

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

Name of Building or Site

Common Name *Historic Name (if applicable)*
Luther Memorial Church Luther Memorial Evangelical Lutheran Church of Madison, Wisconsin

Location

Street Address *Aldermanic District*
1021 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53715-1091 Eight

Classification

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

Zoning District *Present Use*
PUDSIP R6 Church, school, community spaces, administrative offices

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

Name(s)
Luther Memorial Evangelical Lutheran Church of Madison, Wisconsin

Street Address *Telephone Number*
1021 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53715-1091 (608) 258-3160

Legal Description (available at City Assessor's Office)

Parcel Number
070923206035

Legal Description

UNIVERSITY ADDN TO MADISON, 2 AND THE W 71.02 FT OF LOT 3, BLOCK 1 AND LOT 1, BLOCK 1 EXCEPT THAT PART DESC AS FLWS: COM AT THE SW COR OF SD LOT 1; TH N E, 6.11 FT TO THE POB; TH CONT N E, 44.35 FT; TH S 88 DEG 23 MIN 54 SEC E, 85.89 FT; TH S 01 DEG 36 MIN 06 SEC W, 44.33 FT; TH N 88 DEG 23 MIN 54 SEC W, 84.6T FT TO THE POB.

Condition of Property

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

Altered or Unaltered? *Moved or Original Site?*
1959, 1966, 1986, 1992, 1993, 1997, 2011 Original

Wall Construction

Masonry with exterior limestone facing.

City of Madison

LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (2)

Historical Data

Original Owner Luther Memorial Evangelical Lutheran Church, of Madison, Wisconsin
Original Use Church and school

Architect or Builder

Claude & Starck, Architects.
Reginald Stehr, Architect.

Architectural Style

Church: Gothic Revival
Education Building: Mid-Century Gothic Revival

Date of Construction

1921-1923, 1957-1958

Indigenous Materials Used

Largely unspecified

List of Bibliographical References Used

Gruber, Bonnie, editor. *Luther Memorial Church, a firm foundation , a faithful future*. Published by Luther Memorial Church, Madison, WI. 1997.

Various publications, Luther Memorial Archives.

Form Prepared By

Name and Title

Gary Tipler

Organization Represented (if any)

Address

807 Jenifer Street

Telephone Number

(608) 286-1844

Date Nomination Form Was Prepared

May, 2011

Landmarks Commission

LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (3)

Describe Present and Original Physical Construction and Appearance.

The Luther Memorial Church is located at 1021 University Avenue, on a block of religious buildings originally built facing the University of Wisconsin campus and now prominently set among the University of Wisconsin buildings, just a block from Bascom Hall, in the heart of the original campus. It consists of a large church building, and an adjoining education building, which is set back from the University Avenue right-of-way, on the east side of the church. The property is bordered on its east side by the one and two story St. Francis House, which is set on a large lot. And to the west, a two-story Lutheran Campus Center, organizationally distinct from Luther Memorial, and built in 1978. To the south and rear is a twelve story apartment building, built two years ago, and to the southeast rear a three-story building dating to the 1960s with a 1990s addition, presently the home of Porch Light, Inc.

The Church

The church building was patterned after European cathedrals in the Gothic Revival style by the Madison firm of Claude & Starck, Architects. It was built beginning in May 1921, completed and occupied during the fall of 1923, and dedicated on October 28, 1923. The general contractor was Wisconsin Construction Company. It was built of buff-colored limestone from Colfax, Wisconsin, and laid in a random ashlar bond. The trims are of Bedford limestone from Bedford, Indiana.

The church building's main floor and entrance is raised above the street sidewalk adjoining University Avenue by a half story flight of concrete steps. Its façade rises about one hundred feet from the front entrance level – its gable facing the street. The grade falls away toward the rear of the lot, and reveals the lower level at the rear alley, Conklin Court.

The church building's façade facing University Avenue is symmetrical and is buttressed with large rectilinear columns flanking the entrance and framing the tall stained glass window assemblage set within Gothic tracery stone trims. The entrance doors each have three tall Gothic windows. The entrance is deeply set within a Gothic arch with a sculptural panel above the doors featuring a bas-relief figure of Christ. The Greek lettering in the panel in which the entranceway is set has the meaning "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." The church name is at the top of the panel. Gothic stone trims ornament the tall gable facing the street. The façade is topped by a stone cross rising above the roof as a finial.

