

Pabst Theater
144 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee
Milwaukee County
Wisconsin

HABS No. WIS-269

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. WIS-269

PABST THEATER

Location: 144 East Wells Street (north side of East Wells Street between North Water and North Edison Streets) Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Present Owner: City of Milwaukee

Present Occupant: As there is no permanent occupant, the theater is made available to various groups.

Present Use: Theater

Statement of Significance: The Milwaukee Landmarks Commission resolution naming the theater a landmark cites it "as an integral part of the city's culture" and for its "important historical and associative values as well as significant architectural and artistic interest..." An excellent example of late nineteenth century eclectic architecture, the Pabst is Milwaukee's last remaining theater from that era.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Erected for the Pabst Brewing Company, the theater belonged to Pabst interests until 1953, when it was sold by the trustees of the Ida Pabst Trust to the Pabst Theater Foundation, Inc., organized by the Lynde Bradley, Allis-Chalmers, and Froedtert Foundations. This foundation, in turn, sold it to the city in 1961 (Milwaukee's Common Council approved the purchase in March 1960; the warranty deed is dated February 1961).
2. Date of erection: 1895.
3. Architect: Otto Strack (1857-1935) of Milwaukee. Before taking on this assignment, Strack (Straack) had drawn the plans for several structures at the Pabst Brewing Company, among other projects, but had never designed a theater. The German-born architect was, however, familiar with European theater architecture and, while planning the Pabst, supplemented his background by studying prominent

American playhouses and concert halls. If a newspaper story of the day may be believed, one design that exercised some influence on him was the Auditorium Building of 1887-89 in Chicago: According to the Evening Wisconsin of May 8, 1895, the pipe organ at the Pabst was to be arranged like that in the famed Adler and Sullivan theater. When the Pabst was finished, Strack, who occupied a place of honor on opening night, received the plaudits of all the local papers, whose headlines called his work "A Palace Play House," "A Gem of a Theater," and "A Grand Playhouse," adding that "Milwaukee Now Has a Theater Which Is Unsurpassed in the United States," "A Building of Magnificent Appointments," "Perfect in Every Detail."

4. Builders and suppliers: Milwaukee's Gerhard F. Stuewe had the contract for the foundation and is named by the building permit as well as in contemporary newspaper articles. The main contract was awarded to Graham Brothers, according to the Evening Wisconsin for May 1, 1895. In their advertisement in the Milwaukee Journal for November 9 of the same year, Ricketson and Schwarz note that their firm had furnished the brick. The Milwaukee Sentinel for November 10, 1895, reports that the Grant Marble Company had supplied all of the Italian marble used on the interior, that the 1,820 iron seats had been designed and manufactured by the Manitowoc (Wisconsin) Seating Company, that the theater curtain had come from Stark Brothers Company of Milwaukee, the carpeting from Gimbel Brothers, Manhattan arc lights from Keelyn and Smith of Milwaukee, and chandeliers and other light fixtures from Grassler and Gezelschap, Milwaukee. The same story states that wall and ceiling decorations--both painted ornament and ornamental plaster--were the work of D. C. Hess and Company of New York. The organ, having 3,000 pipes, 75 stops, and 42 voices, was built by Ferrand and Votey of Detroit, the Journal for September 21, 1895, relates, commenting that the same firm had also made the organs for Chicago's Auditorium Building and "for the music hall at the World's fair." Finally, the local papers inform us that "Signor Ciani" of New York created the sculpture of Apollo flanked by allegorical figures of Tragedy and Comedy, which surmounts the proscenium.

