 th Floor - printed reduction of current status of 4 th floor plan | Louis Wasserman |

CITY OF MILWAUKEE BUILDING INSPECTION AND SAFETY ENGINEERING
Various records.

DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT CITY OF MILWAUKEE
Prospect Avenue Apartment Buildings Historic District April 4, 1990

PERSONAL PAPERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Hennessy, John | Current owner of the St. James Court Apartments
Photographs, building records, drawings, site survey, and
tenant records. |
| Louis Wasserman and
Associates | Part I and Part II submission Saint James Court Apartments
Background research |

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WEBSITES

Architecture Week

www.architectureweek.com

Greetings from Milwaukee

www.uwm.edu/Libraries/guides

Northwest Masonry Guide

www.masonconf.com

Pabst Mansion

www.pabstmansion.com/archives

UWM Libraries Digital Collections

www.collections.lib.usm.edu

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Saint James Court Apartments
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Boundary description:

Legal Description Partition of East Half of S/W 1/4 Sec 29-7-22
Block 64 E 60' Lot 1 & 1/2 VAC E-W Alley ADJ EXC St
TID #30; BIDS #5, #21

Boundary justification:

The nominated boundary corresponds with the legal description of the parcel. This is the parcel historically associated with the property.

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Saint James Court Apartments
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Photo 1 of 11

Louis Wasserman

April 25, 2007

Negatives at the Wisconsin Historical Society

Camera looking South across W. Wisconsin Avenue and the Court of Honor toward Saint James Court Apartments. Saint James Church is to the right of photo. Corner of Milwaukee Central Public Library is the left margin.

Photo 2 of 11

Louis Wasserman

April 25, 2007

Negatives at the Wisconsin Historical Society

Camera looking South to courtyard entry plaque.

Photo 3 of 11

Louis Wasserman

April 25, 2007

Negatives at the Wisconsin Historical Society

Camera looking East to Main entry to Saint James Court Apartments.

Photo 4 of 11

Louis Wasserman

April 25, 2007

Negatives at the Wisconsin Historical Society

Camera looking North-West toward east (side) elevation of Saint James Court from adjacent parking lot. Milwaukee Central Public Library (also by Ferry and Clas) is to the right of the photo. Alexander Mitchell house (Wisconsin Club) is in the background.

Photo 5 of 11

Louis Wasserman

April 25, 2007

Negatives at the Wisconsin Historical Society

Camera looking west at full East (side) elevation of Saint James Court from adjacent parking lot.

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Section photos Page 2

Saint James Court Apartments
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Photo 6 of 11

Louis Wasserman

April 25, 2007

Negatives at the Wisconsin Historical Society

Camera looking South-east toward corner fireplace in third floor north (front) unit.

Photo 7 of 11

Louis Wasserman

April 25, 2007

Negatives at the Wisconsin Historical Society

Camera looking North toward bay window in third floor north (front) unit.

Photo 8 of 11

Louis Wasserman

April 25, 2007

Negatives at the Wisconsin Historical Society

Camera looking east toward mirror in foyer of third floor south (rear) unit.

Photo 9 of 11

Louis Wasserman

April 25, 2007

Negatives at the Wisconsin Historical Society

Camera looking north to original pantry in kitchen of third floor south (rear) unit.

Photo 10 of 11

Louis Wasserman

April 25, 2007

Negatives at the Wisconsin Historical Society

Camera looking south to bathroom of third floor south (rear) unit.

Original sink, tub, medicine cabinet and portion of original floor tile (to the left in photo)

