



Archaeological Research Laboratory Center
Cultural Resource Management

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4/17/2025

Charlie Griffith, AICP
Senior Planner
City of Waukesha
201 Delafield St.
Waukesha, WI 53188

Re: Architecture/History Investigations
Waukesha Wells Abandonment
City of Waukesha
Waukesha County, WI
UWM-CRM: 2025-0239

Dear Mr. Griffith,

On April 8, 2025, I conducted a field survey for the above-named project. The project consists of the abandonment and demolition of three city water utility facilities in the City of Waukesha, Waukesha County, Wisconsin (see attached Project Location map).

The subject water utility facilities include the following:

- East Avenue Well 5, Reservoir, and Booster Station – 1430 East Avenue
- Sunset Well 6 and Reservoir – 2320 W. Sunset Drive
- West Avenue Chemical Storage – 223 S. West Avenue

Following the demolition of the above facilities, the City plans to sell the vacated lots for redevelopment. Given the project description and its potential to impact the project area, an Area of Potential Effect (APE) was established to coincide with the existing tax parcels within which each of the subject water utility facilities is located. All resources within this APE that were at least 40 years old and possessed a degree of historic integrity were examined for potential historical significance.

Funding for the project is provided by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); as such, architecture/history investigations were conducted in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Literature Search

Prior to the field survey, UWM-CRM conducted a literature review that included searches of the Wisconsin Historic Preservation Database (WHPD) and the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). No properties were identified in either database.

Field Survey

The field investigation confirmed that the three water utility facilities were of sufficient age and retained sufficient integrity to meet SHPO survey criteria. Each property was surveyed, and new WHPD records were created, as follows:

East Avenue Well 5, Reservoir, and Booster Station – 1430 S. East Ave. (AHI 247655, 247656, 247657)

This property consists of a concrete, ground-level reservoir and two small utility buildings. All three structures were built between 1953 and 1956. The circular concrete reservoir features poured concrete walls and a domed concrete roof with a metal ventilator at its center. A small shed is located at the north side of the reservoir; the shed is clad in vinyl siding and features a shed roof and a metal door in its north wall. Two utility buildings are located north of the reservoir. Each utility building is rectangular in plan with concrete block walls and a flat roof. Red brick piers are located at each corner. Metal doors are centered in the north elevation of each building.



East Avenue Well 5, Reservoir, and Booster Station, 1430 S. East Ave., reservoir (AHI 247655), looking south (top); east utility building (AHI 247656), looking southeast (bottom left); west utility building (AHI 247657), looking southwest (bottom right).

Under *Criterion A: History*, East Avenue Well 5, Reservoir, and Booster Station is associated with the City of Waukesha's municipal water utility in the mid-twentieth century. However, it is one of at least three properties with this association; others include Well 6 at 2320 W. Sunset Drive (see below) and Well 7 at S31W27521 W. Sunset Drive (an astylistic utilitarian structure constructed in 1963). Following an examination of City water utility records, no information was found to suggest that the subject well and reservoir were constructed as part of a comprehensive, long-range master plan for the city's water utility; rather, it appears that Well 5 (like others of this period) was constructed as needed to accommodate increased residential development as the city annexed additional land at its outer edges.¹ As such, no evidence was found to indicate that Well 5 is of particular significance in the area of *Community Planning and Development* or of greater significance within the history of Waukesha's water utility system during this period than other water utility structures that were constructed to serve new post-World War II residential developments. As such, it is not recommended as eligible for NRHP listing under *Criterion A*.

No information was found to suggest eligibility under *Criterion B: Significant Person*.

Under *Criterion C: Architecture/ Engineering*, the property contains an example of a mid-twentieth-century ground-level water reservoir of concrete construction. Ground-level reservoirs were the most common and most economical form of municipal water storage in the mid-twentieth century and have remained so through the present day; these structures were constructed as an alternative to elevated water towers at locations where ground elevations allowed and where an unobtrusive aesthetic was preferred.² No information was found to suggest that this type of prestressed concrete construction was particularly innovative or unique at the time the subject reservoir was built. In addition, neither of the adjacent astylistic utility buildings display any architectural distinction. Because of its lack of architectural and engineering distinction, the property is not recommended as eligible for NRHP listing under *Criterion C*.

Sunset Well 6 and Reservoir – 2320 W. Sunset Drive (AHI 247653, 247654)

This property consists of a concrete, ground-level water reservoir and a Contemporary well building; both were constructed between 1959 and 1960. The circular concrete reservoir features poured concrete walls and a domed concrete roof with a metal ventilator at its center. A small shed is located at the northwest side of the reservoir; the shed is clad in vinyl siding and features a shed roof and a metal door it is northwest wall. A Contemporary style well building is located east of the reservoir. This building is T-shaped in plan with stone veneer and concrete block walls and a flat roof. The south elevation of the building is constructed in an undulating form and is clad in stone veneer (portions of which have fallen away) with concrete coping along its upper edge. The remaining walls are of concrete block construction with metal security doors and tinted, fixed-sash windows located in the east, north, and west walls.