5. Original plans: Apparently lost

6. Alterations and additions: Exceptionally detailed descriptions of the Pabst appeared in the Milwaukee papers on September 21 (Journal), November 9 (Journal and Evening Wisconsin), and November 10 (Sentinel), 1895, and the November issues also carried views of the exterior. Comparison of this material and other early views with the building as it is today confirms that the exterior has been changed very little: a few openings have been bricked-up and several new ones created; new fire escapes have been installed; the golden lyre has been removed from the apex of the pediment on the facade; the small balcony at the third story level of the facade has also been removed; and a large vertical electrified sign reading "Pabst" has been installed on the front elevation. Destruction c. 1931 of the remaining section of the Nunnemacher Grand Opera House, adjoining the Pabst on the east, left the east wall in its present bare and unattractive state. On the interior, as is reported in the paragraphs below, the theater has been modified, in some areas significantly so; but it still preserves much of its original flavor--sumptuous and splendidly theatrical.

Building permits and other records document these alterations:

- a. Permit No. 286, February 18, 1913, "to install motion picture machine."
- b. Permit No. 1588, February 5, 1929, for remodelling by Dick and Bauer, Inc., architects, and Universal Construction Company, contractors. Although this permit is dated 1929, most, if not all, of this work was carried out in 1928 as dates on several of the ten drawings for the project, preserved on microfilm at the City Records Center, B-1 Municipal Building, and newspaper stories of the time attest. Indeed, the effort was essentially complete by September 30, 1928, when the fall season at the Pabst began. This was the single most important remodelling project in the building's history, and, in fact, it is in its 1928 form, albeit redecorated and repaired in later years, that the theater comes down to us. The work included:
 - 1) Reconstruction of the foundation: pilings cut off; new concrete underpinnings

- 2) New heating, cooling, and ventilating systems
- 3) New lighting and electrical switchboard
- 4) Basement: Most spaces redesigned and rebuilt; the original stairway from basement lounge area to the main lobby was removed and a new stairway created.
- 5) Stage: A new wooden floor and new light trough was added; a fly gallery and freight elevator were removed; stairways east of the dressing rooms just beyond north and south ends of stage were removed.
- 6) Theater proper: The orchestra pit was lowered and enlarged; the organ grilles, box seats, and arcades flanking the proscenium were removed and these two areas redesigned; a new center aisle was created on the main level; a new art glass fixture was installed in the dome; new seats were installed on the main level and first balcony; new fire escape exits were created; several new cement stairways and new aisles were created, and seats rearranged on the first balcony; a new suspended ceiling was placed over the east end of the first balcony; the structure of the second balcony was reinforced; some risers and seats were rearranged in the second balcony; and restrooms serving the second balcony were redesigned. With the new seats and altered layout of the seating, the theater's capacity, originally 1,820, became 1,549 (684 on the main floor, 502 in the first balcony, and 363 in the second), according to the architect's drawings. The theater proper was completely redecorated, with green, gold, and silver the predominant colors. New stage curtains, draperies, and carpeting also were installed.
- 7) Vestibule and lobbies: Doors between vestibule and main lobby and between lobby and theater proper were covered with leather; doorways joining the east side of the building and the adjacent building on the east (surviving section of 1870-71 block) were bricked-up; a new, padded, double door framed in green marble was created in the west wall, main lobby to provide access to the

new center aisle; wardrobe and other spaces on the north end, main lobby, were redesigned; as noted, the stairway from the main lobby to the basement was removed and a new one built; the marble staircase between the main and mezzanine lobbies was removed and a new staircase created from salvaged materials; and the vestibule and lobbies were redecorated.

It may be reiterated that at this time a number of the openings in the exterior walls were bricked-up and new openings (largely fire escape doors) created. Most existing fire escapes were remodelled, and new steel fire escapes and fire escape platforms were installed.

While the total cost of this project was estimated at \$80,000 on the building permit, later writers claim that it came to \$240,000.