The side walls are buttressed between the windows, and are stepped out at the ground level on the west side. The side windows are tall Gothic arches, detailed with stone tracery. The transepts are defined on the exterior by the full height stone walls with details similar to the rest of the building, though their roofs are shorter. The tower is located at the rear southwest corner of the building. The lower section of the tower, just above the roof is windowed. Above that level it is open, with exuberant Gothic stone tracery defining its fenestration. A simple, ornamented parapet is defined by tall corner Gothic finials. The tower was said in a recently-written article to have been located at the rear corner of the church, to avoid offsetting balanced symmetry of the front façade. However, the tower location may have been based, in part, on the needs for the interior floor area use. The tower's iconic stone Gothic tracery and spires are an architectural highlight of

the building and an oft-used symbol of the church.

The rear of the building fronting on Conklin Court is utilitarian, simple and unadorned.

The steep roof is covered with its original green ceramic flat ribbed roofing tiles.

The Education Building

The Education Building addition is a flat-roofed, three-story limestone-faced masonry and steel building that was built on the northeast side of the church between 1957 and 1959.⁽¹⁾ It was designed by Madison architect Reginald Stehr, in a modern flat-roofed form. The addition was intended to attach to the church building below the windows of the nave to avoid reducing the light required to light the space, particularly for morning services. Due to the setting and topography, the Education Building is two stories on the University Avenue side and three full stories on the Conklin Court, or alley, side. Its fenestration pattern consists of evenly placed vertical window and spandrel panels between simple flat limestone columns. The stone spandrels in the window bays, located vertically between the windows, feature traditional gothic tracery.

The Education Building was originally designed to house the church administration offices and rooms for Sunday school, choir, youth, Boy Scouts and nurseries on all three levels.

The Layout

Historically, the term church, when used to describe a building, refers to Christian church buildings that were developed with deference to the varied needs of denominations, sects and practices associated with the rise and development of the Christian organizations.

Historically, the Christian church building plan required a large meeting space, thus the Christian basilica or cathedral was derived from the Roman basilica, often a large, long meeting space with a large vaulted ceiling overhead, sometimes flanked by arcades and other smaller spaces along the sides. The Luther Memorial Church floor plan was originally, and is still, largely based on this floor plan.

In the 16th Century, Martin Luther instigated the reformation of the church and its practices. Some of these were embodied in church architecture, evident in the Luther Memorial church. He called for simplicity in design and a minimal use of iconography. In the original finishes of the Luther Memorial Church, the ornament was moderate and largely expressed in textural qualities of stenciled patterning on the walls and trims around the windows. These were further simplified in the recent plaster refurbishment and painting of the nave.

To further describe the historic floor plan of a church, as evident in the Luther Memorial Church, the front part of the space from which the service is conducted is the chancel, on the raised platform, with the pulpit and lectern, respectively located on the left and the right, as viewed by the congregation. The pulpit and lectern locations were reversed in the 1990s renovations, and the chancel and altar were brought forward and the communion rail relocated. The sections where the walls extend on either side nearest the chancel are the east and west transepts, which were originally intended for supporting the service, visiting clergy, and choirs. The congregation is seated in the nave, which is flanked by arcades on both sides and has a center aisle among the

¹ Construction drawings dated June 10, 1957 by Reginald Stehr, architect. Luther Memorial Archives.

rows of pews. Near the entrance is the baptismal font, a symbolic position dating to the time of fountains or wells located near an entrance in Roman era houses and churches.

Between the streetfront building entrance and the entrance to the nave is the narthex, a gathering area. Access to the balcony is from the narthex, including the original stair along the wall flanking the street entrance and a newer stair nearer the nave.

The choir balcony is located above the narthex. The seating is arranged in a semi-circular arrangement around the organ console, and the pipes flank the enormous window facing the street.

The Interior

The nave is 150 feet long, 47 feet wide between the arches and 82 feet high to the top of the roof support arches. The church was originally designed to seat 1650 people, though due to programming and the demand for other uses, the spaces have been reconfigured and the seating areas have been reduced. The changes enhance the utility and experience of the congregants without diminishing the environment of the sanctuary.

The high altar and surrounding stonework, or reredos, ornamenting the apse was a gift of John Petersen, builder of the church, and was carved by Walter Sutton of the Bayview Stone Company of Madison. The center carved panel has a large replica of Thorvaldsen's "Come unto Me" statue of Christ, rendered from Colfax stone, from Colfax, Wisconsin.⁽²⁾ Within the open Gothic arches in the stone tracery of the apse are tapestries, which are changed each season. The tapestries were provided by Gaytee Stained Glass Company of Minneapolis.

The pulpit, lectern and original baptismal font were carved of Colfax stone, detailed in a traditional Gothic style. The freestanding altar was built of cherry, set on a stone extension of the altar platform. The baptismal pool of red granite with a limestone base was added in 1995 near the entrance.