¹ "Report on Pitometer Measurements and Studies, Waukesha, Wisconsin," prepared for City of Waukesha by Pitometer Associates Engineers, August 1958.

² Mark Ludwigson, "Water Storage Tanks," PDH Academy, <https://pdhacademy.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/378-Water-Storage-Tanks.pdf> (accessed April 18, 2025).



Sunset Well 6 and Reservoir, 2320 W. Sunset Dr., reservoir (AHI 247654), looking east (top); utility building (AHI 247653), looking northeast (bottom left) and southeast (bottom right).

Under *Criterion A: History*, the property is associated with the City of Waukesha's municipal water utility in the mid-twentieth century. However, it is one of at least three properties with this association; others include Well 5 at 1430 S. East Avenue (see above) and Well 7 at S31W27521 W. Sunset Drive (an astylistic utilitarian structure built in 1963). Following an examination of City water utility records, no information was found to suggest that the subject well and reservoir were constructed as part of a comprehensive, long-range master plan for the city's water utility; rather, it appears that Well 6 (like others of this period) was constructed as needed to accommodate increased residential development as the city annexed additional land at its southwestern edge.³ As such, no evidence was found to indicate that Well 6 is of particular significance in the area of *Community Planning and Development* or of greater significance within the history of Waukesha's water utility system during this period than other water utility resources that were constructed to serve new post-World War II residential developments. As such, it is not recommended as eligible for NRHP listing under *Criterion A*.

³ "Report on Pitometer Measurements and Studies, Waukesha, Wisconsin," prepared for City of Waukesha by Pitometer Associates Engineers, August 1958.

No information was found to suggest eligibility under *Criterion B: Significant Person*.

Under *Criterion C: Architecture/Engineering*, the property contains an example of a mid-twentieth-century ground-level water reservoir of concrete construction. Ground-level reservoirs were the most common and most economical form of municipal water storage in the mid-twentieth century and have remained so through the present day; these structures were constructed as an alternative to elevated water towers at locations where ground elevations allowed and where an unobtrusive aesthetic was preferred.⁴ No information was found to suggest that this type of prestressed concrete construction was particularly innovative or unique at the time the subject reservoir was built. In addition, though the adjacent utility building is a clear example of Contemporary design as applied to an otherwise utilitarian structure, the building is not especially unique within the context of Contemporary architecture in the City of Waukesha (WHPD contains records for 119 Contemporary buildings in the city, including multiple public/municipal buildings including multiple schools, a post office, county buildings, a fire station, park and recreational buildings, and a public parking ramp). Because of its lack of individual distinction within architectural and engineering contexts, Well 6 is not recommended as eligible for NRHP listing under *Criterion C*.

West Avenue Chemical Storage – 223 S. West Avenue (AHI 247652)

This astylistic utilitarian building was constructed in 1930. It is irregular in plan with rock-faced concrete block walls and a flat roof; a slight parapet wall rises above the roofline of the south and west elevations and rock-faced concrete block piers rise above this at the northwest and southwest corners. Large, rectangular expanses of smooth concrete block and stucco punctuate each façade indicating the infill of former window and door openings. The north elevation contains a metal, overhead garage door and a metal pedestrian-scale door.



West Avenue Chemical Storage, 223 S. West Ave., AHI 247652, looking southwest.

⁴ Mark Ludwigson, "Water Storage Tanks," PDH Academy, <https://pdhacademy.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/378-Water-Storage-Tanks.pdf> (accessed April 18, 2025).

Under *Criterion A: History*, the building originally served as Waukesha Pumping Station No. 8 and is associated with the City of Waukesha's municipal water utility system in the post-springs era (post-1918). However, no information was found to suggest that this small utility building was of particular significance within the context of the city's water utility system during this period as it was neither the first nor the last well to be constructed as part of the city's efforts to improve its water supply by drilling deeper wells in the 1930s and 1940s; two of the city's more substantial water utility buildings from this era have been NRHP listed so that the subject building is not particularly distinctive within this context. In addition, the building predates the New Deal era so that it has no connection with the Works Progress Administration (WPA) or other Depression-era work relief programs that facilitated public works projects later in the decade. As such, it is not recommended as eligible for NRHP listing under *Criterion A*.

No information was found to suggest eligibility under *Criterion B: Significant Person*.

