

Italian Workmen's Club

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

United States Department of the 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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Italian Workmen's Club

Other names/site number: Club Lavoratori Italiani Sicilia di Mutuo Soccorso e Beneficenza

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing):

### 2. Location

Street & number: 914 Regent Street

City or town: Madison State: WI County: Dane

Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

### 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 at the following

level(s) of significance: ☐ National ☐ Statewide ☒ Local

Applicable National Register Criteria ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	<b>Date</b>
Daina Penkiunas, Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Officer	
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	
In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ Entered in the National Register
- ☐ Determined eligible for the National Register
- ☐ Determined not eligible for the National Register
- ☐ Removed from the National Register
- ☐ Other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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 ☐

Site ☐

Structure ☐

Object ☐

##### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

1

Buildings

Sites

Structures

Objects

0

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

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## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL/meeting hall

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL/meeting hall

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Moderne

Classical Revival

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK/STONE/CONCRETE/METAL (roof)

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## Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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## Summary Paragraph

The original portion of the still highly intact Italian Workmen's Club's clubhouse was a one-story-tall, rectilinear plan, probably Front Gable Vernacular Form building built in 1922 by the members of the Italian Workmen's Club (IWC) as a clubhouse for men of Italian descent and as a community center for their families. This building was built on a 40-foot-wide by 80-foot-deep lot that fronted onto the east-west-running Regent Street, a major thoroughfare that passed through what was then a densely populated residential neighborhood where nearly all of the IWC members lived. The building measured 29.5-feet-wide by about 60-feet-deep, it had poured

concrete foundation walls that enclosed a full basement story, the walls that rested on this foundation were clad in white brick, and its main façade faced south onto Regent Street. This building's first story contained a large meeting hall, while another meeting room was also located in the basement story. In 1936, the IWC's members decided to enlarge their building by adding a 10-foot addition to the front of it and an 8-foot addition to the rear and they also added a new brown-brick-clad main façade at this time as well that was designed by the prominent Madison architectural firm of Law, Law, and Potter and whose design combined both Classical and Moderne Style elements.<sup>1</sup> The resulting building now occupies almost all of its lot save for a ten-foot-wide alleyway along its east side, its 1936 design is still largely intact, and the building is still used by the Italian Workmen's Club as its clubhouse today. The building's setting has changed greatly since it was first built, however. In 1922, the clubhouse's location was in a small three-block-long commercial shopping district that was crossed by North and South Park Street and situated on both sides of Regent Street, and the building was flanked on the west by two single-family dwellings (one now non-extant) and on the east by a two-story-tall brick-clad Twentieth Century Commercial Style commercial building (extant). This shopping district served a predominantly Italian American residential neighborhood that was located to the south and southeast of it and while this district was extended several more blocks to the west in the years that followed, those blocks that flanked the clubhouse's block continued primarily to serve the surrounding residential district. This pattern continued until the early 1960s, when urban renewal projects leveled the residential district and forced the resettlement of its residents. Since then, portions of the cleared area have been taken over by the expanded former Madison General Hospital (now Meriter Hospital), by medical office buildings and clinics, and by new apartment buildings serving mostly University of Wisconsin (UW) students. Today, this portion of Regent Street is still a commercial district, but all but three of the other early twentieth century commercial buildings and multi-family dwellings that once lined these blocks of Regent Street have now been demolished, leaving the Italian Workmen's Club clubhouse, the two-story commercial building next door, a two-flat dwelling, and one other two-story commercial building located a block away, as the only surviving historic remnants of the buildings that served what was once a thriving historic ethnic neighborhood.

## Narrative Description

### Setting

The Italian Workmen's Club's Clubhouse occupies most of its flat 40-foot-wide by 80-foot-deep lot and its main façade faces south onto Regent Street, an important east-west-running thoroughfare that begins one block to the east at its point of intersection with West Washington Avenue and then continues west as a commercial district some nine blocks to its point of intersection with Monroe Street.<sup>2</sup> This district contains a mix of commercial buildings, restaurants and bars dating from the 1920s up to the present day, as well as modern apartment

<sup>1</sup> City of Madison Building Permit, dated March 10, 1936.

<sup>2</sup> Regent Street then continues many miles further to the west through a number of residential neighborhoods.

building complexes catering to students attending the nearby University of Wisconsin, and buildings housing the Meriter Hospital Complex and various other medical clinics and offices.

The block on which the Clubhouse sits is bounded on the south by Regent Street, on the west by N. Brooks Street, on the north by College Court, and on the east by N. Park Street, the principal north-south-running thoroughfare in this area. Each side of this block is edged by concrete curb and gutter and by concrete sidewalks and the buildings located on the Regent Street and College Court sides of the block, including the clubhouse, are almost all built out to the back edges of these sidewalks. Land in this area is flat and the west half of this block contains the Clubhouse and two houses: 915 College Court, a Dutch Colonial Style house built in 1929; and 918 Regent Street, a late Queen Anne Style two-unit house built in 1910. Also located on this half of the block are two modern post-World War II one-story-tall commercial buildings; 916 Regent Street, and 9 N. Brooks Street. This mix of building types and building construction dates was typical of this commercial district in the post-World War II years and it typified this entire block until as recently as 2009. In that year, however, all the then existing buildings in the east half of the block, excepting only the still extant two-story-tall Twentieth Century Commercial Style Di Salvo building located at 910-12 Regent Street, were demolished to make way for a new six-story Modern Movement Style apartment building (4 N. Park Street) that caters to UW students. Likewise, the entire block on the south side of the 900 block of Regent Street opposite the Clubhouse was demolished several decades ago in order to make way for a large four-story medical clinic (20 S. Park Street) and its parking lot. Also demolished several decades ago was the block just to the north on the north side of College Court, which now contains a large three-story student apartment complex and the same is true of the block to the east as well, located across N. Park Street, which is now occupied by very large six-story-tall Modern Movement Style UW residence halls and UW office buildings.

This same pattern of demolition of the old and rebuilding with new, much larger buildings of different types still continues in this neighborhood today. In this year (2023), the entire north side of the 800 block of Regent Street, the only other part of the historic commercial district that still contained commercial buildings associated with the area's former Italian American community, was leveled to make way for a 10-story-tall mixed-use complex that is currently under construction.

## **Exterior**

The Italian Workmen's Club Clubhouse is rectilinear in plan, one-story-tall, measures 29.50-feet-wide by 80-feet-deep, and rests on poured concrete foundation walls that enclose a full partially raised basement story. The exterior walls that rest on this foundation are clad in brick of two different kinds. The original 1922 building had walls clad in white brick and this brick is still visible on the building's east-and-west-facing side elevations and on its west-facing rear elevation. The south-facing main façade, however, is clad in brown brick and this brick continues around both corners for the first twenty feet on both the east and west side elevations. These walls are sheltered on the east and west by the overhanging boxed eaves of the gable main roof, which has a ridgeline that runs north-south and which is now clad in standing seam metal

roofing. Brick parapets protect the roof's north and south ends, the south parapet of which is taller and more elaborately designed.

### South-Facing Main Facade

The actual appearance of the main south-facing Regent Street façade of the 1922 building is still unknown. No photographs of the building prior to 1936 have yet been found. What is known is that the building's main entrance opened onto Regent Street, that it was located some six feet above street level, that it was reached by ascending a wide staircase, and that there was a wide front porch. In all likelihood, the original main façade probably had a typical Front Gable vernacular form that was symmetrical in design and had a centered main entrance door flanked by two or more window openings, but this is still conjectural at this point in time.

In 1936, the IWC decided to expand the building by deepening it another 18 feet. This involved expanding the building 10-feet forward to the rear edge of the concrete sidewalk that edged the lot on Regent Street and 8-feet back to the rear lot line. The new main façade was surfaced entirely in variegated, mostly brown bricks laid in American Bond and the façade's design combined minimal Classical and Art Moderne elements.<sup>3</sup> This façade is the one that is still present today and it is 29.5-feet-wide, symmetrical in design, and five-bays-wide, and the poured concrete foundations walls beneath the front addition are visible at the base of the façade. Classical elements predominate on this façade. The façade's first (west) and fifth (east) bays are both framed by full-height slightly projecting pilaster strips. A single tall, thin, flat-arched window opening is located in the first story of each of these two bays and each opening has a dressed stone sill and contains a double-hung wood sash one-over-one-light window. A small thin, vertically positioned purely decorative dressed stone plaque is placed higher up above these windows in each of these bays and each pilaster strip has a minimal stone capital that forms part of the coping that edges the parapet that crowns the façade. This coping is horizontal above these two bays, but it angles upward above the second and fourth bays until it reaches the shaped portion that surmounts the third or center bay. These second and fourth bays once had an oblong window opening located near the base of each bay and these openings each had a dressed stone sill and contained a two-light window. In the 1980's remodeling, however, these openings were bricked shut, although the stone sills are still in place.<sup>4</sup>

The third or center bay contains the deeply inset main entrance door to the clubhouse. This door is reached by ascending a single concrete step and an historic photo taken about the time the building was finished suggests that this flat-arched door opening originally contained a pair of

<sup>3</sup> The original 1935 Law, Law and Potter drawing for this façade and two floorplans are still extant and in the possession of Potter Lawson, Architects in Madison, the successor firm to Law, Law and Potter.

<sup>4</sup> The 1935 drawing of this façade does not show these windows and it is not known if they were added later or at the time of construction. This drawing also shows that originally, both the two windows in the first and fifth bays were meant to be covered with decorative wrought iron grills, another similar grill would have covered the transom above the entrance, and a wrought iron balconet was to have been placed above the entrance door surround. None of these elements were in place when the building was finished, however, and they were apparently deleted once construction began. .

four-light over two panel doors that were surmounted by large single light transom. Today, however, the opening contains a single flush steel door that has a one-light full-height sidelight to its right (east), but there is still a large one-light transom placed above it. This opening is simply enframed with dressed stone and the lintel above the opening bears the incised words "Italian Workmen's Club." This stonework is itself enframed by a somewhat wider frame consisting of slightly projecting stretcher bricks laid in a stack bond, and the uppermost portion of this frame located above the lintel also has a thin classically derived stone molding placed across it as well. Placed on the wall surface above this entranceway is circular concrete plaque crafted by Frank Schwoegler of the Bayview Stone Quarry consisting of a Trinacria, which is a Sicilian symbol consisting of a head of Medusa with three bent legs radiating from that symbolize the shape of Sicily.<sup>5</sup> Placed still higher up in the shaped peak of the parapet that crowns this bay is a second circular stone plaque outlined in header bricks and this one bears the date "1922" in raised numbers.

The most important Moderne Style-influenced element in the design of this façade is the use of projecting courses of brick that span the entire width of the façade at regular intervals and that also extend around both corners of the building. These courses are comprised of stretcher bricks and every sixth course projects outward slightly from the façade's wall surface. The visual impact of these courses of brick varies greatly depending on the amount and angle of the light that falls on them. Under some light conditions, however, these courses project a strong horizontal emphasis that gives the facade a very different, more modern appearance than the more classical one it usually has.

#### West-Facing Side Elevation

The 80-foot-wide west-facing side elevation of the clubhouse is asymmetrical in design and eight-bays-wide. The south 11.5-feet of this elevation projects out one-foot from the rest of the elevation and consists of the west-facing side of the 1936 addition to the clubhouse. This section also has the top of its poured concrete foundation wall visible at its base, while the rest of the wall surface above is a continuation of the variegated brown brick used on the main façade, complete with the same projecting sixth courses of brick mentioned above. This section is itself asymmetrical in design and one-bay-wide, with this bay being positioned to the left (north) on the section's wall surface and containing a flat-arched window opening in its basement story that contains six glass blocks. The bay's first story contains a single tall, thin, flat-arched window opening of the same type and size as the ones on the main façade and it also contains a double-hung wood sash one-over-one-light window, but here the windowsill is made out of header bricks rather than dressed stone.