The painted, stained and leaded glass panels of the sanctuary are extraordinary in detail. The large window above the entrance and choir loft has three Trinity symbols, 24 full figures of the twelve disciples, figures of Christ, and many other symbols. The side windows of the nave are largely designed of colorful geometric designs. The large windows of the transepts are representative of the resurrection (east transept) and the ascension (west transept). The windows were designed and manufactured by the Gaytee Stained Glass Company of Minneapolis.

It is believed that the original stenciled patterning that covered the walls of the church were by Gaytee, as well. In recent years, the patterns were recreated in part in a refinishing of the vaulted walls of the semi-octagonal apse, though the colors were different from the somber earth-toned browns and greens of the original stenciling. The original and somewhat simpler stencils surrounding the windows of the choir balcony remain.

The roof support structure was built of steel beams, though they are at least partly clad in Gothic detailed ornamental plaster to appear as wood beams. The ceiling is exposed wood plank. These

² Stonework and sculpture notes. Gruber, Bonnie, editor. *Luther Memorial Church, a firm foundation, a faithful future*. Luther Memorial Church Foundation, 1997, p.6.

finishes are stained and varnished a dark brown color to simulate wood. An ornamental plaster cornice and piers attached to the walls appear to support the ceiling beams. Gothic detailing is an integral part of all the sculptural components of the nave interior.

The flooring is maple.

The original new oak pew seating for the nave and the choir balcony were provided by the American Seating Company. Some of the pews were retrieved from the old chapel on University Avenue and incorporated into the new church seating at the time of transition to the new church, and thus have slightly different details.

The original pipe organ was built by M.P. Moller Company of Hagerstown, Maryland. The bellows were placed in an unheated room in the tower. These eventually failed and the newer organ was installed decades later in the choir balcony. Though the Moller organ and mechanical parts were removed, the original façade pipes remain prominently visible in the transepts.

The sacristy is located to the east of the sanctuary and is plainly finished.

The undercroft lower level's large central room originally served as a gymnasium, an auditorium, and for performances and plays with a raised stage built in the 1930s, later removed. It originally had small rooms surrounding it for Sunday school use. Beneath the west transept there was a pastor's office – later converted to a chapel. There was a maintenance man's apartment near the boiler room, which was beneath the chancel. And there were restrooms beneath the narthex, and men's smoking lounge beneath the east chancel.

The original chimes were manufactured by the Deagan Chimes Company of Chicago. The date of their removal from the tower is unknown, though they were later replaced by a speaker system, which also had been removed.

Alterations

In the late 1980s, the church and education buildings were given a new entryway just east of the formal church front entrance. It improved the access between the buildings and provided elevator service for the main and lower levels of both buildings. Its design borrowed from the materials and details of the church. Its entrance is a large trimmed Gothic arch set in a wall set at a 45-degree angle toward the street. The addition is finished with Bedford stone.

In the sanctuary, the communion table was moved forward and the chancel railing was moved to the west transept in the 1997 renovation.

In 1966, the choir balcony and the narthex were almost doubled in an expansion into the nave. The choir seating was set in a semicircular arrangement to accommodate a new 56-rank Austin organ and a new choir layout. Reginald Stehr was the architect of the balcony and narthex alteration.

At that time, the original pipe organ and bellows were removed and sold to Alex Jordan, Jr., for installation in Organ Room at the House on The Rock, between Spring Green and Dodgeville. The façade pipes remain as ornament in their original locations in the upper transepts.

In 1986, a Bedient portative organ of three stops was acquired.

The west side window of the nave adjoining the west transept was badly damaged and rebuilt as a result of the Sterling Hall bombing across the street on August 24, 1970. The repairs are almost imperceptible.

In 1992, the narthex was further enlarged and new trims and flooring added.

Beginning in 1993, several projects were undertaken. As part of that phase of renovations, the undercroft or lower level was remodeled to update its electrical, HVAC and finishes, and to add two smaller reading rooms nearer the street entrance area and a new enclosed entryway. A section of the entryway from the street-front of the building was enclosed to create two meeting rooms. The men's lounge in the northeast corner remains though was refurbished, as well in the recent work. A meeting room, originally the pastor's office adjoining the southwest side of the central room, was refurbished as a chapel in the 1930s. In recent years it was refurbished as a kitchen, and opens to the large meeting room with a pass-through counter. An original exterior door remains that once served the earlier uses, though is closed off from the inside, and is seen on the west exterior side only. Also, in the lower level, renovations reconfigured the former live-in maintenance man's small apartment at the southern corner of the building, near the boiler room, to create an archives room, and the former chapel was refurbished to create a kitchen to serve the lower level meeting space.

A small part of the west transept was slightly altered as a columbarium for the remains of parishioners, with 220 niches; each niche can accommodate up to 2 urns. It incorporated part of the original stone communion rail and the bronze gate. New lighting and sound systems were also installed. In 1997, the 1893 Steere and Sons tracker action organ was acquired, restored and installed in the east transept. Also, the balconies in the transepts were removed in the renovations due to lack of second exits. In their places, small aria balconies were installed for musical performers.