- c. Permit No. 939, January 24, 1930, for construction of a new lath and plaster "picture booth," according to plans by Dick and Bauer, Inc., architects. The contractor was the Universal Construction Company, and estimated cost was \$6,000. The work was finished by February 3, 1930, a building inspector's notes record.
- d. Permit No. 10761, September 15, 1931, \$400 alterations: "Underpin wall of east corridor . . . construct 16" brick wall from footing to underside of first story beams; provide additional supports under stairway at first floor." By November 3, 1932, the work was done.
- e. Permit No. 10415, July 21, 1943, \$10,000 repairs: "Repair and make safe east wall of building." Alexander H. Bauer is listed as the architect, H. Schmitt and Son, Inc., as the contractor; and the project was completed by October 14, 1943. A building inspector's notes on progress of the work and a newspaper story of the time indicate that it involved cutting off pilings and replacing them with concrete, repairs to and rebuilding some portions of exterior brick walls, and repairs to an unspecified staircase and walls on the east end of the interior.

Permits issued after 1943 record minor repairs only. Although not documented by a permit, the renovation project of 1961 should be mentioned. This \$30,000 "beauty treatment," as one local journalist dubbed it, involved cleaning and redecorating the theater, lobbies, basement level

lounge, and so on and gave the Pabst its present red, white, and gold color scheme (echoing, though not duplicating, that of 1895). New asphalt tile flooring was installed in the vestibule, lobbies, and second-balcony corridor, with new carpeting in theater and lounge. Walls and ceilings (except the dome) were painted, as was the iron portico on the exterior. Theater seats were reupholstered, new drapes and curtains, many new light fixtures, new padding on vestibule and lobby doors all were installed. A second window was created in the ticket office (in the vestibule), and a performers' lounge was created on basement level. In charge of the project were Virginia Swendson, interior decorator, and Sydney S. Plotkin, co-manager of the theater.

Finally, the pipe organ, rebuilt in 1928, has been removed.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

In 1870-71 Jacob Nunnemacher and his son, Hermann, erected a three-story brick building containing a theater, offices, and stores on the north side of Oneida Street (now Wells) between East Water (now North Water) and River (now Edison) Streets. Designed by Milwaukee architect Henry C. Koch, their building measuring 210 feet wide (east-west) and 75 to 80 feet deep, was named Nunnemacher Grand Opera House. It opened formally with an address by Alexander C. Botkin, managing editor of the Chicago Times, and a presentation of "Martha" on August 17, 1871.

Captain Frederick Pabst, of Pabst Brewing Company bought the block in 1890 and renamed it the Stadt Theater. The auditorium was refurbished and became the playhouse of Milwaukee's German stock company, previously quartered in the Stadt Theater on North Third Street. According to an article by Joan Saltzstein in Milwaukee magazine, the Chicago firm of Adler and Sullivan acted as consultants for the remodeling project.

The building, damaged by arson in 1893, was again struck by fire on January 14, 1895. The 1895 blaze damaged the building beyond repair. That year a new, Pabst Theater, was built on the site of the older Nunnemacher Grand Opera House.

The grand opening and dedication of the Pabst Theater was a gala event held November 9, 1895. It featured a march composed for the occasion, a prologue read by artistic manager and director Ferdinand Welb, brief remarks by business

manager and director Leon Wachsner, a performance of an intermezzo from "Cavalleria Rusticana" and the comedy "Zwei Wappen." A November 9 article in the Evening Wisconsin reported that expenditures for building and furnishings amounted to "upwards of \$300,000." The east section of the 1870-71 block, comprising four bays on Oneida Street, was relatively undamaged by the January fire. The ground floor area on the east end became the Pabst Theater Restaurant Cafe. This later was known as Peter Hammes's beer garden and then, during Prohibition, the Blackstone Restaurant. In the early 1930s this last surviving portion of the old Nunnemacher Grand Opera House was razed.

In seventy-five years of almost continuous use the Pabst has welcomed a dazzling array of talent presenting a kaleidoscopic variety of theatrical and musical performances. It began as a German theater, opening with "Zwei Wappen," a comedy by Oscar Blumenthal and Gustav Kadelburg that had premiered at the Lessing Theater in Berlin on November 18, 1894. Directed by Ferdinand Welb, who was also among the actors, the opening night cast comprised the Pabst's resident players and a newcomer from Germany, Flora Clasel, who made her local theatrical debut that evening. From the 1890s until World War I the Pabst featured German-language productions. These years were particularly rich ones in Milwaukee's cultural history, witnessing an impressive flowering of the arts and letters, and while none would assign exclusive credit for this to the city's German-Americans, all concede that their contributions--including the Pabst Theater--were very significant indeed, earning for Milwaukee the flattering nickname Duetsch-Athen.