The remainder of this elevation is the original side elevation of the 1922 clubhouse plus the 8-foot-wide addition that was added in 1936. The lowest portion of this elevation consists of the top portion of the poured concrete foundation wall that encircles the raised basement story that underlies the building. Placed at the foot of each of its seven bays is a flat-arched basement

<sup>5</sup> This plaque also bears the word "Sicily" above the Trinacria and the date "1912" below it.

window opening that is set into the foundation wall, and each opening contains a two-light double hung wood sash window that extends below ground level, and which is protected by a grid of metal bars for security. The wall surface of the southernmost bay (Bay # 1) of this portion of this elevation is clad in the same brown brick as the main façade but the projecting courses of brick were not continued here and there are no other openings in this bay aside from the window in the basement story. The remainder of this elevation is clad in white brick and there were originally five tall, flat-arched window openings (Bays # 2-6) containing one-over-one-light double hung windows arrayed evenly across its width, each with a basement window below it, while the last, northernmost bay (Bay # 7) contained a similar but somewhat less tall window opening. In 1984-85, however, the lower two-thirds of three of these openings (Bays # 2, 3, 5 from the south) were filled with brick while the upper thirds were filled with a single light. In addition, the window opening in Bay # 4 was also filled with brick and a metal vent was inserted in its upper portion, the window opening in Bay # 6 was converted into a side entrance door containing a flush steel door, and the less tall window opening in Bay # 7 had its window removed and a large metal vent inserted into it instead.

#### North-Facing Rear Elevation

The 29.5-foot-wide rear elevation of the clubhouse is also clad in white bricks, and it rests on poured concrete foundation walls that are visible above grade. This elevation has no openings of any kind, and it is crowned by a brick parapet wall whose upper edge is protected by concrete coping and whose shape follows the shape of the north end of the building's gable roof.

#### East-Facing Side Elevation

The 80-foot-wide east-facing side elevation of the clubhouse is essentially identical to the west-facing side elevation, and it is also asymmetrical in design and eight-bays-wide. The south 11.5-feet of this elevation also projects out one-foot from the rest of the elevation and consists of the east-facing side of the 1936 front addition to the clubhouse. This section also has the top of its poured concrete foundation wall visible at its base, while the rest of the wall surface above is a continuation of the variegated brown brick used on the main façade, complete with the same projecting sixth courses of brick mentioned above. This section is itself asymmetrical in design and one-bay-wide, with this bay being positioned to the right (north) on the section's wall surface and containing a flat-arched window opening in its basement story that is filled with six glass blocks. The bay's first story above contains a single tall, thin, flat-arched window opening of the same type and size as the ones on the main façade and it also contains a double-hung wood sash one-over-one-light window, but here the windowsill is made out of header bricks rather than dressed stone.

The remainder of this elevation is the original side elevation of the 1922 clubhouse plus the 8-foot-wide 1936 addition. The lowest portion of this elevation consists of the top portion of the poured concrete foundation wall that encircles the raised basement story that underlies the building. The wall surface of the southernmost bay (Bay # 2) of this portion of this elevation is clad in the same brown brick as the main façade but the projecting courses of brick were not



continued here and there are no other openings in this bay. The remainder of this elevation is clad in white brick and there were originally five tall, flat-arched window openings (Bays # 3-7) containing one-over-one-light double hung windows arrayed evenly across its width, while the last, northernmost bay (Bay # 8) contained a similar but somewhat less tall window opening. In 1984-85, however, the lower two-thirds of three of these openings (Bays # 3, 4, 5 from the south) were filled with brick while the upper thirds were filled with a single light. In addition, the window opening in Bays # 2 and 6 from the south were also filled with brick and air conditioners were inserted into their upper portions, while the original window opening in Bay # 8 was converted into another side entrance and it also contains a flush steel door. Finally, a tall, thin brick chimney is also located on the east-facing slope of the building's roof.

## Interior

So far as is known, the original 1922 Italian Workmen's Club clubhouse had a single large cement-floored meeting room and a furnace room in its basement story, while another large meeting room occupied its first story. Besides the fact that a large flight of exterior steps led up to the first story entrance on the south-facing main façade of the building, however, little else is known about the clubhouse's original interior. It is likely, given the fact that many of the IWC's members worked in the building trades and that they built this building themselves, that the walls and ceilings in the interior were originally plastered. It can also be assumed that there were restroom facilities in at least one of the building's stories, but where it was is not known, nor is it known how one gained access to the basement story from either the inside or outside. Fortunately, surviving floor plans show the interior that resulted once the 1936 additions to the building were built. The new front addition contained an enclosed straight run staircase that led from a small, centered front entrance vestibule up to the first story meeting room. At the top of this staircase was a landing and doors on the walls to the left and right of the landing opened into two small L-shape plan rooms that occupied the southeast and southwest corners of the first story of the addition and which were used as coat rooms. From the landing one then entered directly into the first story meeting room, at the north end of which a new 8.5-foot-deep addition had been built that contained a full-width stage. This stage had a raised floor, and its large flat-arched opening faced south into the room, and was flanked on both sides by a wide, fluted pilaster strip. A door located just to the east of the stage opening led backstage. Once through this door, one found oneself in a room that contained a small run of stairs to the left (west) that led up to the stage and a new second staircase at the back of the room that led down to the basement story.

The new principal entrance to the basement story was via two L-shape plan staircases that descended from both sides of the new front entrance vestibule down to the basement story. Door openings located at the bottom of each staircase opened directly into the main meeting room beyond and also to new men's and women's restrooms that occupied (and still occupy) the southeast and southwest corners of this story of the addition. Most of the rest of this story still consisted of a single large meeting room, but partition walls at its north end created a meeting room for a Boy's Club, a boiler room and coal storage room, and a room at the north end that housed the staircase that descended from the first story stage above.

Otherwise, the updated 1936 Clubhouse building still retained its two large basement story and first story meeting rooms and it still does today, although both have now been altered more than once to meet new demands.

The principal entrance door to the clubhouse is centered on its main façade, it is deeply inset, and there is a single poured concrete step in front of the door. One passes through this door into the entrance vestibule, and directly in front is a flight of steps that leads up to the main story, while to the left (west) and right (east) as one enters are two flights of steps that lead down to the basement story. The walls of this vestibule, and also the walls that enclose all three staircases, are clad in varnished tongue-and-groove pine boards while the ceilings above are now covered in painted drywall. Proceeding up the steps to the first story one reaches a landing, and one then passes through a flat-arched opening containing a one-light wood entrance door to the right (east) and a less wide one-light wood sidelight to the left (west) into a hallway inside. This hallway runs east-west and spans the width of the building. The north wall of this hallway consists of a thick partition wall that separates the hallway from the large meeting room to the north.<sup>6</sup> Large flat-arched openings that lead into the meeting room are placed at either end of this wall, and both this wall and all the rest of the walls in the hallway are clad in painted vertical board paneling. The south wall of this hallway contains the opening to the front staircase in its center and there are two other flat-arched entrance door openings located at either end of this wall that open into two small rooms that are located at either end of the hallway. These rooms occupy the southwest and southeast corners of the first story, they were originally used as coatrooms but are now used primarily for storage, and both receive light from single windows placed on their south-facing walls and on either their east or west-facing walls. In addition, two large, illuminated, glass front display cabinets are set into the hallway's south wall in between the center door opening and the two end door openings, and these cabinets display IWC memorabilia.

The large meeting room measures 60-feet-deep by 32-feet-wide, and its floor is covered in either vinyl or linoleum tiles, its walls are clad in the same painted vertical board paneling used in the entrance hallway, and it has a flat grid type drop ceiling into which recessed lights are placed at regular intervals. The south wall of this room is the later partition wall that separates the hallway from the meeting room. There is a very large illuminated, glass front display cabinet centered in this wall that displays IWC memorabilia and it is surrounded on both sides and below by additional storage space that is concealed by sliding doors and by flush wood doors. IWC memorabilia also covers much of the wall surface on both the east and west sides of this room and it also now covers some of the reduced window openings on these walls as well, only two of which still admit outside light today on the west wall and three more on the east wall. There is also a side exit door located to the north on the room's west wall as well. It is the north wall of the meeting room, however, that has seen the greatest changes, once in 1936 and again in 1985. When the clubhouse was enlarged in 1936, the extra length that was gained permitted the construction of a stage at this end of the room. Historic photos show that the room's new north

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<sup>6</sup> The 1935 floor plans of the building show that this partition wall is a later addition. In 1936, one would have entered directly into the first story meeting room after ascending the new main stairs.

wall had a large opening centered on it, that this opening had a flat arch shape with rounded corners, that it was flanked by fluted pilaster strips on both sides, and that the stage was deeply inset within this arch and had a raised floor. In 1985, however, this stage was removed, and the space was remodeled to house a large open kitchen and its equipment that is still in place today.

The clubhouse's basement story is reached by using one of the two twin staircases that descend from the front entrance vestibule. Originally, the 1922 basement story consisted of a single large meeting room, although it can be assumed that there was also a furnace room located on this level as well. When the 1936 addition was built, new bathrooms were built at the base of each staircase and portions of the meeting room's north end were partitioned off for a club room for boys and for storage. In 1953-54, however, the basement meeting room was turned into a bar that at first served IWC members only. No picture of this interior has yet been found, but in 1966, the space was remodeled and upgraded, and it is believed that this space acquired its current appearance at that time. Known from 1966 till 1993 as the Cellar Bar, one enters this space from either of the two staircases that open into the room from two openings in the room's south wall. This room has a tile-covered concrete floor, a drop ceiling, and walls that are paneled in varnished, vertically positioned tongue-and-groove pine boards. The room's dominant feature is the large, curved bar that is located along most of the room's east wall. This bar has a wide bar top edged with a wood curb, the bar wall below is composed of thin vertical tongue and groove pieces of varnished wood, and a terrazzo foot rail is placed at its base. Tables and chairs furnish the room, comfortable bar stools serve the bar, and there is space partitioned off the rear (north) of the room for a kitchen. In 1993, a new lessee took over the bar and since then it has been known as the Greenbush Bar and it is still in operation today.

## **Landscape**

The Italian Workmen's Club's clubhouse occupies almost all of its rectilinear 40-foot-wide by 80-foot-deep lot, excepting only a blacktopped 10-foot-wide alleyway that extends from Regent Street north to the rear of the lot. A concrete sidewalk edged with concrete curb and gutter is located in front of the building and the clubhouse is built out to the rear (north) edge of this sidewalk. Otherwise, the clubhouse's alleyway is shared by the Di Salvo Building, an historic two-story commercial building (910-912 Regent St.) that is located immediately to the east of the Clubhouse, while a small one-story-tall Modern Movement Style commercial building (916 Regent St.) is located immediately to the west and this building sits at the back of its lot and has a concrete-paved parking lot placed in front of it.

## **Integrity**

While changes have been made to the Italian Workmen's Club's clubhouse over its 101-year existence, the building that exists today is essentially the same one that existed after the 1936 extensions were added to the original front and rear. Changes to the exterior since 1936 include the replacement of the original front doors, the filling in of the two small basement story window openings on the main façade, possibly in 1966, the partial filling in of most of the window openings on the side elevations in 1991, and the addition of the standing seam metal roof, date

unknown. Changes to the interior of the first story since 1936 include the resurfacing of all of its wall surfaces, the addition of a drop ceiling in the main meeting room, and the replacement of the former 1936 stage space at the north end of the room with the kitchen that now occupies this space in 1991. Changes to the interior of the basement story since 1936 include the resurfacing of all of its wall surfaces with vertical pine boards and the construction of the room's curved bar, both probably done in 1966, and the installation of a drop ceiling below the original one. These changes notwithstanding, the clubhouse of today would be immediately recognizable to anyone who was a member in 1936. Such changes that have taken place have all happened in response to the evolving needs of the Club and many of them were actually constructed by the IWC members themselves. What is most important now is that the building continues to be the meeting place for the IWC's members today and also for others of Italian descent who are discovering an interest in their heritage. The neighborhood that surrounded the clubhouse up until the early 1960's has changed beyond recognition, however, and the tight-knit Italian American community that the clubhouse was built to serve is now scattered across Madison and beyond. What has not changed is the Italian Workmen's Club and its clubhouse, which was created to serve as an anchor for newly arrived immigrants from Italy and which now finds itself acting as a heritage center whose work is increasingly to memorialize those early members and to help their descendants keep in touch with their rich heritage.