In the winter of 2011, the side walls, columns and details of the nave were covered with a fiberglass mesh and painted to prevent plaster from falling to the floor. This was necessary due, in part, to the damage of the street reconstruction years earlier. The original paint colors and stencil patterns were documented for possible future restoration by Tony Kartsonas of Historic Surfaces of Chicago.

The Education Building floor plan is largely original except for the renovation to the entrance area. The finishes were updated in the 1990s renovations on the ground floor and lower level for the nurseries. The upper floor retains most of its original finishes and lighting.

Integrity

The Luther Memorial Church and Education Building retain a very high level of integrity due to their continued use, repair and maintenance. Additions and alterations do not significantly detract from the architectural and designed features of the buildings and in fact have made them more useful for the congregants and staff of the church.

Landmarks Nomination - Significance. Luther Memorial Church

Significance of Nominated Property and Conformance to Designation Criteria.

Significance – Architecture

Luther Memorial Church is significant for its architecture, as an excellent example of early Twentieth Century Gothic Revival architecture. The design was a departure from the earlier Gothic Revival styles of churches in Madison, and is more closely patterned and inspired by European church and cathedral designs and traditions. The 1957 Education Building addition is a good example of Mid-Century Gothic Revival, adeptly designed by Madison architect, Reginald Stehr. Together, they represent good examples of Twentieth Century church and school buildings, built out of growth and necessity, and formed by changes in programming and social and educational development of the church.

In addition, the church is significant as a masterwork of Claude & Starck. It is one of the crowning achievements in the body of the works of Claude & Starck. It is without a doubt the finest of their churches, finely executed and most stylistically pure to its class.

Historical Overview of Luther Memorial Church

Luther Memorial Church's Community

Luther Memorial Church is affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its South Central Synod of Wisconsin.

Begun as a ministry to students on the UW campus, Luther Memorial was the first Lutheran Church in Madison to offer worship services entirely in English. The building had the distinction of being the first Lutheran Church west of the Capitol and was the largest church building in Madison, when it was built according to the current accounts.

The music program has been an exceptional part of its history, as has the collaboration with University music groups. That part of its distinctive history began with the dedication of the church on the 400th anniversary of the Reformation on Sunday, October 28, 1923, with a 65-voice choir.

During February 1924, the University of Wisconsin Haresfoot Club, a traveling theatre group, rented the auditorium for rehearsal, thus initiating a relationship with University and community theatre, music and arts groups for use of the building separate from church functions.

Even today, in 2011, the building provides a performance space for music that is unique in the University area. It continues to be a venue for numerous choral and musical groups, including the U.W. Madrigal Singers, U.W. Men's Choir, and U.W. Choral Union, U.W. Concert Choir, and U.W. Chorale, among others. Bruce Bengtson, Luther Memorial's award winning music director and organist, has led the church's several choral and instrumentalist groups since 1978.

Today, the church serves many functions in addition to church worship services and bible study. The church is home to a thriving pre-school, Sunday church school for children through grade 6, confirmation classes, other classes and a library. It houses numerous service and fellowship

groups.

The congregation also supports Lutheran Social Services, Madison Urban Ministry, Oakwood Foundation, Triangle Ministry, Crossways Lutheran Camping Madison Area Lutheran Council and Porchlight. It was the first Dane County church to pay for the construction of a Habitat for Humanity house, in 1994.⁽³⁾

Luther Memorial Church's Early Development and Growth

The origins of Luther Memorial Church began on May 28, 1905, when the Reverend W.K. Frick of Milwaukee held the first Lutheran Service in English in Madison at the YMCA. That fall, several people met and canvassed dormitories and sororities to recruit University students for Sunday school instruction. During the following months, they met at the popular Keeley's Palace of Sweets, a candy shop and ice cream parlor at the top of State Street. On May 23, 1907, the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church was chartered as a congregation of the Synod of the Northwest, in the General Council of Lutheran Churches. The Reverend Howard R. Gold was then called as the first pastor, and arrived in July 1907. That autumn, the congregation first leased the former Gates of Heaven Synagogue at 214 W. Washington Avenue for their weekly use for services and instruction, a lease maintained until its move in 1915. The congregation grew during the following years, serving a range of people, though largely University students and staff.

In 1910, the congregation bought a lot at the corner of Lake Street and University Avenue at 636 University Avenue for \$15,500 and started a building fund campaign. At the end of August, 1914, the Building Committee agreed to enter a contract with Claude & Starck, Architects of Madison, to design a chapel, the first building for the church, and intended to eventually serve as a Sunday school for a large church to be built next door.⁽⁴⁾ The chapel was built and completed in 1915. It seated 300 and cost about \$18,000.⁽⁵⁾ It was the only Lutheran church in the city conducting services exclusively in English. The congregation moved from the leased building at 214 W. Washington Avenue into the new chapel, which was dedicated on Easter Sunday, April 25, 1915.