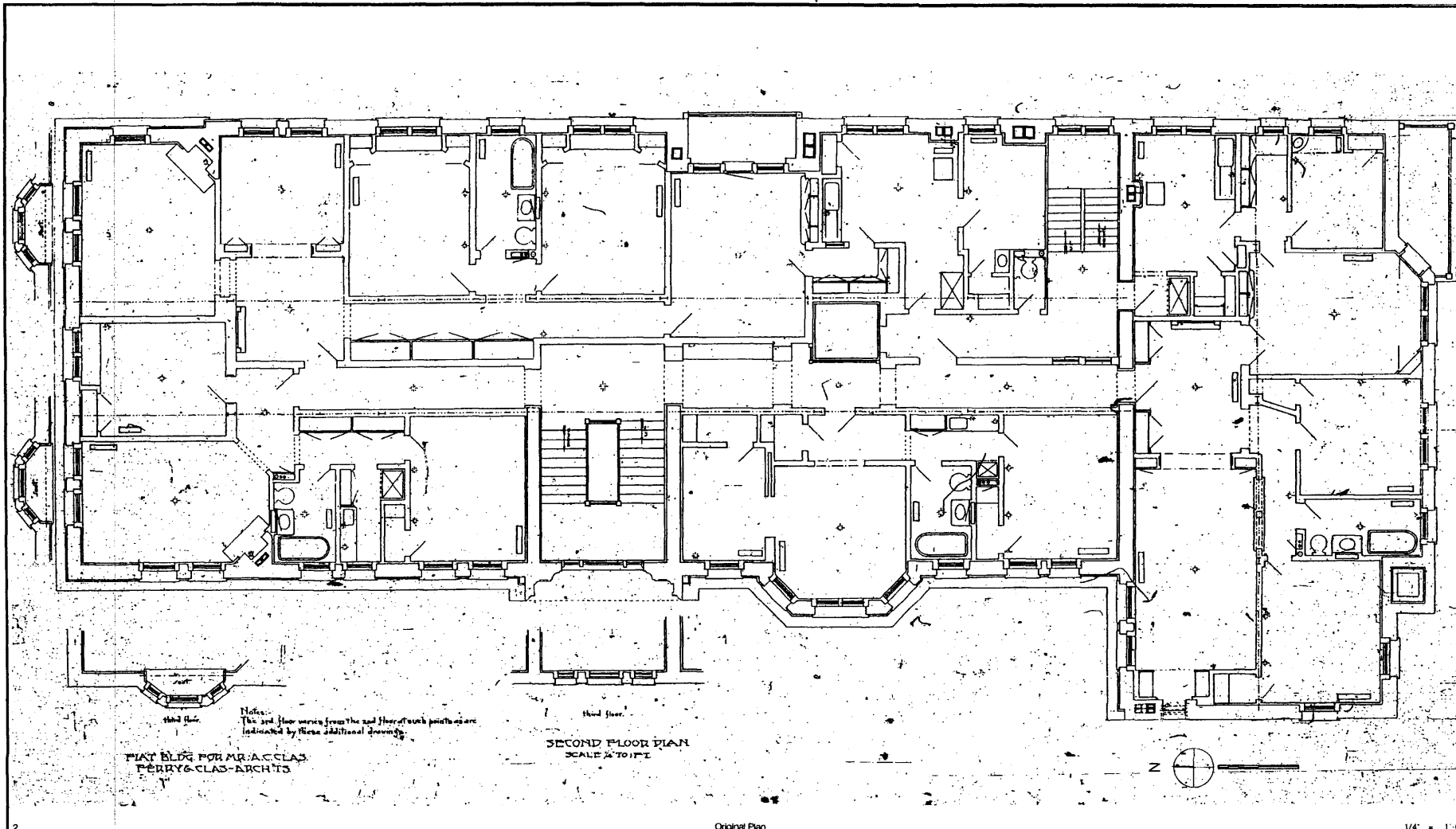
Photo 11 of 11

Louis Wasserman

April 25, 2007

Negatives at the Wisconsin Historical Society

Camera looking South from main first floor lobby to the wood enclosed elevator.



Notes:
 The 2nd floor units from the 2nd floor of each unit are indicated by these additional drawings.

SECOND FLOOR PLAN
 SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



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M. Claret Cooney,
 Landscape Architect

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 Apartments
 831 W. Wisconsin
 Milwaukee, WI 53233