END OF DESCRIPTION, DO NOT DELETE

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for 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.)

Dane County, Wisconsin  
County and State

- ☐ 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social History

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is checked.)

N/A

**Period of Significance**

1922-2023

**Cultural Affiliation**

Italian American

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Law, Law & Potter (1936)

Italian Workmen's Club

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Italian Workmen's Club's Clubhouse is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) at the local level of significance for its rich associations with the social history (Criteria A) of the Italian American community in Madison, Wisconsin. Immigrants from southern Europe, and Italy in particular, did not begin to arrive in Madison until the first decade of the twentieth century and the few who came first were often illiterate, spoke no English, and often had skills that were a poor fit with the needs of the urban centers in the United States that they found themselves in. Most of them had also arrived here without families and were isolated both by language and by culture from the larger society that surrounded them here. In Madison, these men settled in an area known as the Greenbush, and in 1912 a small group of them who were concerned about what would happen if illness or injuries kept them from working met to discuss their situation. Among them was Theodore Paratore, who had recently become aware of a similar Italian American group in Chicago that had formed a mutual benefit and aid society to help them deal with such problems and he proposed that the Madison community should do the same. This idea was quickly adopted and in 1912 the Club Lavoratori Italiani Sicilia di Mutuo Soccorso e Beneficenza, better known as the Italian Workmen's Club, was formed with 42 paying members. In the years that followed, the city's Italian community grew rapidly, and so too did the number of IWC members. By 1922, the needs of the IWC had grown to the point where its members decided to build a clubhouse of their own. The result was a 29.5-foot by 60-foot one-story-tall brick building built by the members themselves that still forms the core of the present building today. With two large new meeting rooms available, the clubhouse soon became one of the most important social centers for the city's Italian American community. In 1936, the clubhouse was extended in length and a new main façade designed by the prominent Madison architectural firm of Law, Law & Potter was built, again by the members themselves. The resulting building is still the clubhouse of the IWC today, and it continues to be a center of social activities for the Italian American community in Madison. While no longer a mutual benefit society, the IWC's members still provide thousands of dollars a year for scholarships to students of Italian descent and they also play host to a number of important Italy-related social events every year including Columbus Day celebrations and the IWC's own three-day-long Festa Italia. Regrettably, most of the surrounding Greenbush neighborhood that was the home of the city's original Italian American community was demolished by the City of Madison in the 1960s as part of its urban renewal activities and most of what remained afterwards has since been demolished to make way for medical offices and clinics and student apartments. As a result, the Italian Workmen's Club's clubhouse is now almost the only remaining building in Madison that was once historically associated with this important city ethnic group. It is also the IWC's proud belief that their club is one of the oldest, if not *the* oldest continuously operating Italian American club in the nation.

### **Period of Significance and Justification**

The period of significance of the Italian Workmen's Club's Clubhouse dates from 1922, when the original portion of the building was constructed, until 1973, when the NR's 50-year

guideline applies. The IWC is still in operation in its original building today, it continues to play an important role in the lives of Madison's citizens of Italian descent, and it is being listed at the local level of significance.

### Criteria Consideration (if applicable)

Not applicable.

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### Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Italian Workmen's Club's Clubhouse is eligible for National Register listing under Criterion A (History) at the local level of significance for its associations with the significance area of Social History. The Italian Workmen's Club was established in 1912 and was one of the earliest and most important secular institutions created to serve the city of Madison's growing, historically significant Italian American community. Remarkably, the IWC still continues to serve that same community today and it still operates out of its original building, which was built in 1922 and expanded in 1936. Other organizations that once served this same community have either now ceased operations or have been merged into other entities, including the IWC, and the buildings that were historically associated with them have now been demolished. The Italian Workmen's Club's Clubhouse is therefore the building that is now most closely associated with this important Madison community and its associations with that community are still important today.

### Historic Context

An excellent general history of the city of Madison from its beginnings up until World War I is contained in the book *Madison: A History of the Formative Years*, written by David V. Mollenhoff and from 1856-1931 in Stuart D. Levitan's book *Madison: The Illustrated Sesquicentennial History*.<sup>7</sup> In addition, a detailed history of the city and its built resources is also embodied in the *City of Madison Intensive Survey Report*, printed in 1995.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, the historic context that follows deals primarily with the history of the Italian Workmen's Club and its clubhouse and with the history of the surrounding neighborhood as it once was.

The first Euro-American settlers in Madison arrived in the 1830s and they were mostly transplanted Yankees (sometimes called "native-born") from the nation's east coast states. By 1860, however, 64% of Madison's 9000 citizens were now either foreign-born or had been born in the United States of foreign parents, and by 1880, this number had increased to 73 percent.

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<sup>7</sup> Mollenhoff, David V. *Madison: A History of the Formative Years*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003. Levitan, Stuart D. *Madison: The Illustrated Sesquicentennial History*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006, Vol. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Rankin, Katherine H. and Timothy F. Heggland. *Madison Intensive Survey Report*. Madison: City of Madison Department of Planning and Development, 1995. Two volumes.

The largest numbers of these non-native-born citizens were immigrants from Germany, with 45 percent, followed by the Irish, with 31 percent, and Norwegians, with nine percent.<sup>9</sup>

By 1905, Madison had a population of 24,000, but by this time the percentages of those in the city who were foreign born had reversed and they now made up only 15.5 percent of the total. Even so, new immigrants from Germany, Ireland, and Norway still accounted for 70 percent of the city's foreign-born population at that time, a statistic that reflected the fact that the large numbers of new immigrants that would soon begin to arrive in the United States from Russia and eastern and southern Europe was only just beginning. By way of example, in 1905, Madison still had 1412 residents who had been born in Germany but just 90 who had come from Russia and 73 from Italy.<sup>10</sup>

Among those who came to Madison from Italy seeking work and a better future at this time were a small group of men from Piana dei Greci, a small village near Palermo in Sicily. The first to come to Madison from that village is thought to have been Joseph Wrend, who arrived in 1898. Once here, Wrend went to work for a local contractor and within a few years he was joined by other men from his village. These men were typically young, many were illiterate, none spoke English, and most had been agricultural laborers in Sicily and were without skills suited to the needs of a city. What they did have, though, was determination and an endless capacity for hard work and that was to prove to be enough in the long run. Because they were at the bottom of the labor pool in Madison, though, and because in almost every instance they had left their families behind with the intention of bringing them here when they had the means to do so, every penny counted and the search for affordable housing that landlords were willing to rent to Italians meant that they had few options in Madison.

The cheapest and therefore the least desirable housing in Madison was to be found in a residential area on the near west side of the city adjacent to the railroad yards of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad.

As the families arrived to join their menfolk in Madison, they first rented rooms, then bought small houses, in a 52-acre triangle of land on the city's west side bordered roughly by West Washington [Avenue], Park and Regent Streets – a part of town known as the Greenbush.

The Greenbush began as a swampy area on the northwest edge of Lake Monona. In 1882, a German immigrant named George Pregler rented a house on South Park Street on the edge of the Greenbush Addition, a tract extending from Erin to Regent and from Park to Mills. Using money he saved from his job with the railroad (supplemented by selling milk from his cow) he bought the triangle of land between his house, the railroad and the lake in 1890 for \$5000. He filled in the marshland with construction debris, dirt and

<sup>9</sup> Mollenhoff, David V. *Madison: A History of the Formative Years*, 145.

<sup>10</sup> Levitan, Stuart D. *Madison: The Illustrated Sesquicentennial History*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006, 141.



ashes from the railroad yards, then laid out streets and lots. Pregler's property was soon regarded as part of the Greenbush Addition.

At that time, many homeowners in the downtown area were upgrading their property, and Pregler was able to buy the unwanted houses and move them to his new subdivision. He also built small, cheap houses on some of his lots, selling them for \$5 down and \$5 to \$10 a month. In 1905, the city filled in more of the swampy property when it began dredging the shore of Lake Monona on the southern edge of Greenbush to create Brittingham Park.<sup>11</sup>

Cheap new three-story wooden apartment buildings were also put up in Pregler's Addison by developers at this time, where they towered over the smaller, older houses that had been moved to the neighborhood from elsewhere in the city. Substandard though these buildings may have seemed to outsiders, though, they nevertheless became homes to persons belonging to ethnic groups that Madison landlords of that day were otherwise unwilling to rent or sell to.

The Greenbush neighborhood (aka the Bush) was known as the "Italian Colony," but there were also many Jews from Eastern Europe and blacks who called it home. White and black families often shared the same houses, sometimes with a dozen families crammed into three-story buildings, and each family allotted two rooms. ... "People (in Greenbush) worked their way up through the American dream," Tony Bruno, vice president of the Italian Workmen's Club, told the *Daily Cardinal* earlier this year [2006]. "You got nothing, you work hard and you got something ... We got along down there because we were all in the same boat, and the name of the boat was poverty."<sup>12</sup>

Italians began to arrive in Madison in increasing numbers beginning in 1905 and among them was a group of men who, like Joseph Wrend, came from Piana dei Greci in Sicily.

Most of the Italian immigrants who made their home in the Greenbush were Sicilians, either Albanians from Piana dei Greci or ethnic Italians from Palermo, but there was also a small contingent of non-Sicilians from Lombardy, in northern Italy. Each group had its own neighborhood: the Albanians on Regent Street, the Italian Sicilians south of them around Milton Street, and the northern Italians on West Washington and Proudfit Streets. By the end of the decade, Greenbush had acquired a distinctly Italian flavor. Madisonians sometimes referred to it as Columbus Park.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Allen, Anne Beiser. *E, Paisan! A Centennial History of the Italian Workmen's Club*. Madison: Italian Workmen's Club, 2012, pp. 5-6. The actual Greenbush Addition, bounded by Erin Street, S. Park Street, S. Mills Street, and Regent Street, was platted in 1854 by Chandler B. Chapman and John Y. Smith and was Madison's first real suburban plat. The 52-acre triangle of land developed by George Pregler was located immediately to the northeast of the Greenbush Addition and was platted by him in 1901 and is properly known as Pregler's Addition. Soon afterwards, though, locals began to equate it with the older Greenbush Addition, and it began to be known known colloquially as "the Bush" or "the Triangle."

<sup>12</sup> *Wisconsin State Journal*, April 2, 2006, p. 896, (illustrated). The *Daily Cardinal* is the UW student newspaper.

<sup>13</sup> Allen, Anne Beiser. *E, Paisan! A Centennial History of the Italian Workmen's Club*, 6.