The City purchased the Pabst Theater in 1961 and leased it out to theater groups and individual performers, an arrangement that was fairly successful until the new Performing Arts Center opened in 1970. During the first decade of the city ownership, many local organizations offered proposals for renovation of the theater, which was designated an official Milwaukee Landmark in 1967. In 1975 the Milwaukee Common Council approved the use of Housing and Community Development funds for the remodeling and restoration of the Pabst. This work was carried out under the direction of Mark Pfaller and Associates, architects. The Pabst re-opened in 1977 and the city continues to lease it out as before the renovation.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: An attractive perspective rendering of the Pabst seen from the southwest is to be found on the front page of the Evening Wisconsin for November 9, 1895. A

similar, but smaller and less refined, line drawing accompanies the Journal story of the same date; and a view from the southeast (a somewhat inaccurate rendering) appears in the Sentinel for November 10, 1895. A relatively early view, a fine photograph of the theater seen from the southeast, is among the illustrations in Milwaukee; A Souvenir Album of 1907. The collections of the Milwaukee County Historical Society and the Local History Room, Milwaukee Public Library, also include a number of fairly early photos of the exterior. Luckily, the newspaper stories of 1895 are lavish in their descriptions of the interior, for illustrative material has proved difficult to find. A drawing of one of the box seat areas--which were greatly modified in 1928--illustrated the Sentinel's story of November 10, 1895. The same issue contained a portrait of the architect. The drawings for the 1928 remodelling project preserved on microfilm at the City Records Center, B-1 Municipal Building, are also valuable as regards the original interior. According to Joy Sanasarian, a librarian at The Journal Company, the Journal's files contain two photos dating from 1928 and illustrating the interior immediately after remodelling. The Milwaukee County Historical Society's clipping file includes a view of the theater's main floor and first balcony in 1932, while a photo of the 1961 renovation work in progress was published with Gerald Kloss's article in the Journal for September 10, 1961. Finally, an excellent photo of the Nunnemacher Grand Opera House of 1870-71, most of which, as we have seen, the Pabst Theater replaced after the fire of January 15, 1895, is in Andrew Morrison, Milwaukee; 100 Photogravures, published in 1892, and a drawing of this building in flames appears in the Sentinel for January 16, 1895.

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PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Newspaper stories of 1895 describe the Pabst as "Italian Renaissance" in style, but it cannot be counted among those literal classical revival buildings that were appearing in great number throughout the United States by the mid-1890s. The Landmarks Commission resolution states that this is a grand example of the "opulent Victorian Baroque," with Renaissance sources freely and richly interpreted. Captain Frederick Pabst spared no expense in building a magnificent theater, with magnificence defined not only in terms of costly materials, luxurious appointments, and elaborate ornamentation, but also in terms of stage facilities, audience accommodations, acoustics, and safety. The stage was flexible and well-equipped; every seat in the house commanded an unobstructed view of the stage; acoustics were excellent. It was described in 1895 as "the most thoroughly fireproof theater in the world."
2. Condition of fabric: Good. At the time of recording the Pabst theater was in need of renovation both inside and out; this was accomplished between 1975 and 1977.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: 147 feet 6 inches (east-west) by 80 feet (north-south). The building has an irregular roof line, with the west or stage pavilion being four stories, the center portion or auditorium being three and one-half stories, and the east or lobby pavilion being three stories.
2. Foundations: Originally, brick foundation walls and timber pilings. Foundations were altered in 1928, 1931, and 1943.
3. Wall construction: First story, south and west walls, are chiefly light gray sandstone; upper stories, south and west walls, are St. Louis pressed brick; stone, brick, terra cotta, and metal trim is on the south and west walls; all stories, north and east walls, are Milwaukee common brick, unornamented.
4. Framing: Masonry bearing wall construction
5. Porch: A single-story ornamental iron porch with a flat roof and iron balustrade extends most of the width of the south (front) elevation.

