

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (1)

Name of Building or Site

Common Name

Historic Name (if applicable)

Holstein Friesian Association Building

Location

Street Address

448 West Washington Avenue

Aldermanic District

4

Classification

Type of Property (building, monument, park, etc.)

Building

Zoning District

R6

Present Use

Commercial/office

Current Owner of Property (available at City Assessor's Office)

Name(s)

Robert H. Keller

Street Address

448 W. Washington Ave
Madison, WI 53703-2704

Telephone Number

255-6787

Legal Description (available at City Assessor's Office)

Parcel Number

070923116284

Legal Description

Lot 17, Block 43, Original Plat of Madison

Condition of Property

Physical Condition (excellent, good, fair, deteriorated, ruins)

Excellent

Altered or Unaltered?

Unaltered

Moved or Original Site?

Original site

Wall Construction

Reinforced concrete with stone veneer

City of Madison
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (2)

Historical Data

Original Owner

Holstein Friesian Association of America

Original Use

office

Architect or Builder

Law, Law, and Potter

Architectural Style

Art Deco

Date of Construction

1930

Indigenous Materials Used

List of Bibliographical References Used

Madison Chamber of Commerce, Inc. (Madison, Wisconsin). 1957.

Madison City Directory. Milwaukee: Wright Directory Company, 1929; 1931; 1935; 1945; 1950; 1956; 1957; 1966; and 1987.

Madison, Wisconsin. City of Madison Department of Planning and Development. Building Permit Records.

Madison, Wisconsin. City of Madison Office of the Historic Preservation Planner. Survey File.

Mansfield, Richard. *Progress of the Breed: The History of U.S. Holsteins.* Sandy Creek, New York: Holstein-Friesian World, Inc., 1985.

Ozanne, Robert W. *The Labor Movement in Wisconsin: A History.* Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1984.

Rankin, Katherine H. "Madison Intensive Survey: Master Architects." Report Prepared for the City of Madison and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1996.

Rankin, Katherine H., and Timothy Heggland. "Madison Intensive Survey: Architectural Styles." Draft Report Prepared for the City of Madison and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, c. 2000.

Wendorf, Elmo, Jr. et al. *Wisconsin Holstein History: 1890-1990.* Columbus, Wisconsin: Town and Country Printers, Inc., 1991.

Wyatt, Barbara L., editor. *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin.* Three volumes. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.

Form Prepared By

Name and Title

Elizabeth L. Miller

Organization Represented

Madison Trust for Historic Preservation

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4033 Tokay Blvd

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Date Nomination Form Was Prepared

November 16, 2008

Landmarks Commission

LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (3)

Describe Present and Original Physical Construction and Appearance.

The Holstein Friesian Association Building is located at 448 West Washington Avenue. It is a two-story, reinforced concrete structure veneered with smooth-faced, limestone. The building rests on a concrete foundation, and possesses a flat roof. Designed by the prominent Madison architectural firm of Law, Law, and Potter in the Art Deco style, it was erected in 1930, at a cost of approximately \$56,000.¹ Vogel Brothers, a local construction company, was the builder.

The Holstein Friesian Association Building is rectangular in plan, and faces east. The east-facing (front) façade is three bay wide, symmetrical about the central entrance. A flight of concrete stairs with closed rails rises to the entrance. A metal lantern with an opaque, round globe can be seen on either side of the entrance. The lanterns are not original, but were in place by 1957.² The entrance is composed of a pair of wood-and-glass doors, surmounted by a chevron molding. Above, the deep, two-pane transom is screened with a metal grille ornamented with stylized foliated designs. The stone spandrel panel that separates the transom from the multi-paned, metal windows at the second story in the central bay is enriched with volutes and floral motifs, as well as fluting. The second story window is topped by a stone panel carved with slender lozenges, volutes, and floral designs. A delicate compound architrave unifies the entrance with the second story window, giving the building a vertical emphasis. The flanking bays match the central bay in configuration and ornamentation, except that multi-paned, metal windows are found at each floor. The parapet is embellished with a pattern of chevrons and discs.

The north- and south-facing facades are identical, and seven bays wide. Multi-paned, metal windows light each bay at both the first and second floors. The three easternmost bays display ornamentation that matches the front façade. The westernmost bays are simpler. The west-facing (rear) façade is finished with brick and undecorated.

The Holstein Friesian Association Building appears to be unaltered.

¹Building permit, dated September 29, 1930, cited in Survey file, 448 West Washington Avenue, on file, Office of the Historic Preservation Planner, City Department of Planning and Development, Madison, Wisconsin.