The history of the Italian Workmen's Club began in 1912, when a group of Albanian Sicilian men from Piana dei Greci who had been meeting in a small wooden building behind Angelo Maisano's store at 821 Regent Street (both non-extant) were discussing their concerns about what would happen to them if they were injured or sick or if they should die. In Italy, they would have had their extended families as a safety net but in the United States, who would look after them? One of the group, Theodore Paratore, reported that he had recently visited a friend in Chicago who told him that they should establish a mutual aid society such as existed in urban centers in Italy, where each member contributed a certain amount each month to a common fund that could be drawn on in time of need. This idea met with general approval and on January 18, 1912, the Lavoratori Italiani Siciliani Mutuo Socorse e Beneficenza Club (the Italian Workmen's Club, for short) was formed with some 42 members.<sup>14</sup>

The first founders ranged in age from 17 to 47. Although most of them were between 25 and 35. Sixteen were married, the rest single. Two were cobblers, two ran grocery stores, and one was a skilled stone mason, but most were unskilled laborers. They dug ditches, built roads and houses, laid sewer lines. Some helped to rebuild the capitol building, which had been seriously damaged by a fire in 1905. Others laid track for the ill-fated urban rail line between Madison and Janesville. They worked at the Lorillard Tobacco factory, the Badger State Shoe Company, or the C.M. & St. [railroad] roundhouse. City Engineer John Icke hired many of them to work for the city. Many of them continued to work for him after 1912, when he set up his own construction company.<sup>15</sup>

In 1914, the IWC's members drew up a constitution and elected a slate of officers, and on June 14, 1915, the IWC was officially incorporated. Membership was limited to men of Italian parentage who were at least 18 and in good health and meetings were conducted in Italian. Such an organization was needed because the Italian-born population in Madison was growing rapidly. By 1917, their numbers had increased from 73 in 1905 to 1200, almost all of whom were living in the Bush, and these numbers were also reflected in the steady increase in the numbers of IWC members as well. Almost immediately, though, the IWC became much more than just a mutual benefit society.

Although its original purpose was to insure its members' financial security, the club was also a social center. The men met regularly after work to relax, play card games like scupa, briscola or trisetta, and to exchange news of the day. It gave them an opportunity to relax and speak Italian among men who shared a common history. The relationships

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<sup>14</sup> Translated as the "Sicilian Italian Workers Mutual Aid and Charity." In February 1912, the Greenbush's Italian Sicilian men formed a similar organization of their own, called the Societa Italiano Mutuo Secorso Bersaglieri La Marmora (the Bersaglieri, for short). Some IWC members were also members of the Bersaglieri as well. See: Murray, Catherine Tripalin. *A Taste of Memories from the old "BUSH."* Vol. 2. Madison, 1990, p. 11.

<sup>15</sup> Allen, Anne Beiser. *E, Paisan! A Centennial History of the Italian Workmen's Club*, 6-7. The Badger State Shoe Company is listed in the NRHP (NR Reference # 89000232). The American Tobacco Warehouses, another place of employment for Italian-Americans that was located next to the Lorillard Warehouse (non-extant) are also listed in the NRHP (NR Reference # 03000580).

formed back in Sicily were cemented by shared experiences in the new country. As more families arrived to join their menfolk, the club held dinners, picnics, and dances. There were marriages and baptisms to celebrate.<sup>16</sup>

As Madison's Italian American community grew, so too did the number of organizations it supported. One was the Italian American Political and Education Club, whose intent was to promote education and citizenship. To join, a man had to declare his intention to become a citizen. Others were associated with neighborhood churches. St. Joseph's R. C. Church was established in 1914 and built its church (non-extant) at 20 S. Park Street in 1916, while the Italian Methodist Church, begun in 1918, built a church of its own (non-extant) at 103 S. Lake Street in 1922. Both churches served not only the religious needs of their congregations but also their social and educational needs as well by supporting youth clubs, classes, and many other social activities, and IWC members attended both churches. Another especially important local institution was Neighborhood House, which now has a modern building at 29 S. Mills Street.<sup>17</sup>

There was considerable necessity to mainstream the newly settled families into the American way of life. Economic adjustments were difficult and many situations were misunderstood. To counteract problems that were beginning to surface, Madison's first community center opened in 1916 at 807 Mound Street. By 1917, the name had been changed to Neighborhood House and had moved to 25 South Park Street. A few years later, an old store with a six-room apartment above at 768 West Washington Avenue was recognized as a possible new home for the ever-expanding community service. With a promise from Italian immigrants to raise \$10,000, Thomas E. Brittingham purchased the building in 1921, then donated the building for use by Neighborhood House. Kiwanis, Rotary Club, Roxanne Club, Technical Club and individuals from 23 Italian families raised the \$10,000 and began to remodel the building. Miss Gay Braxton was chosen as head resident and was joined later by her friend, Mary Lee Griggs. Their main goal was to teach English, American customs and basic civics in preparation for the immigrants' applications for citizenship in their new country.<sup>18</sup>

Two other important civic institutions were created in the original Greenbush Addition next to the Bush in the first two decades of the twentieth century that would have important impact on

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<sup>16</sup> Allen, Anne Beiser. *E, Paisan! A Centennial History of the Italian Workmen's Club*, 8.

<sup>17</sup> The current building (AHI# 241091) was built in 1965 and has been evaluated as being potentially eligible for NRHP listing. This building is currently (2023) slated for demolition and replacement.

<sup>18</sup> Murray, Catherine Tripalin. *A Taste of Memories from the old "BUSH."* Vol. 2. Madison, 1990, p. VIII. Thomas E. Brittingham (1860-1924) was the owner of a lumberyard empire in Wisconsin and was an important philanthropist in Madison. All the historic buildings associated with Neighborhood House have now been demolished. The current building (AHI# 241091) was built in 1965 and has been evaluated as being potentially eligible for NRHP listing. The building is currently (2023) slated for demolition and replacement. See also: Levitan, Stuart D. *Madison: The Illustrated Sesquicentennial History*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006, Vol. 1, 224-225 (illustrated). See also: <https://neighborhoodhousemadison.org>

the Bush. The first was the Madison General Hospital, Madison's first purpose-built hospital, the first part of which was built in 1903 at 202 South Park Street.<sup>19</sup> The second was the first portion of Longfellow Elementary School built in 1918, and located across the street from the hospital at 1010 Chandler Street, which provided the children of the Bush with a modern new school.<sup>20</sup>

By 1920, Italians constituted the third largest foreign-born ethnic group in Madison after the Germans and the Norwegians and the sheer number of them in the Bush put pressure on some of the neighborhood organizations that had evolved to serve them.

In 1922 the IWC members decided that they needed a better meeting place than Maisano's garage. With a loan from the Savings and Loan Trust Company, they purchased lot 13, Block 5, of the Central Home Addition, from Paul Stark of the Stark Land Company. The lot was on the north side of Regent Street, in the 900 block, an area that was just starting to be developed.

With the help of their contractor friend John Icke, they built a clubhouse on the lot. Icke, a west side resident who lived on University Avenue, had hired workers from the Italian community from its earliest days. At one time, 90% of his work force was of Italian origin. Now he loaned the club scoop shovels, tools, and other equipment. The club members did much of the labor themselves ... after work and on weekends.

With the new space, the club was able to entertain more lavishly than ever. Families held wedding receptions, baptismal parties and funerals at the clubhouse. When a member died, the club not only paid his death benefit but also provided an honor guard to protect the body until after the burial.<sup>21</sup>

By 1922, the Italians in the Greenbush numbered over 1700, almost 70% of the total population in the Greenbush neighborhood. By this time too, the Greenbush had become virtually a self-contained community, complete with small, specialized grocery stores, restaurants, and shops that catered almost exclusively to neighborhood patrons. Whole city blocks located between Regent Street and the railroad tracks to the north that had been empty in 1905 now sported new commercial buildings and houses and apartments, some of which were newly built, while others had been moved there from elsewhere in the city.

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<sup>19</sup> This building was subsequently demolished in 1960 to make way for much larger ones serving the hospital, which have themselves now been demolished or transformed to make way for today's greatly enlarged Meriter Hospital Complex. See also: Mollenhoff, David V. *Madison: A History of the Formative Years*, 376-379 (illustrated).

<sup>20</sup> Longfellow School was added onto twice over the years and was finally closed in 1980. It has now been converted into apartments and is listed in the NRHP (NR Reference # 96000239). Area children also attended Draper School on the other side of the railroad tracks on the corner of E. Johnson and Murray streets, and St. Joseph's parochial school (both non-extant).

<sup>21</sup> Allen, Anne Beiser. *E, Paisan! A Centennial History of the Italian Workmen's Club*, 10-11.

They [the Italians] were still poor, but not as poor as they had been in Sicily. The food they grew was their own. They were respected by men like John Icke as competent, reliable workmen, and they were paid for their work in cash. Their children not only attended school regularly, but even graduated from the city's high school. Families picnicked at Brittingham Park. The young men played baseball on the dirt field at Harlow Park. There was little need to leave the Greenbush except to work.<sup>22</sup>

The growth of the Greenbush's Italian population was also reflected in the increased membership of the IWC. By the end of the 1920s, new arrivals to Madison were swelling the membership roll. Other new members were often the sons of the IWC's founding members; to be asked to become a member was now seen as an honor and a rite of passage into adulthood. The IWC was also now taking on supporting roles in local community activities that went beyond the purely social and financial roles that had characterized the club's beginnings.

In the later 1920s, the Madison Optimists' Club (founded in 1924) had begun to organize junior clubs for boys between the ages of 12 and 14, to give restless, unemployed teenagers something to do after school. One of these clubs met in a small room in the IWC basement. The boys were encouraged to take part in sports, including swim teams at the YMCA. ... The boys from the Junior Optimists' Club who graduated from high school in the 1930s were often at loose ends, with jobs hard to come by. In 1930, [IWC member] Vince Colletti formed a Young Men's Club which organized football, basketball and baseball teams to compete in the municipal leagues run by the city recreation department. The teams competed against teams sponsored by local businesses. The Young Men's Club [YMC] football team won the city championship in 1932. The YMC also met in the basement room of the IWC clubhouse, which had been fitted out with a couch and a small table. While their chief interest was sports, they also held dances and an annual spaghetti dinner in the meeting hall. Like Colletti, who became IWC president in 1936, many of them were sons of IWC members who went on to join the club themselves.<sup>23</sup>

The IWC was also at the center of numerous festive events that celebrated the Italian heritage of the neighborhood. Some events, such as the annual Columbus Day celebration, were celebrated by both Italian Americans and non-Italians and the IWC was just one of many organizations that took part in it. In 1933, however, "the United Women's Guilds of Grace Episcopal Church decided to sponsor a two-day Italian Festa and asked the IWC to assist with the program. The club members' wives prepared an Italian luncheon and dinner, and the Salerno brothers and Phil Barbato provided Italian music."<sup>24</sup> Besides these city-wide celebrations, the IWC also hosted

<sup>22</sup> Allen, Anne Beiser. *E, Paisan! A Centennial History of the Italian Workmen's Club*, 15. Brittingham Park (extant) is located on the Lake Monona Shore two blocks east of Greenbush and dredged material from its creation had been used to fill low-lying areas in Greenbush. Harlow Park (non-extant) was an informal name given to a playing field used by Greenbush children on S. Park Street.

<sup>23</sup> Allen, Anne Beiser. *E, Paisan! A Centennial History of the Italian Workmen's Club*, 18-19.

<sup>24</sup> Allen, Anne Beiser. *E, Paisan! A Centennial History of the Italian Workmen's Club*, 21-22. Grace Episcopal Church was one of Madison's oldest and most prestigious religious institutions. This festival is still held today, it is

events of its own and events of other neighborhood organizations. Annual events included Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners for members' families and a large July 4<sup>th</sup> family picnic while its YMC held its own spaghetti dinners. Baptisms, weddings, and funerals were also large, well-attended events as well. Other important events in the IWC clubhouse included meetings of the club's women's auxiliary.