In May of 1918, the Congregation changed the name of the church from "Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity, of Madison, Wisconsin to "Luther Memorial Evangelical Lutheran Church, of Madison, Wisconsin," with a vote of a two thirds majority of the congregation. In May of 1920, Claude & Starck were commissioned to commence planning for the new church building to be built on a lot acquired at 1021 University Avenue, and patterned after Gothic cathedrals of Europe. Construction drawings were completed in May 1921, and construction started soon afterward. The cornerstone was laid on the last Sunday of October 1921 in a ceremony that included University of Wisconsin President E.A. Birge, Mayor I.M. Kittelson, Governor John J. Blaine. Reverend G. Keller Rubrecht, President, Synod of the Northwest, and Reverend Howard R. Gold, of the Board of Education of the United Lutheran Church participated in the ceremonies.

On October 28, 1923, the Luther Memorial Church was dedicated. The cost, including the

3 Gruber, Bonnie, editor. *Luther Memorial Church, a firm foundation , a faithful future*. Published by Luther Memorial Church, Madison, WI. 1997.

4 Church council and building committee minutes. Luther Memorial Archives.

5 The church sold the chapel years later, following the construction of the present church building, but the old chapel building remains, known as the Church Key in 2011.

parsonage next door, also by Claude & Starck, was \$380,000.

During the following years, the congregation continued to grow, and by April 1929, it reached 1500 people. However, it wasn't until after the congregation suffered the hard times of the Depression, and the end of World War II, that it experienced a burgeoning new growth.

Luther Memorial Church is also associated with the Lutheran Campus Center, which it started in 1907, though they legally became separate in 1939. Other than the 25 years from the 1940s to the 1960s when the Campus Center was on Langdon St., the Lutheran Campus Center has been housed at or near Luther Memorial Church, and since 1978 has occupied the building built for it just west of the church on land where Luther Memorial's old parsonage once stood. The church maintains parking in the basement of the building and has direct access to it from the lower level. Presently, the Lutheran Campus Center is a partner ministry between Luther Memorial, Bethel Lutheran and the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, ELCA.

Today, Luther Memorial's membership is comprised of nearly 1,000 people from throughout Dane County. The congregation continues to draw heavily from faculty, staff and students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and those people interested in the historic Western Christian Mass and accompanying style of ancient musical forms that are best suited to a gothic style of architecture.

Luther Memorial's Association with Claude & Starck, Architects

Claude & Starck, Architects, were commissioned by the Luther Memorial Church to design the church at 1021 University Avenue, probably in about 1917, or so, but they had other commissions for the congregation, too. In 1914, they had designed the first building for the church, the Chapel at 636 University Avenue, when the organization was named the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity.⁽⁶⁾

Around the time the chapel was designed and under construction, Claude & Starck drew up a preliminary sketch of the proposed church building to be built on the lot adjoining the Chapel on University Avenue. Due to problems in land area and an ownership dispute, it was never built there and instead the church acquired the present site, 1021 University Avenue in 1920 – then known as the old Harper house and lot.

The design for the present church building at 1021 University Avenue was begun by May 22, 1920, when Claude & Starck had been engaged informally by the church council to submit another concept for a new church on the new and larger lot at 1021 University Avenue.⁽⁷⁾ On June 5, 1920, Louis Claude presented the concept drawings for the church at the new site to the church council. At that meeting a Building Committee was also established and its membership chosen. The process took a year and in May of 1921 the drawings were completed, bids let and the groundbreaking took place. The old Harper house was moved to the Conklin lot, through the block, on Johnson Street (demolished in 2009). The cornerstone was laid on the last Sunday of October that fall. The construction took the better part of two years and the building was

6 Drawings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity, 1914, Northwest Architectural Archives, Manuscripts Division, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Also, an undated postcard, circa 1914-1917, depicted Claude & Starck, Architects' proposed Luther Memorial Church adjoining the chapel at 636 University Avenue, a concept and location that was abandoned in favor of the present site.

7 Church council and building committee minutes. Luther Memorial Archives.

dedicated in October, 1923.

Their last commission for the church was the parsonage at 1025 University Avenue. During the time that the church was nearing completion, in June of 1923, Claude & Starck also designed the parsonage that was built just west of the church and completed that winter, though the records for that are few.