6. Chimneys: None
7. Openings: As mentioned above, a number of the original openings have been bricked up.
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance, near the east end of the south elevation, consists of four sets of metal-framed, metal-clad, rectangular double doors with rectangular lights. Each set of doors is surmounted by an arched transom light. The doors are set within two large arched openings flanked by polished granite columns. On this elevation, at grade, are also two sets of rectangular double fire doors near the center of the facade and an iron stage door near the west end. There are multi-level fire escape exits on both the south and north elevation and a basement-level entry on the south immediately west of the main entrance. In the west elevation are two rectangular metal stage doors; in the east wall of the auditorium are two rectangular fire escape doors at the top level above the roof of the lobby and a rectangular door near the north end, just above grade.
 - b. Windows: Most of the windows throughout the building are wooden double-hung units with one-over-one lights. As mentioned earlier, many have been bricked up, but the original treatment is, for the most part, still evident.

South elevation: Above the second floor balcony, the facade is divided into a five-part composition with the end pavilions having three bays and the center pavilions each having one. (The central bay probably never contained windows but initially may have had paneled doors which gave access to the second and third floor balconies.) An additional strip of narrow, deep-set windows punctuates the outer edge of the second and fourth parts of the facade. With the exception of the latter, all the second and third floor windows are within arcades crowned by keystones, with those on the end pavilions being framed by pilasters. These strong vertical elements are off-set by a heavy string course which runs across the entire facade above the third story windows. The five-part composition of the facade is somewhat imbalanced because the east or entrance pavilion is purposely emphasized by heavier and more elaborate decoration. The simple triple arcade of the west or stage pavilion has been modified on the east to a single arch, the top of which is

filled by an ornate medallion flanked by a pseudo-balustrade with two round windows above it. The pilasters framing the windows have decorative capitals and there are decorative spandrels between the second and third floors. This pavilion also differs from the others in having single rather than paired windows. On the first floor there is a small oval window with a small square window below it on the east and west ends of the facade. These extend the pattern of the two strips of narrow, deep-set windows above. Placed high in the first story of the west pavilion, there are three pairs of small windows underscored by a continuous stone sill, each pair separated by a single pilaster.

West elevation: The pattern established on the south facade--two stories of paired windows in pilastered arcades broken by a string course--is repeated on the west elevation with a single arcade on each end of the wall. Most of these windows have been bricked up. The rest of this side of the building is devoid of windows.

East elevation: Because the remaining portion of the old Nunnemacher Grand Opera House originally stood along this side of the building, the only window is one large iron-framed unit located near the entrance at the north end of the wall.

North elevation: Most of the original openings have been bricked up and it is difficult to discern at this point the original plan of this side of the building. There are, however, a few remaining double hung windows at various levels.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape and covering: Above the auditorium is a tarred gambrel roof with an air vent at the center of the main ridge. The stage roof, higher than that of the auditorium, is a convex mansard, the flat top surrounded by ornamental iron cresting. The covering here is slate. Atop the stage roof is a small rectangular structure with a gabled roof.
- b. Framing: Brick with iron reinforcement and iron beams
- c. Cornice and eaves: In order to disguise the irregular roof line and to balance the tall west or stage pavilion, a false front with an elaborate entablature

and pediment was created above the third story of the east pavilion. A continuous cornice runs along the entire facade, above which there is a balustrade between the two end pavilions.

