

For Immediate Release

**Contact: Kara O'Keeffe
608-261-9596**

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Milwaukee Athletic Club Placed on the State Register of Historic Places

Milwaukee, Wis. - The Wisconsin Historical Society placed the Milwaukee Athletic Club (Milwaukee, Milwaukee County) on the State Register of Historic Places on November 30, 2018.

Founded in 1879 as the Milwaukee Athletic Society, the club incorporated in 1882, and changed its name to the Milwaukee Athletic Club in 1898. After leasing space in many buildings in the city through the late 19th and early 20th century, the club erected this purpose-built clubhouse at the northeast corner of Broadway and Mason Street in 1917.

The Milwaukee Athletic Club was designed by architect Armand D. Kahn; built as an athletic club facility and hotel, it continues in this use to this day. The club has undergone major renovations, the first of which were in 1948, continuing in 1954 and further improvements were completed in the 1960s.

Early in its history, the club focused solely on athletics, with an emphasis on competitive amateur team and individual sports in relatively spare spaces. This changed in 1917 with the construction of a 12-story clubhouse in the heart of the city's downtown, that coincided with a shift in the purpose and direction of the club, from "a society founded for athletic purposes" to "the center of not only athletic, but civic, business, and social life in the city." The new building offered more social and recreational spaces than any of its previous quarters, and included residential floors to serve as both long-term and temporary housing for club members. The building was also the first in the club's history to provide dedicated space to women associated with the organization.

In the years following World War II, the Milwaukee Athletic Club sought to retain and grow its membership in the face of stiff competition from suburban country clubs by embarking on a nine-year renovation of many of the club's social spaces and athletic facilities. Several of the club's most significant historic interior spaces, including the Bali Room, Men's Lounge, and the Elephant Room, date from this renovation. The building reflects its historic significance as the city's premier athletic club from the early-twentieth century through the post-war period.

The State Register is Wisconsin's official list of state properties determined to be significant to Wisconsin's heritage. The State Historic Preservation Office at the Wisconsin Historical Society administers both the State Register and National Register in Wisconsin.

To learn more about the State and National Register programs in Wisconsin, visit www.wisconsinhistory.org.

About Wisconsin Historical Society

The Wisconsin Historical Society, founded in 1846, ranks as one of the largest, most active and most diversified state historical societies in the nation. As both a state agency and a private membership organization, its mission is to help people connect to the past by collecting, preserving and sharing stories. The Wisconsin Historical Society serves millions of people every year through a wide range of sites, programs and services. For more information, visit wisconsinhistory.org.

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