It is not known how the church council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity, settled on the firm of Claude & Starck for the first project, the design of the Chapel at 636 University Avenue. However, the church committee's membership suggests the connections and recommendations that likely led to the commission. The selection of Claude & Starck was likely based on the recommendation of members of the church's council, Rudolph and Emil Hokanson, whose business partner in the Hokanson Automobile Company had commissioned the architects for his residence in 1907. The Hokanson Automobile Company had been founded in 1904 by Rudolph Hokanson, who served as general manager. Charles F. Spooner was president, Rudolph's younger brother Emil Hokanson was vice president, and George P. Miller was Secretary of the company. In 1907, Claude & Starck completed drawings for George Miller for a house at 1125 Rutledge on the lake side of Orton Park. It was a Tudor-styled residence with Arts-and-Crafts-styled cabinetry, windows and details. In 1916, following the chapel commission for Luther Memorial, Claude and Starck were commissioned by Emil Hokanson to design a house at 1043 Sherman Avenue, across Sherman Avenue from his brother Rudolph's house at 1054 Sherman Avenue. The house was one of the finest Prairie-School- styled residences in the state. Emil Hokanson lived in the house only a year or so before moving to Milwaukee to work on the company's business in their Milwaukee office. Rudolph continued as an officer of the Church council, until the planning of the construction of the new church in 1921, when he, too, moved to Milwaukee.

The Firm, Claude & Starck, Architects

Claude & Starck designed scores of residences, 40 libraries, many schools, banks, commercial and industrial buildings throughout Wisconsin from the beginning of their partnership in 1896 until 1929, when they dissolved their partnership. During that time, they oversaw the construction of over 150 buildings in Madison alone in the Craftsman, Prairie School, Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival, and Spanish Colonial styles.

The Churches of Claude & Starck

Claude & Starck's first church was designed and built during the first year or so of their partnership in 1897. It was the East Koshkonong Norwegian Lutheran Church, which still stands at 454 East Church Road, southwest of Cambridge, Wisconsin. Its late Victorian Gothic styling was a departure from the earlier Victorian era Gothic churches, and patterned, in part, on the two separate and distinctly differing towers at the front façade, flanking the gable, and featuring a large rose window and front entryway.

In 1905, Claude & Starck designed St. John's Lutheran Church, or Saint Johannes at the time of the drawings, built at 322 East Washington Avenue in Madison. It was largely patterned after the East Koshkonong Norwegian Lutheran Church that Claude & Starck had designed several years earlier.

Among Claude & Starck's other work for churches were the Unitarian Society parish house at 504 N. Carroll in 1909 (dated drawings)(8); a parish hall addition to the Unitarian Church on E. Dayton Street in 1911; alterations and an addition to Saint Paul's Episcopal Church, 413 South 2nd Street, Watertown, in 1922 (drawings); a parish house and alterations for the First Methodist Episcopal Church, 1924 (drawings); and the Sacred Hearts of Jesus & Mary Church auditorium, 221 Columbus Street, Sun Prairie in 1927 (Rankin, p.40.).

Luther Memorial stands as a monument among the works of Claude & Starck, particularly among their church designs. It was among their most expensive building projects, as well. Their work was significant in its design and execution. Though built with economy in mind, the effect was an edifice of inspiring and breath-taking proportions, enhanced by skillful detail and craftsmanship.

Louis W. Claude

Louis W. Claude was born in 1868 to Louis J. Claude, who emigrated from England, and Elvira Ward Claude, who was from New York State.

Claude was educated in the public schools in Baraboo, Wisconsin. He attended the University of Wisconsin as a special student in Civil Engineering under Professor Allan Durst Conover, from 1887 through 1889.(9) It was a program in building engineering, architecture and construction. Concurrently, he worked in the firm of Conover & Porter, Architects, and left their employ in December 1889.(10)

In 1890, Louis W. Claude went to work in the Chicago architectural firm of Burnham & Root, which was in the early stages of planning and supervising the construction of the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. After a short time there, he joined friend Will McFetridge in apprenticing in the architectural office of Dankmar Adler and Louis Sullivan in Chicago, under the direction of Sullivan's chief draftsman, Frank Lloyd Wright, another veteran of Conover's engineering instruction and Conover & Porter's architectural firm.(11) Claude noted that he "laid out the first plans for the first Transportation Building" for the World's Columbian Exposition."(12)

Claude remained at Adler & Sullivan's office until November 1891 and then went on to work with Schlacks & Ottenheimer, architects, both of whom had been associates of Claude's and apprentices at Adler & Sullivan.(13) The firm specialized in church design and had many commissions throughout the Midwest.

8 Drawings refers to those listed in the Claude collection of the Northwest Architectural Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

9 Catalogue of the University of Wisconsin, 1888-1889, Cramer, Aikens & Cramer: Milwaukee and Madison, Wisconsin. 1889. p. 25. Catalogue of the University of Wisconsin, 1889-1890, Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Cramer, Aikens & Cramer, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. 1890. p.21.