In 1934, the wives of the IWC members organized themselves into a formal women's auxiliary, to facilitate planning of social events and to deal with a problem that had arisen with regard to the club's health fund. Club by-laws provided that money from the fund be used to pay medical expenses for club members and their families, and the death benefit paid for members' funerals. But what about widows? Or independent, unmarried daughters? Who would pay for their medical expenses and funerals? ... On February 22, 1934, fifty-seven women attended the first meeting of what was originally called the Women's Auxiliary of the Italian Workmen's Club. ... The women's club agreed to pay bills for broken bones, pneumonia, and members' operations. Later, a death benefit was added to help cover the cost funerals. ... While they worked closely with the men's club, the women's club had from the beginning a strong sense of its own independence. By 1935, it was calling itself the Italian Women's Mutual Club, and eventually it adopted its present [2012] name, the Italian American Women's Club.<sup>25</sup>

By 1935, the Italian Workmen's Club had become a respected and well-established neighborhood institution, but the numerous events it hosted were putting pressure on its clubhouse. The 1922 building was essentially a simple one with each story consisting of just one large room and with minimal basement level restroom accommodations that were intended primarily for men. Storage space was also a problem, as was accessing the building's basement story. In addition, the building's simple original main façade no longer reflected the club's increasingly important role in the Greenbush neighborhood. As a result, the club decided to hire Law, Law and Potter, Madison's largest architectural firm, to design a new 10-foot-deep addition to the front of the building along with a new main façade, and an 8-foot-deep addition to the rear. These new additions were also accompanied by interior alterations to both stories that gave the club new bathrooms in the basement story, new storage space and closet space in the first story, and a new stage at the north end of the first story meeting room. As before, the work was done by the members themselves and was completed by the end of 1936. The result was the building that is still the home of the IWC today and which is the subject of this nomination.

The entrance of the United States into World War II saw 40 members of the club serve in various branches of the military and six of them died during the course of the war. Once the war ended, a new generation of members began to bring changes to the club and the post-war economic boom brought changes with it as well. New Deal social programs and post-war prosperity

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called Festa Italia, and it is sponsored, organized, and run by the IWC and is Madison's largest ethnic celebration.

<sup>25</sup> Allen, Anne Beiser. *E, Paisan! A Centennial History of the Italian Workmen's Club*, 22-23. Not long after it was founded, the Bersaglieri also acquired its own building, the former Perlman's Store building located on the corner of Mound Street and West Washington Avenue [non-extant]. The Bersaglieri used their building in much the same way as the IWC used theirs and in 1934 the wives of its members formed their own club and mutual aid society.

resulted in new municipally sponsored social and recreation programs that began to take the place of the programs that the IWC and other neighborhood organizations had sponsored previously. In 1948, for example, the YMC closed, although IWC-sponsored basketball and softball teams continued to play in municipal leagues for a number of years afterwards. By now too, the new generation of Italian Americans spoke fluent English, a fact that was recognized in the IWC's decision to begin holding its meeting in English rather than Italian. These changes were also reflected in a change to the clubhouse itself. Because a meeting room for the YMC was no longer needed, the basement of the building was converted into a bar in 1953 that at first was open only to IWC members but which was soon opened to the general public in the evenings. The post-war period also affected other users of the clubhouse as well.

After the war, the Women's Auxiliary became the Italian American Women's Club (IAWC) and ended its Italian-language-only rule. The IAWC continued to meet in the IWC clubhouse, and cooperated with the men's club in annual activities like the July 4<sup>th</sup> club picnic and the children's Christmas party. But it set its own programs, reflecting its own interests. Its members might be the wives and daughters of IWC members, and share the IWC facilities, but they considered themselves to be part of an independent organization.

IWC membership grew steadily through the 1950s, as the sons and then grandsons of the founders took their places besides their elders. By 1957, all the club's officers were men who had been born in America. Although the Young Men's Club was gone, the IWC still provided teams to compete in the city's recreation league sports. Spaghetti dinners, dances and wedding receptions proliferated. Dues increased as member's incomes rose, and the death benefit approached \$800.<sup>26</sup>

Unfortunately, changes were in the offing that would permanently alter the Greenbush and its culture. The Bush had been built on barely reclaimed marsh land and the buildings on it were a mix of the old that had been moved to this new site and new buildings built on the cheap to house people who could not afford anything else. Over time, it evolved into a culturally rich neighborhood dominated by immigrants from Italy, but to the rest of Madison and to the powers that be it was the closest thing Madison had to a slum. When federal money for urban renewal became available at the end of the 1950s, the Madison City Council created the Madison Redevelopment Authority (MRA) to use this money for urban renewal. The focus of their activities soon became the residential area next to Brittingham Park and the triangular area next to it that formed the heart of the Greenbush neighborhood and also the heart of Madison's Italian American community. By 1962, when the 150 members of the IWC celebrated the club's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, almost all the houses and stores in these two areas had been demolished, including the homes of 35 IWC members. Gone too, were important neighborhood institutions and meeting places.

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<sup>26</sup> Allen, Anne Beiser. *E, Paisan! A Centennial History of the Italian Workmen's Club*, 33.

For the Italian community, the destruction of the Greenbush meant the end of their distinctive neighborhood. The people had been dispersed throughout the city. The Italian churches – both Saint Joseph and the Italian Methodist – were gone. St. Joseph relocated to a site just south of the Beltway [Beltline], while the Italian Methodist Church merged with South Shore Methodist to form Calvary Methodist, at a new location on West Badger Road. Neighborhood House moved from West Washington to South Mills Street, where it served a completely different population.<sup>27</sup>

Before the demolition occurred, men in the neighborhood still dropped by the IWC after work as they always had to play cards, drink some wine, and tell stories about that day's happenings. While this still happened afterwards, what had been a two-block walk from home was now transformed into an automobile commute; the easy come-and-go of the past was gone. Fortunately, the IWC's clubhouse was located just beyond the area that was being demolished, but the loss of the neighborhood of which it had been such an integral part forced the club to reconsider what it was and what it could be.

With the destruction of the Greenbush, the IWC faced a new challenge: how to maintain membership and cultural identity in new circumstances. The clubhouse had been a neighborhood gathering place, but the neighborhood no longer existed. The members had been scattered throughout the city. The annual children's Christmas parties were discontinued for a time in the mid-60s, when young families showed a reluctance to bring their children downtown in winter. The July 4<sup>th</sup> picnics at Olin Park continued, however, and people still used the clubhouse for wedding receptions and wakes. An open house held at the clubhouse on Columbus Day in 1968 drew members from all the old Italian clubs.

But the number of young men joining the club was declining, and it showed in a slow but steady drop in overall membership. The IWC had 140 members in 1971, more than half of them over 60.<sup>28</sup>

Some of the changes the club began to implement in the 1960s were intended to make membership easier to obtain. Others affected the building itself. In 1966, what by now was called the Cellar Bar in the basement was remodeled with varnished pine boards being used to cover the walls. Club members served as bartenders and held the liquor license in their own names and beer was kept cold in ice-filled horse troughs kept behind the bar on busy weekends, which ironically were busier than ever because a number of the neighborhood's other bars had now been demolished. The bar was remodeled again in 1972-73, as was the first story meeting room, where new ceiling tiles and better lighting was installed.

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<sup>27</sup> Allen, Anne Beiser. *E, Paisan! A Centennial History of the Italian Workmen's Club*, 43. An excellent account of this period can be found in Florence Zmudzinski's "Leaving Greenbush." Madison: *Historic Madison: A Journal of the Four Lake Region*, Vol. XX, 2005, pp. 46-63. Other neighborhood organizations such as the Bersaglieri and Greenbush's Jewish community also lost their buildings at this time as well and that of the Bersaglieri was not replaced.

<sup>28</sup> Allen, Anne Beiser. *E, Paisan! A Centennial History of the Italian Workmen's Club*, 44.



Another innovation was the establishment of a scholarship program in 1975 with two \$500 scholarships being awarded annually to Dane County high school graduates of Italian ancestry who were bound for college or technical school.<sup>29</sup> Considerable effort was also made to bring members of the club and others of Italian ancestry to events held at the clubhouse. Annual events such as the July 4<sup>th</sup> picnic and Columbus Day were supplemented by dances held at Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Halloween. Anniversary celebrations were also now taking place at the club along with the usual baptisms, weddings and funerals, and gradually, membership began to increase once again. An especially popular club event is its Festa Italia celebration, which they first held in 1976 and again in 1982. In 1985, the club decided to hold it one more time to raise money for the scholarship program. This time around, the event was held in Vilas Park and the club had hoped to attract perhaps 500 people. Instead, 19,000 people showed up, and Festa Italia has subsequently become an annual three-day event celebrating all things Italian, with food, music, ceremonies such as the scholarship presentations, and other events such historic photo displays and even, in 1986, a display of exotic Italian-made automobiles. Also in 1985, the club began offering Italian language classes and in 1989 the club initiated a tomato sauce tasting contest in the clubhouse that continues to be a popular annual event today. The clubhouse also became a venue for numerous civic meetings as well. Both Democrat and Republican political candidates have held events there over the years as have many other local organizations, and lectures on aspects of Italian history and culture have also been presented by UW faculty from time to time as well. All these things had a positive effect on membership, and by 1987 the club had 250 members.

By the end of the 1980s, the Italian Workmen's Club had found a new niche as the protector and advocate of Italian culture in Madison.<sup>30</sup>

In 1991, the City of Madison Landmarks Commission officially designated the Italian Workmen's Club as a City Landmark (#90).<sup>31</sup> Later in that year the club made some major changes to the clubhouse including removing the stage in the first story meeting room and replacing it with a full-size kitchen that made it easier of hold spaghetti and sauce tasting events. The windows in the meeting room were also reduced in size at this time as well as a fuel-conserving measure. In 1993, the Cellar Bar was turned over to a new lessee, successful Madison restaurateur and fellow Italian American Anna Alberici, who remodeled the bar once again, lined the pine-clad walls with photos of life in the Bush from her mother's personal photo albums, and renamed it The Greenbush Bar, which it still is today.

Changes were also being made to the club's by-laws at this time. By the 1990s, the need for the health benefits that had once been paid by the club to its members had been largely superseded by Medicare, Medicaid, and other programs, and the amount the club could contribute to any

<sup>29</sup> This was and is a very popular program, with amounts per scholarship being raised to \$1000 in 1986. In 2023 the amount given out was \$5000.

<sup>30</sup> Allen, Anne Beiser. *E, Paisan! A Centennial History of the Italian Workmen's Club*, 62.

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/planning/landmarks/1604/> See the City of Madison Landmarks Commission's Landmarks List, Landmark No. 90, to access a PDF of the Landmarks Form. Accessed on November 18, 2023.

one individual was really too small to be of much help in any case. Likewise, in 2007, the club's death benefits were also phased out for much the same reason. Changes were also happening in the women's auxiliary at this time as well.

In 1993, the women's auxiliary of the Bersaglieri merged with the IAWC. There was talk of merging the men's and women's clubs into one entity, but no one really took it seriously. The women moved their meeting place in 2002 from the IWC clubhouse to [the new] St. Joseph Church, which had better parking facilities and access for its elderly members. Although the women's club continued to cooperate with the IWC, it provided its own scholarships and programs, and did not require its members to be of Italian ancestry.<sup>32</sup>

The club also began adding to the list of honorary wards it presented to members and others of Italian heritage each year at banquets held at the clubhouse. This tradition had begun as early as 1973, when the first award to the Columbian of the Year, someone of Italian heritage who had made a significant contribution to the community, was given at the Columbian Open House held each year at the IWC around Columbus Day. In 1989 the club added an Outstanding Service Award (posthumous) to honor those whose contributions had not been recognized in their lifetime. The Community Service Award for people who had made a significant contribution to Madison's Italian community was instituted in 1994 and an Athlete of the Year award given to a student of Italian heritage was also instituted in the same year.<sup>33</sup>

These award ceremonies and all the other annual and seasonal events held at the clubhouse led the club's members to consider moving to new and larger quarters more than once, but by the beginning of the new century the old clubhouse had come to symbolize not just the heritage of club itself but also the history and heritage of the now vanished Greenbush neighborhood that had once sustained it. Instead, the members continue to improve their historic clubhouse when it is necessary and desirable in order to meet new needs and to facilitate new programs.