MARK DATE DESCRIPTION

MARK	DATE	DESCRIPTION

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 MODEL FILE:
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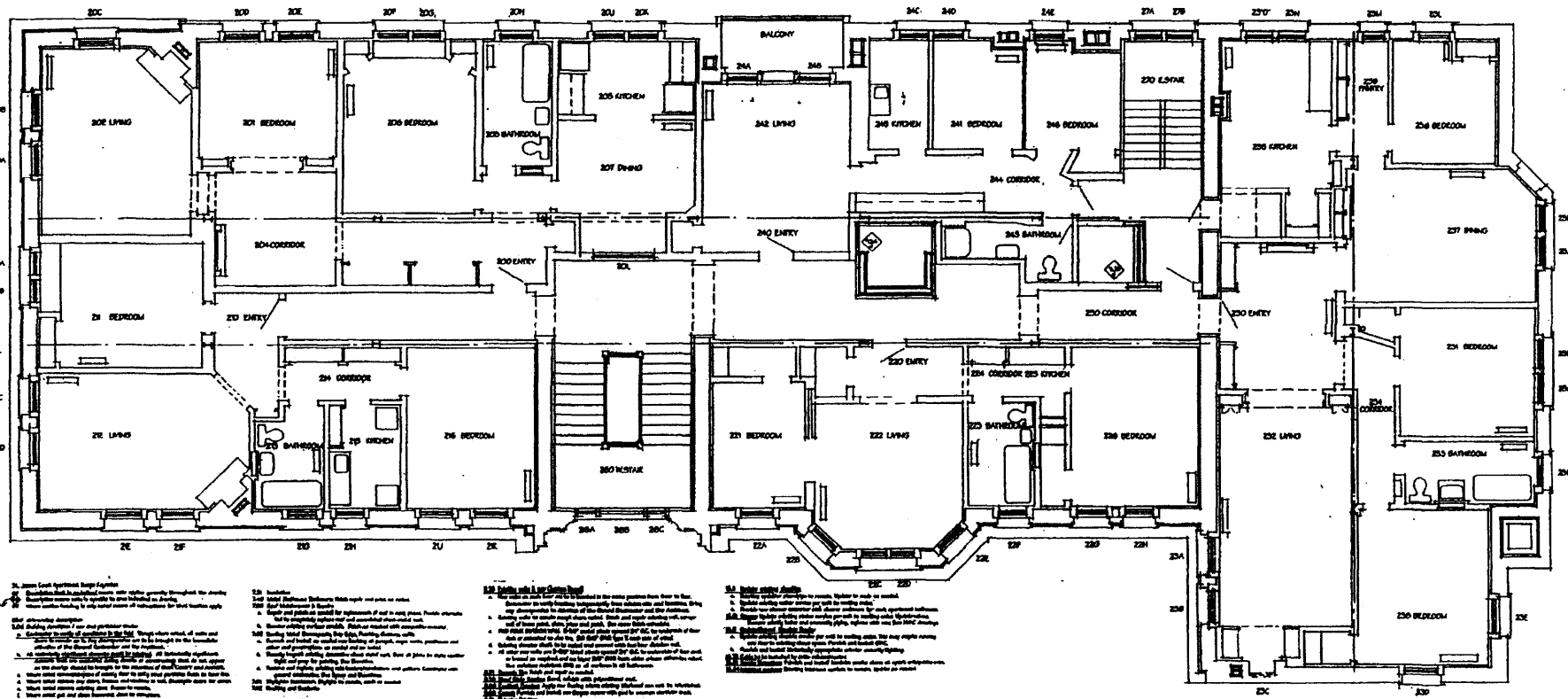
Original 2nd Floor

102h

SHEET 1 OF 5

Figure 2: Saint James Court Apartments
 Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, WI

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- 20. General Notes:**
1. All work shall be in accordance with the specifications and drawings.
 2. The contractor shall be responsible for obtaining all necessary permits.
 3. All materials and workmanship shall be in accordance with the specifications.
 4. The contractor shall maintain access to all adjacent areas.
 5. All work shall be completed within the specified time frame.
 6. The contractor shall be responsible for the safety of all workers.
 7. All work shall be completed in accordance with the specifications.
 8. The contractor shall be responsible for the removal of all debris.
 9. All work shall be completed in accordance with the specifications.
 10. The contractor shall be responsible for the protection of all existing work.

- 21. Installation:**
1. All materials shall be installed in accordance with the specifications.
 2. The contractor shall be responsible for the protection of all existing work.
 3. All work shall be completed in accordance with the specifications.
 4. The contractor shall be responsible for the removal of all debris.
 5. All work shall be completed in accordance with the specifications.
 6. The contractor shall be responsible for the protection of all existing work.
 7. All work shall be completed in accordance with the specifications.
 8. The contractor shall be responsible for the removal of all debris.
 9. All work shall be completed in accordance with the specifications.
 10. The contractor shall be responsible for the protection of all existing work.

- 22. Electrical:**
1. All electrical work shall be in accordance with the specifications.
 2. The contractor shall be responsible for the protection of all existing work.
 3. All work shall be completed in accordance with the specifications.
 4. The contractor shall be responsible for the removal of all debris.
 5. All work shall be completed in accordance with the specifications.
 6. The contractor shall be responsible for the protection of all existing work.
 7. All work shall be completed in accordance with the specifications.
 8. The contractor shall be responsible for the removal of all debris.
 9. All work shall be completed in accordance with the specifications.
 10. The contractor shall be responsible for the protection of all existing work.

- 23. Plumbing:**
1. All plumbing work shall be in accordance with the specifications.
 2. The contractor shall be responsible for the protection of all existing work.
 3. All work shall be completed in accordance with the specifications.
 4. The contractor shall be responsible for the removal of all debris.
 5. All work shall be completed in accordance with the specifications.
 6. The contractor shall be responsible for the protection of all existing work.
 7. All work shall be completed in accordance with the specifications.
 8. The contractor shall be responsible for the removal of all debris.
 9. All work shall be completed in accordance with the specifications.
 10. The contractor shall be responsible for the protection of all existing work.