10 Cass, Betty. Madison Day-by-Day. Wisconsin State Journal. Madison, Wisconsin: January 14, 1942. p. 13.

11 Cass, Betty. Madison Day-by-Day. Wisconsin State Journal. Madison, Wisconsin: January 14, 1942. p. 13.

12 Wisconsin State Journal, August 18, 1899.

13 Rankin, Katherine H., "*Madison Intensive Survey: Master Architects.*" Report prepared for the City of Madison and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1996. p.22-26, 43.

And in: Orr, Gordon Jr., FAIA. "Louis W. Claude: Madison Architect of the Prairie School", The Prairie School Review. Vol. XIV Chicago: Prairie Avenue Bookshop, 1981.

In 1895, Claude opened an architectural practice in Madison, and lectured at the University of Wisconsin. In 1896, he partnered with Edward F. Starck, in Claude & Starck, Architects. It is not known how they knew each other before then, though they both had worked for prominent Chicago architectural firms. According to a Claude & Starck biographer, Gordon Orr, Claude was “reputed to have been most responsible for the design and direction of the firm.”⁽¹⁴⁾ Claude was the member of the firm who almost always was reported in newspapers and interviews as representing the firm.

Edward Starck

Edward Starck was a partner in the firm of Claude & Starck, Architects. He was sometimes the liaison with the building committee in the early planning of the church building.⁽¹⁵⁾ His signed watercolor rendering of the first edition of the church façade was a rare document, suggesting two things – that he was beginning to exert some degree of recognition for his contribution to the firm’s work, and putting a name to the rendition artwork. Several renditions for various projects had been done previously, but had only been signed Claude & Starck, Architects. Perhaps it was Starck who had authored many of the previous renditions, formerly attributed to Claude.

Edward F. Starck was born in Milwaukee in 1868. When he was ten years old, his family moved to Madison and his father became a builder and operated a planing mill. That business was the predecessor to the Findorff Construction Company, which is today (2011) a large construction firm. Young Edward Starck had apprenticed with the prominent architects David R. Jones of Madison, Edward Townsend Mix of Milwaukee and Handy and Cady of Chicago before joining Claude in a partnership in Madison in 1896.⁽¹⁶⁾ Starck’s family and work connections likely led to several of the early commissions that their partnership attained in its earliest years. Starck was a silent partner, who avoided the press and didn’t participate in the business correspondence, so his written record is lean.

Claude & Starck, Architects

Louis W. Claude (1868-1951) and Edward F. Starck (1868-1947)

Claude & Starck began their partnership in Madison in 1896 and, over the course of their 32 year partnership, designed hundreds of buildings, including nearly 40 libraries in Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota and Washington, many schools, public buildings, banks, factories and scores of residences. They became proficient in Tudor Revival, Gothic Revival, Neo-Classical Revival, Craftsman, Arts & Crafts, and Prairie School styles of architecture. Throughout most of their partnership, their office in Madison was in the Badger Block, on S. Carroll Street on the Capitol Square, an early commercial building of their own design. It was there that the plans were drawn for the chapel, the church and the parsonage for Luther Memorial Church. The firm’s partnership lasted until September 1927, when Louis Claude left the firm and moved his office next door to the Badger Block Annex. Some projects in the name of the firm were completed during the following two years until the firm was dissolved in 1929. Claude’s sole practice was very limited for several years and in early 1942, he moved it to his home at 851 E. Gorham Street, Madison. He closed his business just a few years later, and spent much of his time at the family home at Devil’s Lake where he died at age 82, on August 10, 1951.

14 Orr, Gordon Jr., FAIA. “Louis W. Claude: Madison Architect of the Prairie School”, [The Prairie School Review](#). Vol. XIV Chicago: Prairie Avenue Bookshop, 1981. p. 6.

15 Secretary’s Minutes of the Church council, May 22, 1920. p.217.

16 Rankin, p. 218.

It is notable that Edward Starck was the active partner following initial discussions of the concept of the church and he became the principal contact in the firm for the Building Committee of the church. In 1927, following the end of the partnership, Edward Starck retained the office and partnered with his chief draftsman, Hubert A. Schneider.(17)

Education Building

The Education Building was designed in the spring of 1957 by Madison architect Reginald Stehr.(18) It was dedicated in November, 1959. It held the administration offices, and rooms for Sunday school, choir, youth, Boy Scouts and nurseries. It cost \$280,000.