The meeting hall of the clubhouse was given a facelift in 2006. The building committee replaced the carpeting, remodeled the kitchen and decorated the walls with photographs, maps, and plaques listing winners of club awards. The original club flag, and the Vespucci Club banner, were framed and hung. Two panels from an antique Sicilian cart, donated to the club in 1997 by Rebecca Schall (whose mother had brought them back from Italy thirty years earlier) were treated with preservative and placed on the wall. The heating system was overhauled, and a side entrance added, with steps leading down to the pavement. When [club] President Steve Sasso left office at the end of the year, he estimated that the club had spent \$60,000 [in that year] to upgrade the aging clubhouse.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Allen, Anne Beiser. *E, Paisan! A Centennial History of the Italian Workmen's Club*, 71.

<sup>33</sup> Allen, Anne Beiser. *E, Paisan! A Centennial History of the Italian Workmen's Club*, 60-61, 74.

<sup>34</sup> Allen, Anne Beiser. *E, Paisan! A Centennial History of the Italian Workmen's Club*, 74-75. The Vespucci Club, another local Italian American organization, had merged with the IWC some years earlier.

Membership numbers have waxed and waned over the years but today the club has 170 members and it continues to host a wide variety of social and civic activities throughout the year as well as its traditional annual events, its scholarship program, and Festa Italia. In recent years, the Italian Workmen's Club has become an important focal point for those with Italian ancestry in Madison.

Having lost so many of the buildings in which its activities once took place, Madison's Italian American community now turns to the IWC and its clubhouse as the place where its heritage is still celebrated.

The club formulated a mission statement in 2001, stating "The Italian Workmen's Club (IWC) is dedicated to the preservation of the history, culture, language and memories of the Italian people who immigrated to Madison from Sicily and other regions of Italy. The IWC is committed to continual efforts to increase awareness in the Madison community of the many accomplishments, honors, contributions and achievements of the Italian Americans."

It's a different club from the one started one hundred years ago in that unused building behind Maisano's grocery store. But the goals are not all that different. If there is no longer a need to protect the individual members, the value of preserving their heritage remains important to their grandsons.<sup>35</sup>

## Comparative Analysis

Like the Italians who emigrated to Madison in the early years of the twentieth century, early arrivals to the United States from other nations also found it expedient to form or join associations of some kind to provide themselves with places where they could gather with their fellows as they struggled to assimilate into this sometimes strange new country. For many, their religion provided them with a readymade institution whose churches became their first meeting place. In Madison, as elsewhere, various parishes of the Catholic church were usually originally associated with a particular ethnic group. Just as St. Joseph's R. C. Church in the Bush (non-extant) was Italian-speaking, so Holy Redeemer R. C. Church was a German-speaking congregation, while St. Raphael's R. C. Cathedral and St. Patrick's R. C. Church both had predominantly English-speaking Irish congregations.<sup>36</sup> Another German-speaking congregation was Shaare Shomaim Synagogue, and there were also numerous German-speaking protestant church congregations.<sup>37</sup> All of these churches had clubs and sponsored organizations that were helpful to newly arrived co-religionists and while those of these churches that are still extant now typically have very different congregations, they still serve something of the same purpose today.

<sup>35</sup> Allen, Anne Beiser. *E, Paisan! A Centennial History of the Italian Workmen's Club*, 76.

<sup>36</sup> Holy Redeemer R. C. Church, (AHI# 387290) 132 W. Johnson Street, Mansion Hill Historic District, NR Reference # 97000552. St. Raphael's R. C. Church, (AHI# 108200) 216 W. Main Street (non-extant). St. Patrick's R. C. Church, (AHI# 16109) 404 E. Main Street, NR Reference # 82000657.

<sup>37</sup> Shaare Shomaim Synagogue, (AHI# 16103), 300 E. Gorham Street, NR Reference # 70000030.

Nineteenth and early twentieth century secular organizations such as the Italian Workmen's Club that were associated with a particular ethnic group in Madison were much less common, however. Large numbers of fraternal and mutual benefit organizations were established in the nineteenth century in this country and many of them had meeting places and buildings of their own in Madison, but very few had specific ethnic ties and conducted meetings in a language other than English. The earliest organization in Madison associated with a specific ethnic group was the Madison Turnverein (aka Turners), a German-speaking organization that had been founded in Germany in 1811 and which had been reestablished in the United States in 1848 and had established a branch in Madison in 1855. The Turners were a nationwide organization that was dedicated to gymnastics and physical culture, but individual organizations also had libraries and hosted lectures and social events. Madison's Turners owned a succession of buildings located at 21-25 N. Butler Street, but the last one was demolished in 1997 to make way for a new State office building. The organization is still extant today, however, and has a large modern athletic facility located at 3001 S. Stoughton Road in Madison.<sup>38</sup>

Madison's Norwegian-speaking community had the Sons of Norway, also a national organization, and Madison's Idun Lodge 74 was founded in 1908 with 40 members. The lodge provided insurance for its members and hosted social events, its meetings were conducted in Norwegian, and it met in many places over the years before finally acquiring a building of its own in Madison at 2262 Winnebago Street in 1963. This occupancy lasted until 2019, when the lodge sold their building, which has now been altered and houses an event venue called "Bur Oak." The lodge now meets at Trinity Lutheran Church.<sup>39</sup>

As already noted, only four of the historic buildings associated with Madison's Italian American community are still extant today. All four, including the Italian Workmen's Club, are located in the same block (the clubhouse, Di Salvo's commercial building, and two houses) and of these, only the IWC played a role of historic significance in the history of this community.

## Architect

Regrettably, nothing is known about who designed the original 1922 portion of the IWC clubhouse building. That it was built by the club members themselves using equipment that was loaned to them by former City Engineer and contractor John Icke is well known but who designed the building is not. What is certain is that by the time the Club wanted to expand its original building in 1936, they wanted their new street front to express the successes the Club had achieved since its humble beginnings. Money was still very much a factor, however, and their budget was limited, but once again, most of the work was to be done by the members themselves, which made it possible for them to commission a design from the Madison architectural firm of Law, Law & Potter.

<sup>38</sup> Turner Hall, AHI# 73258, 21-25 S. Butler Street, non-extant. Built in 1941 and designed by Law, Law and Potter. See: <https://www.madisonturners.com/society/> Accessed Nov. 18, 2023.

<sup>39</sup> See: <https://sonsofnorway5.com/lodges/details/a7-Idun-74> Accessed Nov. 16, 2023.

Many of the most important buildings built in Madison between the two World Wars were designed by Law, Law & Potter, Madison's largest and arguably its most important architectural firm in the 1920s and 1930s. The founders of the firm, James R. Law III (1885-1952) and Edward J. Law (1891-1983) were brothers who were both born in Madison and educated at the

University of Pennsylvania School of Architecture.<sup>40</sup> After working for several years in the Madison offices of Claude & Starck and the State Architect's office, James Law began his own practice in Madison in 1913, and within a few years he was joined by his brother, Edward, in a firm that was initially known as James R. & Edward J. Law, and which was often abbreviated to just Law & Law.

One of James Law's first projects was the design of Madison's first skyscraper, the nine-story-tall Gay Building (16 N. Carroll Street) on the Capital Square, which was completed in 1915, a commission whose success paved the way for the many more commercial and institutional buildings that the firm would design in Madison's downtown in the next decade. In 1916, Ellis J. Potter (1880-1992), a recent graduate of the University of Illinois' architectural program, also joined the firm and a year later the firm designed its next Madison high-rise building, this being the first unit of the six-story-tall Neo-Classical Revival Style Bank of Wisconsin Building (1 W. Main Street). Another early project for the firm was Longfellow School, a fine English Revival Style grade school that became the grade school for the Greenbush neighborhood and whose first portion was built in 1918 at 210 S. Brooks Street.<sup>41</sup>

By the beginning of the 1920s, Law & Law was becoming one of Madison's most prominent firms and it was busy designing some of the most important commercial buildings that were built in Madison during that decade, among which were the Neo-Classical Revival style Beavers Insurance Building (119 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.) in 1921, and the now demolished Neo-Classical Revival style First National Bank building (1 North Pinckney Street), also built in 1921. Along with its large-scale commercial projects the firm also undertook the design of a notable series of Masonic Temples during this decade (all three principals were Masons), one of the most impressive being the Neo-Classical Revival style Madison Masonic Temple at 301 Wisconsin Avenue (NRHP 9-13-90) completed in 1925. By 1925, the success of the office resulted in the naming of Ellis J. Potter as the firm's third principal in the restyled firm, which was known as Law, Law and Potter. During the 1920s the firm was also kept busy designing a host of single family residences as well, all of which were designed in the newly fashionable Period Revival styles. These designs were for houses of every size and included both very large and very small commissions. Most, however, were substantial in size and all were expertly done.

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<sup>40</sup> Their grandfather, James Law Sr. (1828-1918) was a bricklayer and stone mason who was born in England and who came to Madison in 1853

<sup>41</sup> The firm later designed additions to this building in 1924 and again in 1938-39 and it is now listed in the NRHP NR Reference # 96000239).

One of the reasons that the firm of Law, Law and Potter was successful was that it was able to incorporate new design trends into its thinking. In the mid-1920s the Period Revival Styles that had been this firm's specialty were beginning to give way to more modern, less ornate styles, at least in the design of the firm's commercial buildings. Up until then, the firm's multi-story office buildings were Neo-classical Revival style buildings that had what was essentially a classically inspired design scheme wherein a multi-story building was given a well-defined base section, a mid-section, and an upper section, this scheme being what Richard Longstreth, in his ground-breaking work *The Buildings of Main Street*, called "the three-part vertical block."<sup>42</sup> By the mid-1920s, though, commercial buildings designed by this firm were beginning to exhibit elements of the newly popular Art Deco style in their designs that were used in a conservative way.

One of the earliest of these buildings was the Montgomery Ward Store located on the capitol square at 100 N. Hamilton Street, a triangular plan three-story-tall limestone clad building built in 1928 and opened in 1929 bearing simple, stylized ornament that is classical in inspiration but modern in feel that is incised into its first story wall surfaces, and panels inset into its cornice that bear elaborate geometric and floral designs.<sup>43</sup>

The Montgomery Ward Building (extant but considerably altered) was followed by Law, Law and Potter's ten-story-tall Art Deco Style Wisconsin Power & Light Co. Building, located one block off the square at 120-124 W. Washington Avenue. This \$850,000 building was built at almost the same time as the even more elaborate Tenney Building (110 E. Main Street), and it too is clad in limestone and uses many of the same stylistic devices that the firm also used in its ten-story-tall Tenney Building design.<sup>44</sup> The Wisconsin Power & Light Co. Building was begun in 1928 and completed in 1929 just about the same time that the first unit of the Tenney Building was completed. The Tenney Building, however, used the same design elements to greater effect and it also had the added advantage of having a larger budget, which can be seen in the materials that were used, both inside and out.<sup>45</sup> Here, the verticality of the whole building is even more pronounced, the exterior is clad in both granite and limestone, more lavish use is made of carved limestone and terra cotta ornamentation, and the exterior of the building also features bronze grillwork and light fixtures. In addition, the interior of the building's lobby, with its marble-clad floors and walls and its polished bronze fixtures and elevator doors, is a textbook example of the lavish interiors that relatively chaste Art Deco exteriors so often belied.

Change was coming, however. The Depression gradually brought new building activity in Madison almost to a halt and James Law left the firm in 1932 to serve four terms as the mayor of

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<sup>42</sup> Longstreth, Richard. *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*. Washington D. C.: The Preservation Press, 1987, p. 93. Such a scheme was typical of the design of most of the taller multi-story buildings built in America in the 1920s, the Belmont Hotel and the Hotel Loraine in Madison being good Tudor Revival style-influenced examples of the use of this scheme.

<sup>43</sup> For an excellent illustration of this building see: Williams, Zane. *Double Take: A Rephotographic Survey of Madison, Wisconsin*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002, p. 108.