9. Stairways: An iron stairway, surrounded by an iron fence with a gate, located just west of the main entry on the south elevation, joins the grade level and the basement doorway. There are fire escapes on north, south, and east elevations.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: This level contains dressing rooms, restrooms for performers, property rooms, two electrical equipment areas, light storage room, paint room, blower and heating equipment rooms, plenum space, and public lounge and restrooms.
- b. Main level: At the east end are the foyer, ticket office, main lobby, and checkroom, with auxiliary spaces. To the west are the theater proper, orchestra pit (slightly below the level of the theater), and stage (five risers above theater level). Backstage, at stage level, are two stars' dressing rooms with restrooms.
- c. Second level: Mezzanine lobby, with toilet and storage rooms, and first balcony
- d. Top level: Second balcony, ladies' restroom, and corridor
- e. Intermediate levels:
 - 1) Backstage: Dressing rooms, with toilets, are located above the two stars' dressing rooms north and south of the stage. Lighting control panel and fuse board are situated in a room at the second level on the south. At the fourth landing above the stage is the catwalk used for storing and controlling scenery drops; a second catwalk, above the stage, holds mechanical equipment for the drops.

- 2) Southeast end: On the first landing above the mezzanine lobby is an office; on upper landings are the projection room storage space and a men's restroom.
- 3) Northeast end: Above mezzanine level is an office and a storeroom.
- 4) The upper area at the rear of the first balcony contains the projection room.

3. Stairways:

- a. The main staircase on the east end of the building joins the main and mezzanine lobbies. Its white marble treads, balusters, newels, and handrails all were salvaged from the original grand staircase, removed in 1928. The wainscot along the east wall is Alps green and gold Siena marble.
- b. A stone staircase at the northeast end of the main lobby joins this space and the basement-level public lounge and restroom area.
- c. Just west of the ticket office, on the south side of the building, is a stairway joining all levels of the theater. At mezzanine level this stairway splits into two sections, the east portion leading to an office and to the upper rows of the first balcony, the west section leading on up to the projection room storage space (which is connected to the projection room proper by an iron stairway) and the second balcony. The east portion is stone, the west iron, with both having iron balusters and newels and wooden handrails.
- d. In a corresponding area on the north side of the building are a stone staircase joining the mezzanine lobby and upper rows of the first balcony and an iron stairway leading from the mezzanine lobby to an office and storeroom.
- e. In the upper reaches of stair areas c. and d. are stairs leading to catwalks above the domed ceiling of the auditorium.
- f. Three carpeted concrete stairways lead from the west side of the mezzanine lobby into the lower seating area of the first balcony.

- g. In the first balcony proper are seven carpeted concrete aisle staircases.
 - h. In the second balcony are a like number of carpeted concrete aisle staircases.
 - i. On the north side of the building is an enclosed iron fire stair which joins the second balcony and fire escapes and can be entered only at the second balcony level.
 - j. In the southeast corner of the stage is a small wood staircase (five risers) connecting stage and theater auditorium.
 - k. A concrete stairway leads from basement level to the orchestra pit.
 - l. Backstage, at north and south ends, are iron spiral staircases joining the basement and upper levels of the backstage area and giving access to dressing rooms and catwalks.
4. Flooring:
- a. Basement: Concrete, with carpeting in the public lounge and ceramic tile in public restrooms
 - b. Main level:
 - 1) Foyer: Brown asphalt tile (not original) over concrete
 - 2) Main lobby: Red and gold asphalt tile (not original) over concrete
 - 3) Checkroom and auxiliary spaces: Red and gold asphalt tile (not original) over concrete
 - 4) Theater: Painted concrete with carpeting in the aisles
 - 5) Stage: Wood
 - 6) Orchestra pit: Carpeted concrete
 - c. Second level: In the mezzanine lobby, the floor is red and gold asphalt tile (not original), in the first balcony, concrete with carpeting in the aisles.