Reginald Stehr, Architect

Reginald W. Stehr was born in Madison in 1910, studied architecture at the University of Illinois, and graduated in 1932. Little is known of his apprenticeship and practice in Madison until he opened his own office in his home at 706 S. Orchard Street in late July, 1948. In 1950, Stehr was the architect for the social and educational building of St. Luke's Lutheran Church on Hubbard Avenue in Middleton. Stehr was sometimes philanthropic in his work and contributed his work on the planning and design of the aquarium for Henry Vilas Park Zoo in 1962. The following year, he was contracted to draw up preliminary plans for altering the Vilas park zoo lion house, was hired to design the mammal house at the zoo (1965), and an addition and alteration to primate house, Henry Vilas Zoo (1967). Stehr designed several Madison fire stations: No. 5 (1963), 4418 Cottage Grove Road; No. 7, at Harley Dr. and Raymond Road (1965), demolished; and an addition and remodeling of No. 8 (1965), 409 North Street. Stehr also designed offices and residences.(19)

Stehr was the architect of Luther Memorial's balcony and narthex alteration in 1966. He was a member of St. John's church in Madison, and following his design of the church's education building, became a member of Luther Memorial, and became the church's architect of record for several additions and alterations. He died in January 1968.(20) His daughter Kathleen Carol Stehr married Alan Martinson in the church in April 1969.

Gothic Revival Architecture

Gothic Revival architecture arose as the result of a movement that began in England in the 1740s – a movement that was enmeshed with philosophical beliefs associated with religious nonconformism and reform. It paralleled a growth in medievalism, which was later renewed in the Nineteenth Century as a response to industrialization and its dehumanizing effects on mankind. Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812-1852), an English architect and furniture designer, was a prominent critic of the developing industrialized society and posited that Gothic architecture was infused with Christian values that industrialization was destroying. A Catholic, he likened employing Gothic design as harkening back to a golden era. This concept was further articulated by British architectural critic John Ruskin (1819-1900), who developed the theory that art is essentially spiritual and reached its zenith in the Gothic art and architecture of the late

17 Capital Times, Madison, Wisconsin, Dec. 04, 1929. p.12.

18 Education Building construction drawings dated June 10, 1957. Luther Memorial Archives.

19 Various notices and articles in the Capital Times and Wisconsin State Journal.

20 Obituaries, Stehr, Reginald. Capital Times, January 22, 1968, Madison, Wisconsin. p.18

Middle Ages, inspired by high levels of religious and moral development. Both men did much to promote the use of Gothic Revival styles and the high level of craftsmanship in the Arts and Crafts movement.

Though the sources of the Nineteenth Century Gothic Revival cathedrals and churches that may have served as inspirations for Claude & Starck are not known, it was certain that the firm had access to the current architecture trade magazines of the time. In these were published watercolor, pencil, and pen-and-ink renderings of the old buildings of Europe, made by visiting architects on tour.

Also, Louis Claude's experience was imbued with the Gothic Revival style. His boyhood rural home, Eagle Crag, was designed and built in 1857 on the north shore of Devil's Lake by his father, Louis James Claude, an engineer. The Claude house also may have been inspired by similar publications by Andrew Jackson Downing and his peers, as well as, may have appeared as a house style of some of the Lake Country homes in England from whence the senior Claude had come. In the early 1890s, Louis Claude also worked for church architects Schlacks and Ottenheimer, and gained some level of expertise in design and detail in the mode. Though the sources are vague, the interest was strong. Claude & Starck included Gothic Revival design within at least a third of their buildings over the years.

The cathedral form reflected in Luther Memorial Church was well developed in the early Nineteenth Century and in part, in the ancient buildings upon which the style had evolved. For example, Pugin's design for St. Aidan's Cathedral of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Ferns in Enniscorthy, County Wexford in Ireland bears some resemblance. It has a tall façade gable above an entrance that has an enormous Gothic window set. It also has a rear, though central bell tower. Its sides are buttressed with tall arched windows lighting the nave. It is a form well copied by generations of architects.

The Gothic Revival style is further defined in church architecture as to have created soaring spaces that easily lent themselves to inspiration, music and reflection. These spaces were lit by tall vertical windows that maximized the visual effect and size of the window, and maximize the light entering into a building. This was accomplished by stacking many smaller paned windows vertically and topping them with pointed arches. Windows were alternated with structural columns, often buttressed, to maximize the size of the windows. The use of color, as in colored glass and interior finishes and stenciling modified the effect of the light and gave it an artistic effect.

These Gothic characteristic features are found in Luther Memorial Church.

The Mid-Century Gothic Revival as found in the Education Building adequately portrays a deference to the design of the adjoining church building in its fenestration patterning, materials and Gothic detailing, borrowed, though not copied, of the earlier style. The exterior design of the building is more restrained and is more a surface application of the Gothic style to a school structure.

As a composition, these buildings reflect an integrated development of the Gothic Revival style as expressed in two differing, though compatible, eras.