²“Progress,” *Madison Chamber of Commerce, Inc.*, vol. 5, no. 7, July-August, 1957, p. 3.

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (4)

Significance of Nominated Property and Conformance to Designation Criteria.

Statement of Significance

The Holstein Friesian Association Building is eligible for Madison Landmark status under Criterion 3, as an outstanding example of the Art Deco style, and as a fine example of the work of the distinguished Madison architectural firm of Law, Law, and Potter. The Holstein Friesian Association Building is also significant under Criterion 1, as the national headquarters of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) from 1939 until 1957. AFSCME is the only national labor union that originated in Wisconsin. The building retains excellent integrity.

Architectural Significance: the Art Deco Style and Law, Law and Potter

The Madison Intensive Survey identified 42 Art Deco buildings. Fifteen are judged to be good or excellent examples of the style, potentially eligible for Landmark status. The Holstein Friesian Association Building is included in this number, and described as

Perhaps the finest example of Art Deco in Madison, ...a beautiful jewel.³

Of the 15 potentially eligible Art Deco buildings in Madison, five are office buildings. All were designed by architects. These are: the State Office Building at 1 West Wilson Street (1929/1938; Arthur Peabody); the Tenney Building at 110 E. Main St (1928-29, Law, Law, and Potter); the Wisconsin Power and Light Co. Building at 120 W. Washington Av (1928, Law, Law, and Potter); the Wells Printing Company at 121-123 W. Main Street (1936 remodeling by Starck and Schneider); and the Holstein Friesian Association Building. The State Office Building, the Tenney Building, and the Wisconsin Power and Light Co. Building are all much larger than the Holstein Friesian Association Building. The State Office Building is a massive complex, with sections that vary from five stories to eight stories. It is finished with dark gray stone, and features elaborate ornamentation that exemplifies the Art Deco mode. The eleven-story, Tenney Building, and the ten-story, Wisconsin Power and Light Building, are both veneered with light gray stone and present simpler examples of the style. The Art Deco flourishes of both buildings are concentrated on the spandrel panels, and the parapet. The Wells Printing Company is a two-story building, with Art Deco detailing limited to the first story. The ornate, glazed terra cotta storefront displays chevron and sunburst motifs, and abstract fluted pilasters. The Holstein Friesian Association Building possesses more elaborate decoration than either the Tenney Building or the State Office Building, and, unlike the Wells Printing Company, presents a fully-realized Art Deco design. The Holstein Friesian Association Building is comparable to the State Office Building in the level of detail and the fine execution of the Art Deco mode. The Holstein Friesian Association Building is unaltered. The Holstein Friesian Association Building is one of the finest examples of Art Deco office architecture in Madison, and retains as good or better integrity than any other of the comparison properties.

³ Katherine H. Rankin and Timothy Heggland, "Madison Intensive Survey: Architectural Styles," draft report prepared for the City of Madison and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, c. 2000, p. 131.

The Madison Intensive Survey considers Law, Law, and Potter to be “master Madison architects.” The Holstein Friesian Association Building is also eligible for Landmark status as a fine example of the work of these master architects. James R. Law (1855-1952) was born in Madison. He became a draftsman in the office of the Madison firm of (Louis W.) Claude and (Edward) Starck in 1903. From 1907 to 1909, he studied at the University of Pennsylvania School of Architecture. Law then worked briefly for Claude and Starck, and then for Arthur Peabody, supervising architect of the University of Wisconsin, from 1910 until 1913. Law opened his own office in 1913, and was joined by his brother, Edward, in 1917. Edward Law (1891-1983) had graduated from the University of Pennsylvania School of Architecture in 1916. The firm was known as Law and Law until Ellis J. Potter became a principal in 1925. Law, Law, and Potter was one of the prolific architectural offices in Madison in the 1920s and 1930s. The firm was skilled in both residential, and non-residential designs. Their early office and commercial work was generally NeoClassical in flavor. In the early 1920s, the firm’s non-residential designs showed the influence of the period revival styles. In the late 1920s and the early 1930s, Art Deco became their preferred mode for office and commercial work. The Art Moderne style followed in the late 1930s and the 1940s. In addition to the Holstein Friesian Association Building, Law, Law, and Potter designed the Tenney Building; the Wisconsin Power and Light Co. Building; the Central Building Co. Building at 548-50 State Street (1928/1931); Baron Brothers Department Store at 12-18 W. Mifflin Street (1937); Rentschler Florists Building at 228 State Street (1925); Republic Building Co. Building at 231 State Street (1927); and Jackson Realty Corporation/Montgomery Ward Store at 102 N. Hamilton Street (1929).⁴ The Holstein Friesian Association Building is the best example of Law, Law, and Potter’s Art Deco designs.

