

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

Name of Building or Site

Common Name

Historic Name (if applicable)

Sayles Three-flat Building

Location

Street Address

151-153 West Wilson Street

Aldermanic District

14

Classification

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

Building

Zoning District

R6

Present Use

Apartments (3)

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

Name(s)

Apex Investment Group, LLC

Street Address

1741 Commercial Avenue

Madison, WI 53704

Telephone Number

255-3753

Legal Description (available at City Assessor's Office)

Parcel Number

070924201282

Legal Description

SW 33 feet of NW 76 feet
of Lot 1, except for NE 7 feet
of SE 3 feet, Block 70,
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

Frame, finished with clapboards

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

Historical Data

Original Owner
George Sayle

Original Use
three-unit flats (apartments)

Architect or Builder

Architectural Style
Queen Anne/Colonial Revival

Date of Construction
1911

Indigenous Materials Used

List of Bibliographical References Used

Levitan, Stuart D. *Madison: The Illustrated Sesquicentennial History, Volume 1, 1856-1931*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006.

Madison City Directory. Madison: G.R. Angell and Company, 1911, 1914, and 1919.

Madison City Directory. Milwaukee: Wright Directory Company, 1921, 1923, 1925, 1929, 1931, 1935, 1945, 1950, and 1951.

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 and Tax Rolls.

Map of Madison. Pelham, New York: Sanborn Publishing Company, 1942.

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

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

Form Prepared By

Name and Title
Elizabeth L. Miller

Organization Represented (if any)
Madison Trust for Historic Preservation

Address
4033 Tokay Blvd

Telephone Number
608-233-5942

Date Nomination Form Was Prepared

Landmarks Commission

LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (3)

Describe Present and Original Physical Construction and Appearance.

The Sayle Three-Flat Building at 153 West Wilson Street was erected for George Sayle, Jr., in 1911.¹ The Sayle Three-Flat displays the influence of the Queen Anne style in its form and its elaborate leaded glass. The surviving original porch details and the round-arched dormers reflect the influence of the Colonial Revival style. The Sayle Three-Flat was probably built by George Sayle, Jr.'s, contracting firm, Sayle Building and Manufacturing Company. It is a three-story, frame structure, finished with narrow clapboards and resting on a raised, brick-veneered basement. Vinyl siding covers the third floor. Most of the windows are 1/1 sash, in simple surrounds. The flared, hip roof is covered with asphalt shingles and accented. The porch posts support a broad frieze embellished with dentils, which wraps around the building, separating the second and third stories. A cornice board enriched with a bead-and-reel molding appears beneath the eave of the roof.

The Sayle Three-Flat Building faces north. A three-story, polygonal tower with a window in each face at each story anchors the northwest corner of the building. The north-facing (front) façade is dominated by a three-story, full-façade front porch. Originally, the porch featured two-story, fluted, Ionic columns, and railings with turned balusters. In January 2009, the columns were removed and replaced with two-story, paneled, square posts. New, taller railings with closely-spaced wooden dowels were installed at the first and second stories. The decorative frieze separating the second and third stories has been retained.

The north-facing (front) façade of the building itself is three bays wide. At each story, a cottage window with a leaded-glass header in an intricate floral pattern can be seen in the westernmost bay, while a door occupies the central bay. The easternmost bay holds a door at the first story, and a small, horizontally-oriented window at each of the upper stories. A round-headed dormer sits on the roof.

The south-facing (rear) façade possesses a cutaway porch with slender, square posts and a plain balustrade at each story. Two sash windows overlook each porch. At each level, a door tucked into the east wall opens onto the porch. A hip-roofed dormer perches on the roof. A replacement door enters the basement toward the west end of this façade.

The east-facing façade displays irregularly-spaced, fixed and sash windows at each floor. A hip-roofed dormer appears on the roof.

The west-facing façade overlooks South Henry Street. A three-story, polygonal bay can be seen toward the north end of this façade. A cottage window with a leaded-glass header like the ones on the front façade is found in the west face of the bay at each story. Above, a round-headed dormer sits on the roof. Single and paired sash windows are irregularly placed at each story,

¹ City of Madison Tax Rolls, cited in Survey File, 153 W. Wilson Street, on file, Office of the Historic Preservation Planner, City of Madison.

south of the polygonal bay. Another round-headed dormer is centered above the paired windows.