- 24. Mechanical:**
1. All mechanical work shall be in accordance with the specifications.
 2. The contractor shall be responsible for the protection of all existing work.
 3. All work shall be completed in accordance with the specifications.
 4. The contractor shall be responsible for the removal of all debris.
 5. All work shall be completed in accordance with the specifications.
 6. The contractor shall be responsible for the protection of all existing work.
 7. All work shall be completed in accordance with the specifications.
 8. The contractor shall be responsible for the removal of all debris.
 9. All work shall be completed in accordance with the specifications.
 10. The contractor shall be responsible for the protection of all existing work.

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MARK	DATE	DESCRIPTION

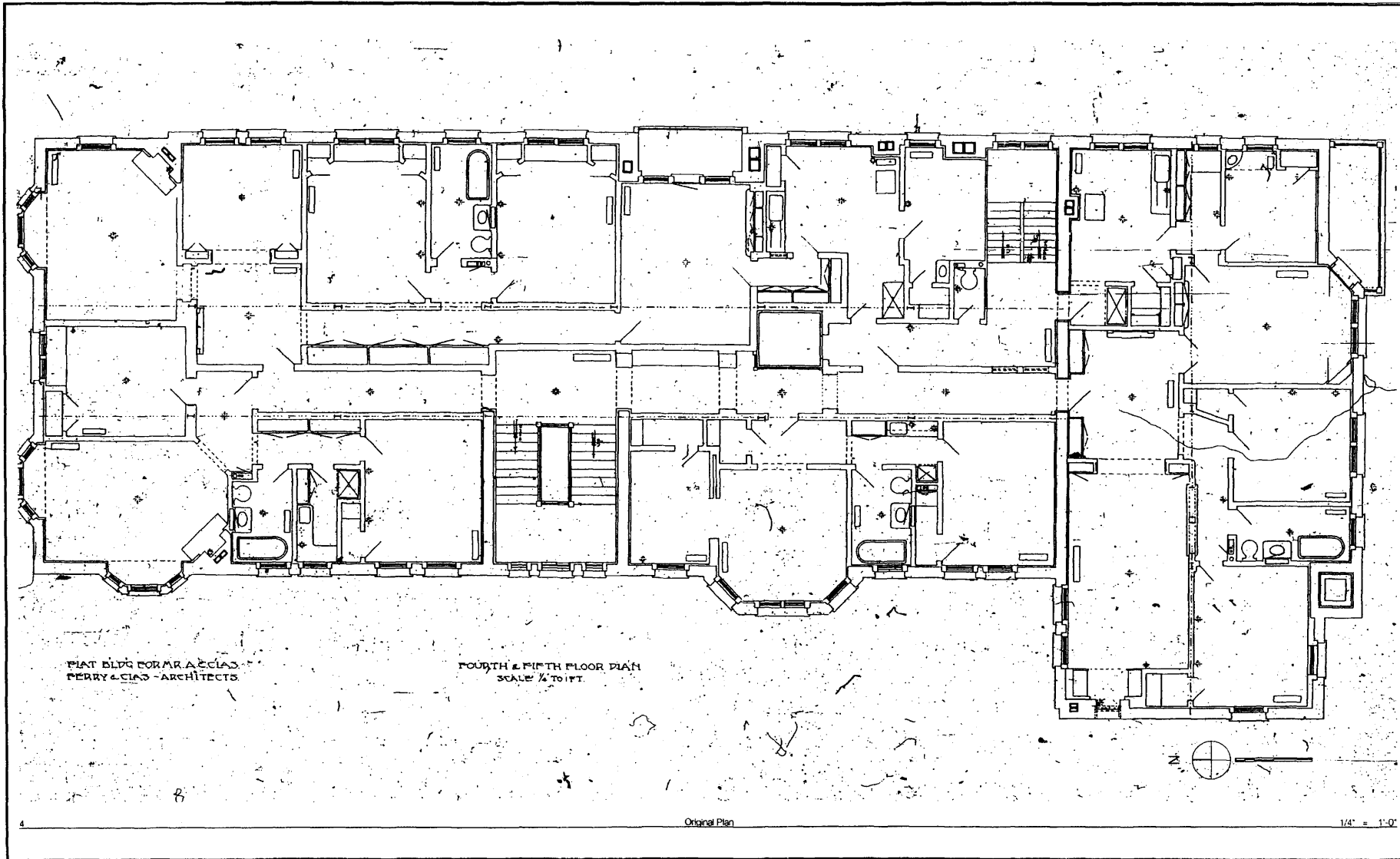
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Second Floor

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SHEET 3 OF 5

**Figure 3: Saint James Court Apartments
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, WI**



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MARK DATE DESCRIPTION

MARK	DATE	DESCRIPTION

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SHEET TITLE

Original 4th Floor

104h

SHEET 2

OF 5

Figure 4: Saint James Court Apartments
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, WI