Historical Significance: AFSCME

The Holstein Friesian Association Building is also eligible for Landmark status as the national headquarters of the Association of Federal, State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) from 1939 until 1957. In 1932, a group of state employees met in Madison and formed the Wisconsin State Employee Association (WSEA). The new organization was the first state employees’ union formed in the United States. “Its purpose was to preserve the state’s civil service system, which was threatened by the severe competition for jobs during the Depression.”⁵ Through a series of marches and demonstrations, the WSEA achieved its goal.⁶

Arnold Zander, one of the leaders of the Wisconsin State Employee Association, then turned his attention to organizing a national union of public employees. In the fall of 1935, he convened a meeting in Chicago, inviting the other state employee associations (Colorado and Ohio), as well as the organizations of city employees, and county employees then in existence (scattered around the country). The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees was formed at this meeting. In 1936, the American Federation of Labor (AFL) granted AFSCME a charter. Arnold Zander was named AFSCME’s first president. By the end of 1936, AFSCME had 10,000 members.⁷

⁴ Katherine H. Rankin, “Madison Intensive Survey: Master Architects,” report prepared for the City of Madison and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1996, pp. 116-129.

⁵ Robert W. Ozanne, The Labor Movement in Wisconsin: A History, (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1984), p. 72.

⁶ “History of AFSCME,” <http://local68.union-local.org>, retrieved November 16, 2008.

⁷ *Ibid.*; and Ozanne, p. 73.

AFSCME opened its headquarters in the Holstein Friesian Association Building in 1939. By 1946, the organization had 73,000 members. In the early years, AFSCME successfully negotiated for paid vacations for hourly employees, cumulative sick leave, salary increases, time off for overtime, mandatory vacations and an 8-hour day, 5-day week. In 1955, AFSCME merged with the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), which represented many blue-collar employees, and changed the direction of AFSCME. The organization's national headquarters moved to Washington, D.C. in 1957. AFSCME continued to grow, and its membership surpassed one million 1978. Presently, it is the third largest union in the nation, with a membership of 1.4 million.⁸

History of the Holstein Friesian Association Building

The Holstein Friesian is a specialized breed of cattle, and produces more milk than any other breed. The first registered Holstein Friesian cattle were brought to the United States in 1810, by a breeder in Vermont. The breed arrived in Wisconsin in 1873. It soon became the most popular in the state, accounting for half the cattle in Wisconsin by World War I.⁹ Today, the black-and-white Holstein Friesian is synonymous with Wisconsin.

In 1885, the Association of Breeders of Thoroughbred Holstein Cattle and the Dutch Friesian Association of America joined forces to form the Holstein Friesian Association of America. The organization promoted the breed, maintained a registry of all Holstein Friesians, including each animal's pedigree, and published technical articles about the breed. The national headquarters was located in Brattleboro, Vermont.¹⁰ The Holstein Friesian Association's national convention in 1930 approved the construction of an office building in Madison to house the organization's Advanced Registry and Extension Departments. The Holstein Friesian Association Building was completed in 1931, and hosted the 1932 national convention. However, the Depression took a toll on the group's finances, and in 1937, all the Holstein Friesian Association's offices were moved to Brattleboro.¹¹

From 1939 until 1957, AFSCME's national headquarters owned and occupied the Holstein Friesian Association Building. Reitan-Lerhdahl and Company, an insurance business, acquired the building in 1957. Reitan-Lerhdahl and Company sold the property to GTE Sprint Communications in 1984. It was conveyed to GTE Communications Services, and then to U.S. Sprint Communications. The U.S. Sprint Communications Company Limited Partnership acquired the building in 1989, and sold it to the current owner, Robert H. Keller, in 1992.¹² The Holstein Friesian Association Building remains in office use.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Barbara L. Wyatt, editor, *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*, (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), vol. I: 8-5.

¹⁰ Richard Mansfield, *Progress of the Breed: The History of U.S. Holsteins*, (Sandy Creek, New York: Holstein-Friesian World, Inc., 1985), pp. 8-9.

¹¹ Elmo Wendorf, Jr. et al., *Wisconsin Holstein History: 1890-1990*, (Columbus, Wisconsin: Town and Country Printers, Inc., 1991), p. 17.

¹² <http://www.cityofmadison.com/assessor>, retrieved November 15, 2008.

Holstein Friesian Association Building, 448 West Washington Avenue

