

Minutes of the Landmarks Commission's Public Hearing, held at 6:30 p.m. on October 29, 1990, in the Lower Level Hearing Room 107, City Hall, 201 Delafield Street. The Public Hearing was held in order to hear public comments concerning the proposed designation of the historic Northwestern Hotel, commonly called the Club 400, 322 Williams Street, as a Local Landmark in the City of Waukesha.

Members Present: Chairman John M. Schoenknecht, Marilyn Hagerstrand, Ellen Folsom, Deborah Hankel, Charles F. Calkins, George W. Gunn, and Evelyn Vrakas

Members Absent: Ald. Tim Nekich and Jean Batha, excused

Others Present: Daniel J. Pokwinski, Kathleen Otradovec

Staff Present: Planner David Kopp, Secretary

Chairman Schoenknecht called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m., noting that Staff had been delayed by another meeting. When Staff was ready, Chairman Schoenknecht called the meeting to order and explained the reason for the Public Hearing, which was to consider Local Landmarks status for the Northwestern Hotel. He said that all interested parties would be given an opportunity to be heard on the matter, and then called upon Secretary Kopp to give a Staff report on the property in question.

Secretary Kopp then gave a brief architectural description of the building, describing its Queen Anne architecture with such features as brackets, decorative brickwork, rosettes and the highly decorative metal cornice with the rounded pediment. In response to Chairman Schoenknecht's question, he said that Staff recommended in favor of the nomination.

Chairman Schoenknecht then reported that he had received two other communications on the matter, and both had offered corrections to the Freeman story on the Northwestern Hotel which had appeared earlier in the day. One mentioned that Ralph Polfuss was Les Paul's uncle, not brother, while the other stated that the building had been called "Mary's Soda Shop" during the Prohibition era of the 30's.

Turning to the public which was present, Chairman Schoenknecht asked Mr. Pokwinski and Ms. Otradovec for their comments. Both were in favor of the designation.

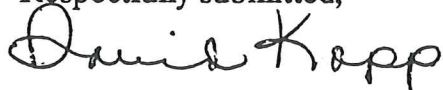
Chairman Schoenknecht then closed the meeting to public comments and called for discussion by the Commissioners. Mr. Calkins wondered if AIA had a copy of the original building plans, and Mr. Gunn offered to check on this. He also asked if there was any information on Valentine Imig, the building's architect, or his family, and Mr. Pokwinski volunteered that he thought that there had been some County Historical Society records on him, but that many had been lost in a fire in the 1890's. Another source might be Lorayne Ritt at the Freeman, Secretary Kopp added. Chairman Schoenknecht then asked about the origin of the common name, "Club 400", and Mr. Pokwinski said that was traceable to the "400" train which stopped at the historic Milwaukee and Madison Depot across the street, now known simply as "the Depot". He also said that the nearness of the old Fox Head 400 Brewery was also a likely contributing factor. Ms. Hagerstrand wondered about the facade, and Secretary Kopp described the Queen Anne store front, with its' traditional symmetry. He used the Hartmann rendering to help illustrate the point, explaining that the doorway would have been shown in the center of the facade if there hadn't been a physical barrier or obstruction to that location. The doorway was recreated to the east instead. Mr. Pokwinski then told them that a prior remodeling of the building had included the removal of centrally located, curved steps, which also helped to explain the exceptionally tall first floor facade. Then Ms. Vrakas suggested that video taped interviews with Les Paul be pursued, concerning the Northwestern Hotel among other items. Chairman Schoenknecht then said that he was very pleased with the nomination, and commended Mr. Pokwinski on the work he had done in restoring the property to a position of prominence. Mr. Pokwinski graciously shared credit with Secretary Kopp, reporting that he had offered the Commission's assistance on the project when he had seen Mr. Pokwinski on a ladder, working on the side of the building. Shortly thereafter, the design services of Mr. Hartmann were secured for the building, along with a \$500 LCP&R grant for paint work from the Commission as well. The rest, it could be said, was history.

Prior to official action on the nomination being taken, Secretary Kopp recommended that any new historical information, which involved the property or Mr. Paul, be added to the nomination. This was in reference to the Commission's intention to have a consultant examine the property and submit a National Register nomination for the building when the research was finished. Ms. Hankel then moved to designate the historic Northwestern Hotel, (Club 400) as a Local Landmark, and Ms. Folsom seconded this. Mr. Calkins then asked if the Commission should have visited the building as a group prior to the meeting? It was agreed that it should have done so. However, the consensus was that the Commission had considered this nomination to be an exception to the rule. Due to Mr. Pokwinski's desire to use the Historic Building Codes (DILHR Chapter 70) in order to remodel the interior, it was necessary to be designated as either a Local Landmark or be on the National Register. The later procedure would take quite a while, whereas the status of "Local Landmark" could be granted much more quickly. The group tour was reaffirmed for future nominations. Chairman Schoenknecht then called the question, and the



designation of the Northwestern Hotel (Club 400) was unanimously supported. Secretary Kopp then was directed by Chairman Schoenknecht to complete the steps that remained in order to fulfill the ordinance's requirements for official designation, and he so agreed. The Public Hearing then adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Kopp". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

David M. Kopp, MUP  
Planner and Secretary  
to the Commission