- d. Top level: In the corridor, the flooring is black and gray asphalt tile (not original), in the second balcony, concrete with carpeting in the aisles.
 - e. Intermediate levels: Offices near the northeast and southeast corners of the building have carpeted concrete floors as do the projection room storage area and backstage dressing rooms. The floor in the projection room is concrete. The catwalks above the stage and the dome are iron slats and corrugated sheets supported by iron beams.
5. Wall and ceiling finish:
- a. Basement: There is plaster in the public lounge and dressing rooms; tile walls in the public restrooms; and brick and plaster elsewhere, with book tile separations under the stage area.
 - b. Foyer: The east and west walls have gold Siena marble wainscot with Alps green marble base and chair rail. Above the wainscot the walls are painted plaster which simulate stone. The ceiling is ornamental plaster.
 - c. Main lobby: The wainscot is like that in the foyer, and the upper portions of the walls are painted plaster. There are gilded Ionic pilasters between the portals opening into the theater and alongside the checkroom. Free-standing columns are gold scagliola with Alps green marble bases and gold-painted Ionic capitals. The ceiling is paneled ornamental plaster, with light fixtures recessed.
 - d. Theater: North, south, and east walls are painted plaster punctuated by gilded pilasters. The proscenium arch, in the west wall, is set in a large rectangular panel with triangular panels above the arch at north and south having ornamental plaster grilles. The archivolt is heavily encrusted with gold-painted decorative plaster work, and a gilded sculpture of Apollo with Tragedy and Comedy crowns the proscenium. Side walls meet the proscenium wall at shallow angles and contain the former box seat areas, remodelled in 1928 but retaining portions of the original plaster ornament. Balcony railings are also richly decorated. Crowning the auditorium is a shallow circular dome with a stained-glass oculus (not original). Dome and walls meet at a richly ornamented plaster cornice,

about the base of which are pilaster-framed plaques bearing the names of famous painters, sculptors, musicians, and writers.

- e. Stage: Brick walls, with plaster in some areas
 - f. Mezzanine lobby: Wall and ceiling finish same as in main lobby
 - g. First balcony: Painted plaster
 - h. Second balcony: Painted plaster
 - i. Other spaces, main level and above: Largely painted plaster
6. Doorways and doors:
- a. Basement: There are panelled wood doors at the dressing rooms and toilet rooms; metal-covered wood doors at equipment and storage rooms; and fire door at entrance to orchestra pit.
 - b. Foyer: Three pairs of rectangular double doors, now padded and covered with black leather, having metal frames, connect the foyer and main lobby. A doorway just south of the ticket office leads into the south stairhall.
 - c. Main lobby: There are six doorways opening off this space: three sets of rectangular double doors, padded and covered with black leather, having Alps green marble frames, leading into the theater; a single door, padded and covered with black leather, having an Alps green marble frame, opening into the ticket office; a marble-framed doorway at the checkroom; and an archway near the northeast corner leading into the basement stairway. Before the building was remodelled in 1928 there were also doors connecting the lobby with the cafe in the adjoining building.
 - d. Mezzanine lobby: At the north and south ends are portals to stairways; in the west wall are three Alps green marble-framed doorways, one leading into the first balcony, the others, having wood doors, opening into toilet and storage rooms.
 - e. There are panelled wood doors with wood frames at the restrooms, offices, and storage rooms above mezzanine level.

7. Trim: Marble and plaster
8. Hardware: Brass
9. Lighting: Electric
10. Heating: Steam

D. Site:

General setting and orientation: The building itself faces south; the theater within is oriented east-west. The Pabst stands on the north side of East Wells Street and is bounded on the east by a lawn, on the north by a parking lot, and on the west by North Edison Street.

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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were made during the 1970 Milwaukee Project under the sponsorship of the Milwaukee Landmarks Commission of the City of Milwaukee--Richard W. E. Perrin, Chairman--and were donated to the Historic American Buildings Survey. This project was the continuation of a program to record the historic architecture of Milwaukee begun in 1969, under the joint sponsorship of the Milwaukee Landmarks Commission and the Historic American Buildings Survey, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service, Department of the Interior. The project team included architect John Thiel of Milwaukee; architectural historian Mary Ellen Wietczykowski--now Mary Ellen Young--(Milwaukee Landmarks Commission); and photographer Douglas Green. The data was prepared for transmittal to the Library of Congress by HABS editors Carolyn Heath, Mary Farrell, Candace Reed, and Philip Hamp.