<sup>44</sup> "Wisconsin Power and Light Company New Building Announcement." *Wisconsin State Journal*. June 17, 1929, pp. 5-8 (illustrated). This building is still extant and is in excellent condition.

<sup>45</sup> The Tenney Building was listed in the NRHP in 2017. NR Reference # 100001775.

Madison (1932-1943). This left Edward Law in charge of the firm, and while the Italian Workmen's Club commission in late 1935 would have been one of the smallest projects ever undertaken by the firm, it was probably welcomed nevertheless as a means of keeping the firm's reduced staff active during the depths of the Depression.

Fortunately, Law, Law and Potter survived the worst of the Depression years and resumed producing high quality buildings in a variety of increasingly modern styles until the beginning of World War II again brought a temporary halt to construction. Eventually, the partners retired, and new men took their place. James Law died in 1952.<sup>46</sup> Edward Law died in 1983.<sup>47</sup> Today, the successor firm, known as Potter Lawson, continues to add important new buildings to Madison's built environment.

### Concluding Significance Statement

Listing the Italian Workmen's Club's clubhouse in the NRHP was first considered as early as 1986, when it was included in a list of registration priorities for properties associated with Wisconsin's Italian American population in the State of Wisconsin's *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin* (CRMP) publication.<sup>48</sup> The IWC clubhouse is eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A (History) for its historic significance to the Italian American population of Madison and its significance is enhanced by its excellent state of preservation and by the fact that it still houses the Italian Workmen's Club today. The club was founded in 1912 and was one of the earliest and most important secular institutions created to serve the city of Madison's growing, historically significant Italian American community. The club began as a mutual benefit society whose purpose was to help members burdened by the cost of illness, injury, or death, but it also served as a social center for the Greenbush neighborhood that originally housed most of Madison's Italian American families. Remarkably, even though that neighborhood itself no longer exists, the IWC still continues to serve its now dispersed community today and it still operates out of its original building, which was built in 1922 and expanded in 1936. This building and the organization it houses was and is of great importance to the history of Madison's Italian American community and the continued existence of both the club and its clubhouse not only memorializes that community's heritage but perpetuates it as well. Other organizations that once served this same community have either now ceased operations or have been merged into other entities, including the IWC, and the buildings that were historically associated with them have now been demolished. The Italian Workmen's Club's Clubhouse is therefore the building that is now most closely associated with this important Madison community and its strong links to that community are still important today.

<sup>46</sup> *Dictionary of Wisconsin Biography*. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1960, p. 224.

<sup>47</sup> *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 22, 1983. Obituary of Edward J. Law.

<sup>48</sup> Wyatt, Barbara (ed.). *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin* (3 vols.). Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Division of Historic Preservation, 1986, Vol. 1, (Settlement) p. 1-5.

**Land Acknowledgement (will be reviewed by the Office of the State Archaeologist)**

This nomination recognizes the depth of human presence here, the ancestral homeland of American Indians for millennia. From as early as the seventeenth century, Euro-American exploration and settlement, military campaigns, and government programs, all had the effect of repeated displacement of Indians of many tribal affiliations. This continuous tribal movement resulted in Wisconsin being home to many tribes who originated from other parts of the country, generating a pattern of immigration, relocation, and formation of a new homeland. Some of these tribes remain in Wisconsin, but others may not. We acknowledge that the property that is the subject of this nomination is located on land long occupied by American Indians.

**Archaeological Potential** (will be drafted and reviewed by the Office of the State Archaeologist)

**Preservation Activities** (for properties in CLGs)

The Italian Workmen's Club was evaluated as being potentially eligible for the NRHP during a survey of Madison's downtown Isthmus area conducted in 1983. Eligibility was re-affirmed prior to the writing of this nomination. As a partner with the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the National Park Service (NPS) participating in the Certified Local Government (CLG) program, Madison is required to maintain a system to survey and inventory historic properties. That entails regular surveys with updates every 20-25 years to identify properties that appear potentially eligible for the NRHP.

END OF STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE DO NOT DELETE



## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ 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 #  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

### Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☒ Other  
Name of repository: Italian Workmen's Club

Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory # 111710  
and/or Archaeological Site Inventory #:

### Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Allen, Anne Beiser. *E, Paisan! A Centennial History of the Italian Workmen's Club*. Madison: Italian Workmen's Club, 2012.

City of Madison Building Permit, dated March 10, 1936.

City of Madison Landmarks Commission Nomination Form.

The original 1935 Law, Law and Potter drawing of the clubhouse and the changes to be made is still extant and in the possession of Potter Lawson, Architects in Madison.

Levitan, Stuart D. *Madison: The Illustrated Sesquicentennial History*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006, Vol. 1.

Mollenhoff, David V. *Madison: A History of the Formative Years*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.

Murray, Catherine Tripalin. *A Taste of Memories from the old "BUSH." Vol. 1*. Madison, 1988.

Murray, Catherine Tripalin. *A Taste of Memories from the old "BUSH."* Vol. 2. Madison, 1990.

Rankin, Katherine H. and Timothy F. Heggland. *Madison Intensive Survey Report*. Madison: City of Madison Department of Planning and Development, 1995.

*Wisconsin State Journal*. Various Issues.

Wyatt, Barbara (ed.). *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin* (3 vols.). Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Division of Historic Preservation, 1986, Vol. 1, (Settlement).

Zmudzinski, Florence. "Leaving Greenbush." Madison: *Historic Madison: A Journal of the Four Lake Region*, Vol. XX, 2005, pp. 46-63.

END OF BIBLIOGRAPHY DO NOT DELETE

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreeage of Property:** Less than One Acre

Provide either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude:	_____	Longitude:	_____
2. Latitude:	_____	Longitude:	_____
3. Latitude:	_____	Longitude:	_____
4. Latitude:	_____	Longitude:	_____

**Or**

### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

1. Zone:	<u>16</u>	Easting:	<u>304441</u>	Northing:	<u>4771157</u>
2. Zone::	_____	Easting:	_____	Northing:	_____
3. Zone::	_____	Easting:	_____	Northing:	_____
4. Zone:	_____	Easting:	_____	Northing:	_____

### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lot 13, Block 5, Central Home Addition - Being a Subdivision of Outlots 11 & 12, University Addition.

### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries enclose all the land that has historically been associated with the Italian Workmen's Club's clubhouse.

END OF GEOGRAPHIC DATA DO NOT DELETE

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Timothy F. Heggland

organization: \_\_\_\_\_

street & number: 6391 Hillsandwood Road

city or town: Mazomanie State: WI zip code: 53560

Email: tim.heggland@juno.com

Telephone: 608-795-2650

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**Additional Documentation**