The Sayle Three-Flat Building retains very good integrity. The sole exterior alteration to the building itself appears to be the vinyl siding that has been applied to the third story, a change that is not noticeable and does not affect the historic character of the Sayle Three-Flat. The loss of the original Ionic columns and the replacement of the first and second story railings does alter the appearance of the front porch. However, the new porch elements are generally compatible with the original features: the posts are two-story, as were the original columns, and they are paneled, which makes them aesthetically pleasing; the railings are simple, and although the dowels are plainer than the original balusters, they are turned. Finally, the porch gives the appearance of having been painted, which helps the new elements blend in with the historic character of the building.

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 Sayle Three-flat Building is eligible for Madison Landmark status under Criterion 3, as a fine and intact example of the three-flat building type. Up until the turn of the century, Madison was a small enough community that most of the residences were single-family homes. Around the turn of the century, the industrial and governmental sectors in Madison expanded rapidly, spurring population growth and a need for additional housing. Two- and three-family flats and apartment buildings sprang up all over the isthmus.²

The three-flat building type was built in urban areas between about 1900 and 1930. It is a rectangular block, with a low-pitched, hip roof; a three-story, front porch; and one residential unit on each floor. A cottage window, often set in a shallow, polygonal bay, appears at each story on the front facade. The three-flat building is plain in appearance, with flourishes limited to front porch elements, dormers, and the leaded-glass header that may accent each cottage window.

The 1942 Sanborn Fire Insurance map of Madison showed 58 buildings that appeared to be three-flats.³ Field review found 45 still standing. The remaining three-flats fall into two categories: full-façade front porch (33 examples); and half-façade front porch (12 examples). The full-façade, front porch group can be further divided into those that show the influence of the Queen Anne/Colonial Revival transition (18 examples), which are typically clad with clapboards; and those that show the influence of the Craftsman/Prairie style (15 examples), which are generally finished with brick or stucco.

The Sayle Three-flat Building is the best, and one of the most intact, examples of the Queen Anne/Colonial Revival transition three-flats in Madison. The others in this category are: 406 S. Mills Street (c. 1915); the Harloff-Wald Three-flat Building at 515-517 W. Dayton Street (1912); 520 W. Johnson Street (c. 1915); 527-29 W. Washington Avenue (c. 1915); the Johnson Flats at 12 N. Henry Street (1911); 120 N. Orchard Street (c. 1915); 122-24 N. Orchard Street (c. 1915); 444 W. Johnson Street (c. 1915); the Watzke Building at 444 W. Washington Avenue (1912); 200-202 S. Henry Street (c. 1900); the Fleckenstein Building at 134 N. Butler Street (1913); the Schubert Three-flat Building at 929-931 Jenifer Street (1913); 1036 Spaight Street (c. 1915); 1040 Spaight Street (c. 1915); 25 N. Mills Street (c. 1915); and 45 N. Mills Street (c. 1915). In comparison with others of its category, the Sayle Three-flat Building possesses more decorative details, including the polygonal corner bay; the leaded-glass header with an elaborate, floral motif above each cottage window on the front and west-facing facades; and the broad frieze with separating the second and third floors of the front porch. In addition, despite the changes made to the front porch in 2009, the Sayle Three-flat Building retains as good or better integrity than any other Queen Anne/Colonial Revival transition three-flat in Madison.

² Katherine H. Rankin and Timothy Hegglund, "Madison Intensive Survey: Architectural Styles," Draft Report Prepared for the City of Madison and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, c. 2000, p. 74.

³ *Map of Madison*, (Pelham, New York: Sanborn Publishing Company, 1942).

History of Sayle Three-flat Building

The Sayle Three-flat Building was erected as a rental for George Sayle, Jr., in 1911. Sayle (1865-1951) was the son of Irish immigrant parents. Born in Madison, Sayle was a carpenter, contractor, and fire fighter who sat on the Madison City Council between 1895 and 1905. Sayle also served as mayor (1916-1920), and as a member of the city's Police and Fire Commission (1923-1927 and 1930).⁴ Sayle was also active in the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association. He lived next door, at 149 W. Wilson Street, from 1905 until his death, retaining ownership of the Sayle Three-Flat Building throughout his life. By 1976, the Sayle Three-flat building was owned by J. B. Mahews, who sold it to CSC Apartments that year. West Wilson Joint Venture acquired the property in 1984. The building has belonged to Apex Investment Group, LLC, since 2000.⁵

⁴ Stuart D. Levitan, *Madison: The Illustrated Sesquicentennial History, Volume 1, 1856-1931*, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), p. 199.

⁵ <http://www.cityofmadison.com/assessor>, retrieved November 15, 2008.

The Sayle Three-Flat Building, 153 West Wilson Street