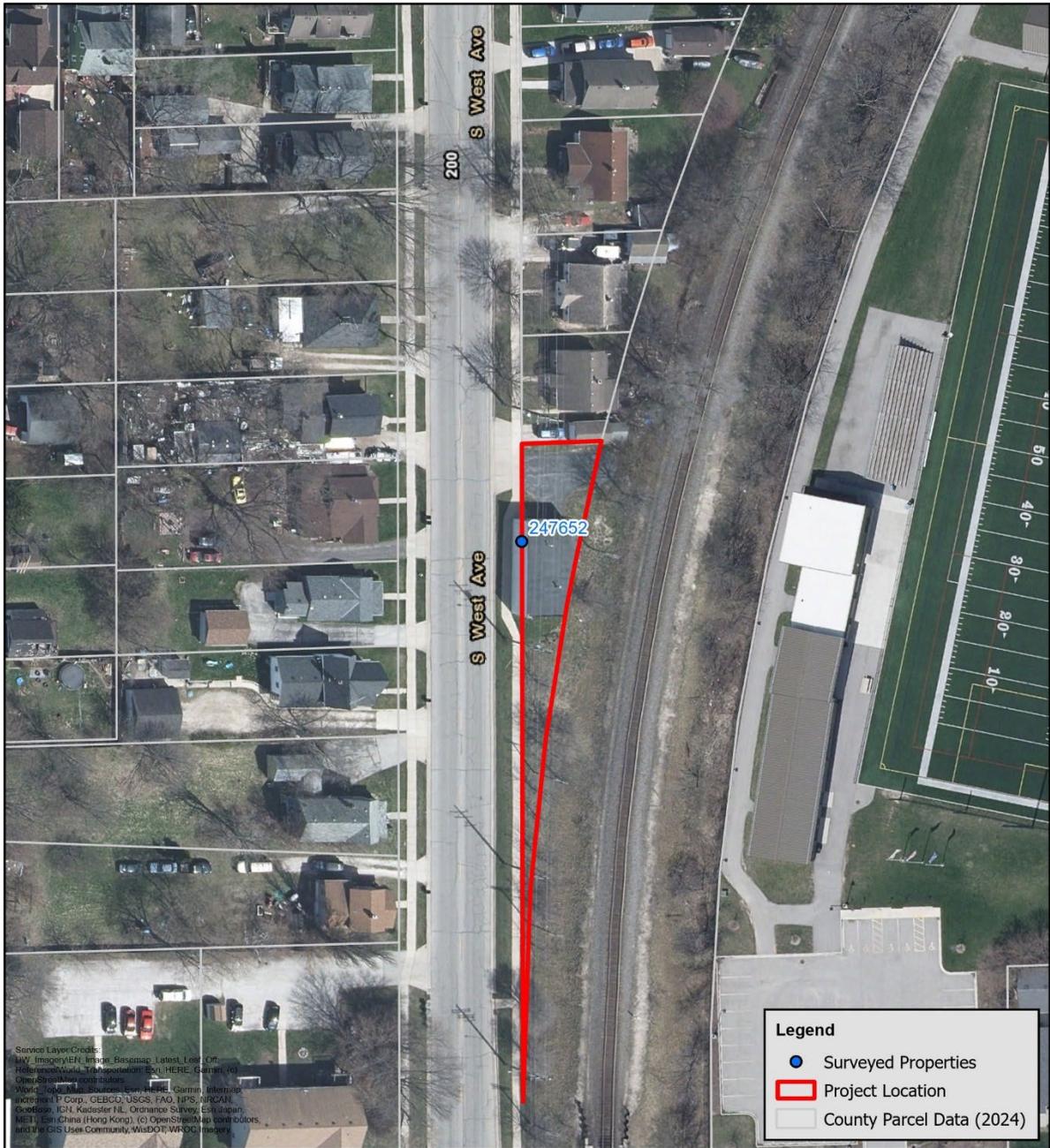
Under *Criterion C: Architecture*, the building is in good condition but retains a low degree of integrity due to the infill of original window/door openings. In addition, the building's utilitarian design does not compare favorably with the two NRHP-listed Art Deco style water utility buildings in Waukesha that were constructed in the same period. Because of its low degree of integrity and lack of architectural distinction, the building is not recommended as eligible for NRHP listing under *Criterion C*.

Results

The result of this investigation is that all three properties were identified as meeting SHPO survey criteria. However, none of these properties is recommended as eligible for NRHP listing. No further architecture/history investigation is recommended. If you have any questions or concerns with the findings of the architecture/history investigation, please feel free to contact me at grklein@uwm.edu.

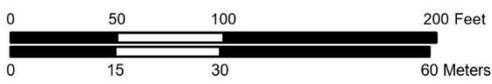
Best Regards,

Gail Klein
Architectural Historian
UWM-Cultural Resource Management



Map Details: UWM-CRM 2025-0239
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983 HARN Wisconsin TM
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: North American 1983 HARN
 Created by: UWM-CRM 4/16/2025
 WHPD Layers Reference: 4/16/2025
 Layout Design: N. J. Weber

223 S. West Ave.
 City of Waukesha Water Utility
 City of Waukesha, Waukesha County
 T6N R19E Section 8, 10, 15



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