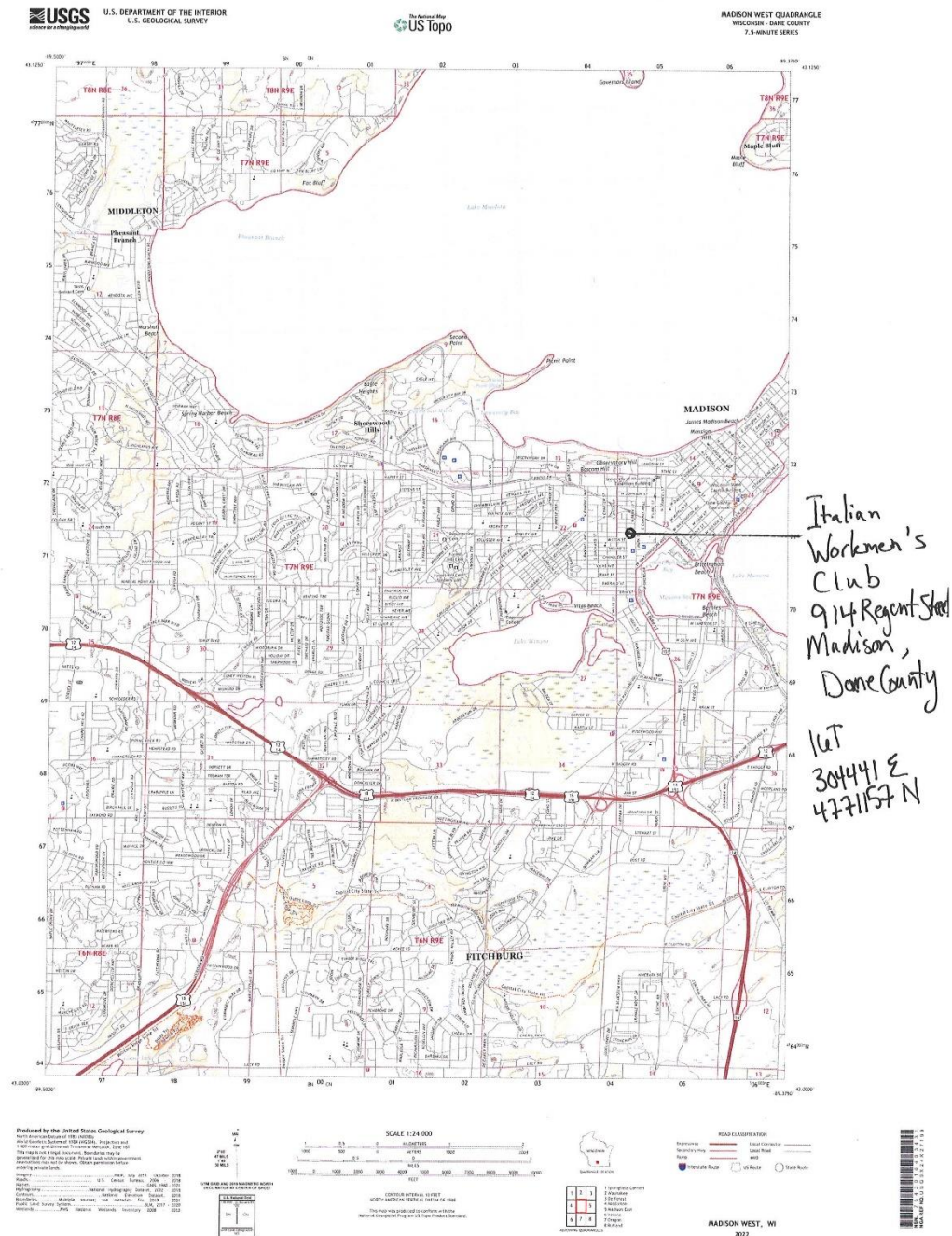
List of Figures

Figure 1. USGS Map

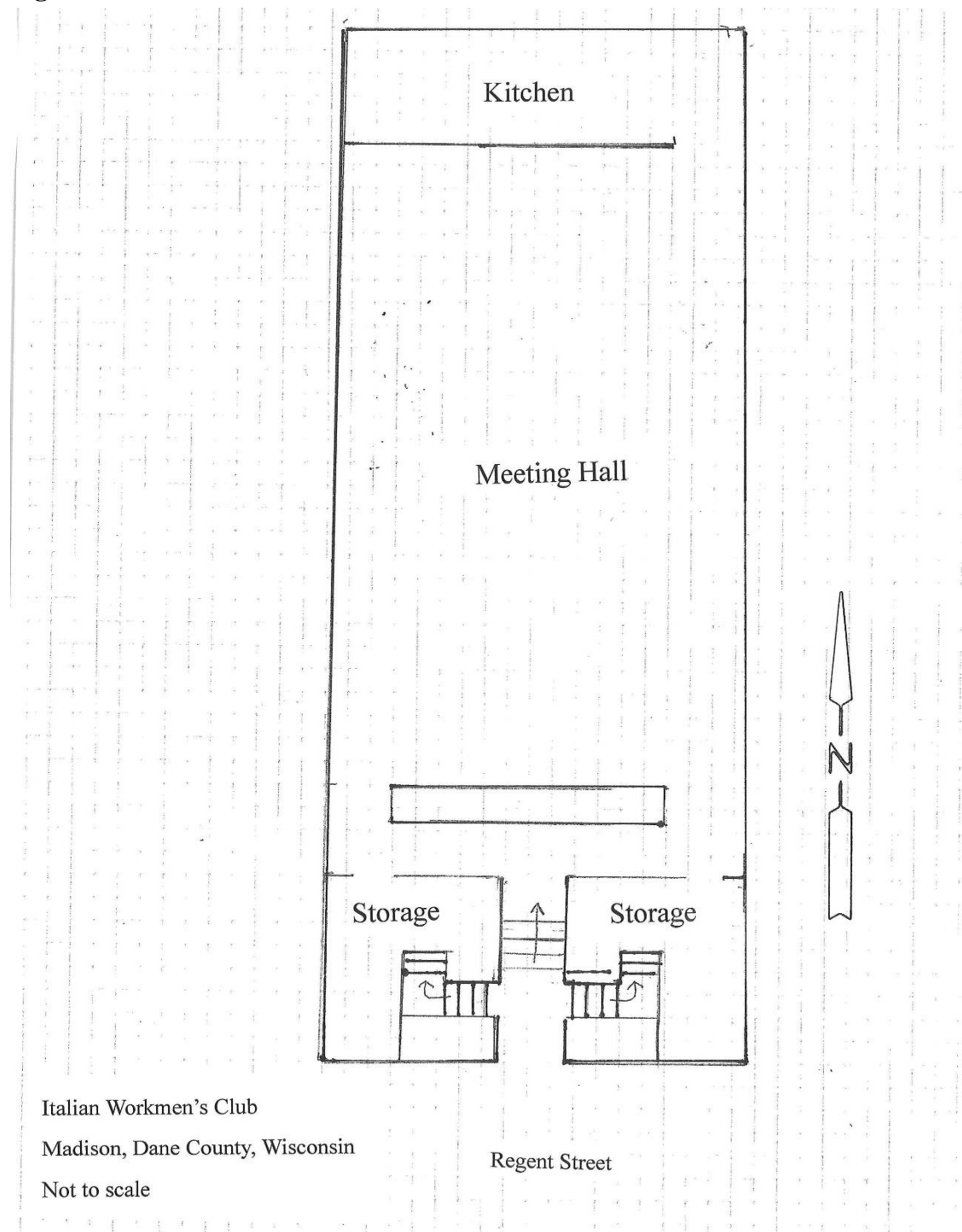
Figure 2. Site Plan

Figure 3 Historic Photo, 1936, main elevation, view looking north.

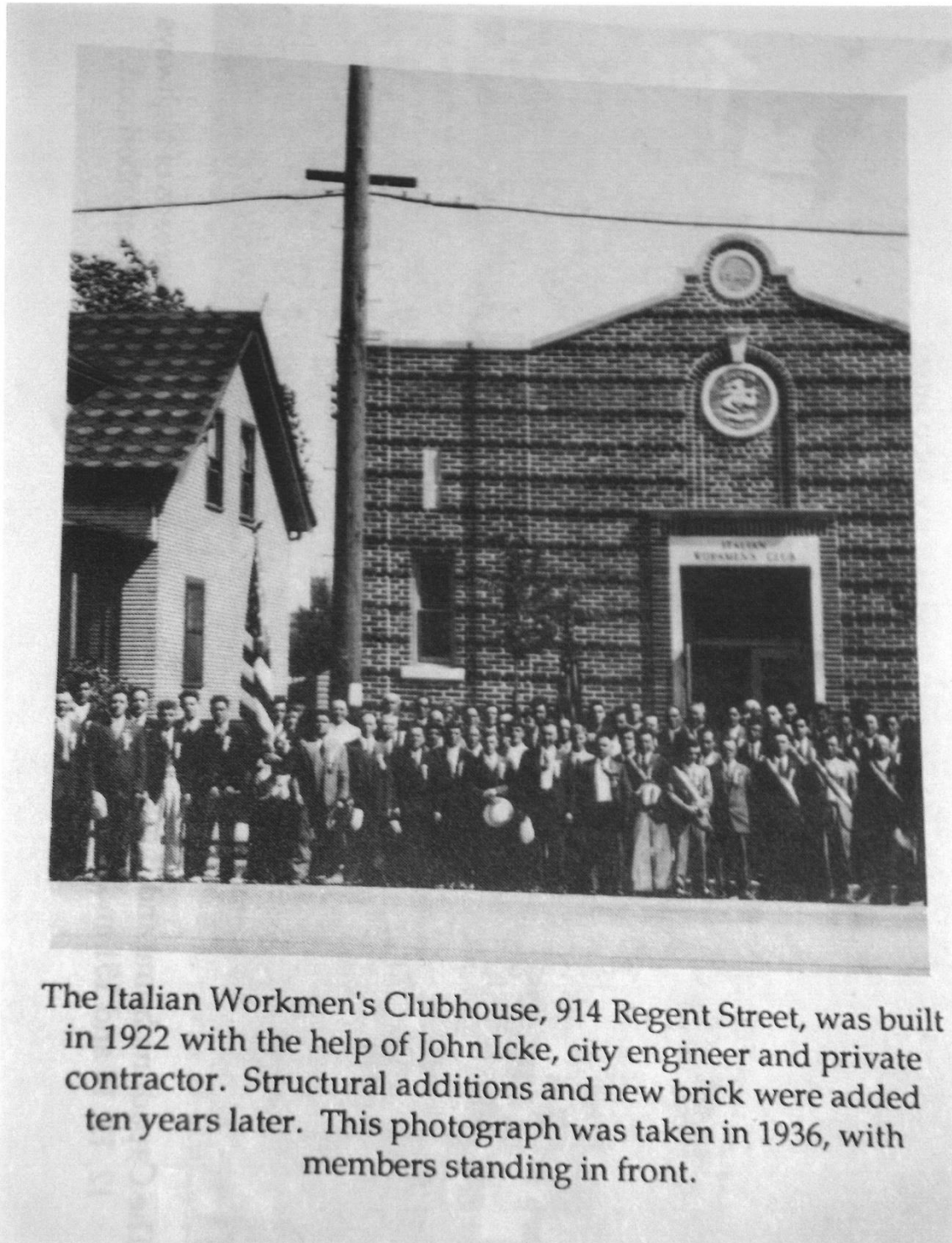
Figure 4. Historic Photo (ca.1959), main elevation, view looking northeast.



**Figure 2. Floor Plan**



**Figure 3. Historic Photo, 1936, main elevation, view looking north.**



The Italian Workmen's Clubhouse, 914 Regent Street, was built in 1922 with the help of John Icke, city engineer and private contractor. Structural additions and new brick were added ten years later. This photograph was taken in 1936, with members standing in front.

**Figure 4. Historic Photo (ca.1959), main elevation, view looking northeast.**



END OF FIGURES SECTION DO NOT DELETE



## Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once in the photograph log. The photograph order must correspond with the photograph log.

## Photo Log

Name of Property:	Italian Workmen's Club		
City or Vicinity:	Madison		
County:	Dane	State:	Wisconsin
Photographer:	Timothy F. Heggland		
Date photographed:	January 23, 2023; June 9, 2023		

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 19. (WI\_Dane County\_Italian Workmen's Club\_0001) Italian Workmen's Club. 914 Regent Street. Exterior, general view, view looking northeast.
- 2 of 19. (WI\_Dane County\_Italian Workmen's Club\_0002) Italian Workmen's Club. 914 Regent Street. Exterior, main elevation, view looking north.
- 3 of 19. (WI\_Dane County\_Italian Workmen's Club\_0003) Italian Workmen's Club. 914 Regent Street. Exterior, general view, view looking north-northeast.
- 4 of 19. (WI\_Dane County\_Italian Workmen's Club\_0004) Italian Workmen's Club. 914 Regent Street. Exterior, west-facing side elevation, view looking east.
- 5 of 19. (WI\_Dane County\_Italian Workmen's Club\_0005) Italian Workmen's Club. 914 Regent Street. Exterior, west-facing side elevation, view looking north-northeast.
- 6 of 19. (WI\_Dane County\_Italian Workmen's Club\_0006) Italian Workmen's Club. 914 Regent Street. Exterior, north-facing rear elevation, view looking south.
- 7 of 19. (WI\_Dane County\_Italian Workmen's Club\_0007) Italian Workmen's Club. 914 Regent Street. Exterior, east-facing side elevation, view looking north.
- 8 of 19. (WI\_Dane County\_Italian Workmen's Club\_0008) Italian Workmen's Club. 914 Regent Street. Exterior, general view, view looking northeast.
- 9 of 19. (WI\_Dane County\_Italian Workmen's Club\_0009) Italian Workmen's Club. 914 Regent Street. Exterior, main elevation detail, view looking north.

- 10 of 19. (WI\_Dane County\_Italian Workmen's Club\_0010) Italian Workmen's Club. 914  
Regent Street. Interior, entrance lobby view, view looking northeast.
- 11 of 19. (WI\_Dane County\_Italian Workmen's Club\_0011) Italian Workmen's Club. 914  
Regent Street. Interior, basement story, bar room, view looking southeast.
- 12 of 19. (WI\_Dane County\_Italian Workmen's Club\_0012) Italian Workmen's Club. 914  
Regent Street. Interior, basement story, curved bar, view looking east.
- 13 of 19. (WI\_Dane County\_Italian Workmen's Club\_0013) Italian Workmen's Club. 914  
Regent Street. Interior, basement story bar, view looking northwest.
- 14 of 19. (WI\_Dane County\_Italian Workmen's Club\_0014) Italian Workmen's Club. 914  
Regent Street. Interior, entrance lobby and staircase, view looking north.
- 15 of 19. (WI\_Dane County\_Italian Workmen's Club\_0015) Italian Workmen's Club. 914  
Regent Street. Interior, first story entrance hallway, view looking west.
- 16 of 19. (WI\_Dane County\_Italian Workmen's Club\_0016) Italian Workmen's Club. 914  
Regent Street. Interior, first story meeting room, view looking south.
- 17 of 19. (WI\_Dane County\_Italian Workmen's Club\_0017) Italian Workmen's Club. 914  
Regent Street. Interior, first story meeting room, view looking north.
- 18 of 19. (WI\_Dane County\_Italian Workmen's Club\_0018) Italian Workmen's Club. 914  
Regent Street. Interior, first story meeting room, view looking northwest.
- 19 of 19. (WI\_Dane County\_Italian Workmen's Club\_0019) Italian Workmen's Club. 914  
Regent Street. Interior, first story meeting room, view looking northeast.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations 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.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Italian Workmen's Club

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours

Tier 2 – 120 hours

Tier 3 – 230 hours

Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

## Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

<b>name/title</b>	John Caliva/President			<b>date</b>	November 22, 2023
<b>organization</b>	Italian Workmen's Club			<b>phone</b>	608-258-1880
<b>street &amp; number</b>	914 Regent Street			<b>zip code</b>	53715
<b>city or town</b>	Madison	<b>state</b>	WI		

If there are other interested parties that should be noticed, please provide in the tables below

<b>name/title</b>				<b>date</b>	
<b>organization</b>				<b>phone</b>	
<b>street &amp; number</b>				<b>zip code</b>	
<b>city or town</b>		<b>state</b>	WI		

<b>name/title</b>				<b>date</b>	
<b>organization</b>				<b>phone</b>	
<b>street &amp; number</b>				<b>zip code</b>	
<b>city or town</b>		<b>state</b>	WI		

<b>name/title</b>				<b>date</b>	
<b>organization</b>				<b>phone</b>	
<b>street &amp; number</b>				<b>zip code</b>	
<b>city or town</b>		<b>state</b>	WI		



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Italian's Workmen's Club, Madison, Dane County, 17 of 19





Italian's Workmen's Club, Madison, Dane County, 18 of 19





Italian's Workmen's Club, Madison, Dane County, 19 of 19