

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

Name of Building or Site

Common Name

Davies House

Historic Name (if applicable)

Joseph E. and Emlen Davies House

Location

428 North Livingston Street

Aldermanic District

District #2, Brenda Konkel

Zoning District

R 5

Present Use

6 Unit Apartment

Current Owner of Property

**428 N. Livingston LLC
c/o Eric Fleming**

Street Address

**428 North Livingston St.
P. O. Box 1829
Madison, WI 53701**

Telephone Number

608-212-3650

Parcel Number

070913215096

Legal Description

**LOT 6 DOYONS SUBD. OF LOTS 8 & 9,
BLOCK 138**

Condition of Property

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

Property is in fair condition

Altered or Unaltered?

Altered to 6 unit apartments

Moved or Original Site

Original Site

Wall Construction

Stone basement foundation with brick veneer, conventional wood frame & rafter

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LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (2)

Historical Data

Original Owner

Joseph E. & Emlen Davies

Original Use

**Single Family Residence
with staff quarters**

Architect or Builder

unknown

Architectural Style

Georgian Revival

List of Bibliographical References Used

See Attached

Form Prepared by

James R Roper (revised by K. H. Rankin, April 21, 2006)

Organization Represented (if any)

None

Address

**746 East Gorham Street
Madison, WI 53703**

Telephone Number

608-250-1995

Date Nomination Form Was Prepared

Prepared February 15, 2006

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Bibliography

Joseph E. & Emlen Davies House

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- Muggah, Mary G. & Raihle, Paul H. (1946). Biographical Sketch of Joseph Edward Davies. In Meet Your Neighbor (pp 164-165). Chippewa Falls Book Agency, Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin.
- National Register of Historic Places NRHP (1987). United States Department Of Interior & National Park Service. Fourth Lake Ridge Historic District, Madison Wisconsin, 428 North Livingston.
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- Staff (1958, April 9). When Joseph E. Davies Was Gymnastic Instructor at U. W. The Madison Capital Times.
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- Usher, Ellis Baker. (1914). Biographical Sketch of Joseph Edward Davies. Wisconsin: Its Story And Biography 1848-1913 (pp. 2324-2326). The Lewis Publishing Company, Chicago and New York.

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LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (3)

Describe Present and Original Physical Construction and Appearance.

Joseph E. and Emlen Davies House

The Davies house is a Georgian Revival style house built in 1907. The following is a brief overview the evolving architecture for homes of this style.

Georgian and Colonial Revival Architecture (Rankin and Heggland, 2006)

Since the Centennial celebration on Philadelphia in 1876, the Colonial Revival has been the most popular style for single-family houses in the United States. The Colonial Revival can be subdivided into the Dutch Colonial, the Georgian Revival and an asymmetrical variant sometimes called "Colonial" or "Pennsylvania farmhouse."

In the early 1600s when settlers arrived on the east coast from England the prevailing housing style was still medieval. The "House of Seven Gables" is a good example of medieval style used for the early settlements in New England. The house has steeply pitched gables and narrow clapboards stained a dark brown color. The windows now are double-hung units divided into many small rectangular panes of glass and are placed in a functional pattern rather than a designed one. The windows are small compared to the expanse of siding and originally they were probably even smaller casement windows with diamond panes of leaded glass.

Early in the 1700s England and its colonies took up the Georgian style with a passion. Named after the reigning king at the time it featured shallowly pitched roofs, even and symmetrical spacing of windows, central doorways, larger double-hung windows with rectangular panes of glass and classical details taken from ancient Greece and Rome. In the United States, Georgian houses were often of clapboard and/or shingles in the north and red brick in the south. [The above Georgian details are present in the Davies house as well as the clapboard siding typically used in the north].

The Federal style was essentially a development of the Georgian using finer and more delicate details. If we had not successfully revolted from England, it would have been called "Late Georgian," but since we were then a new country, it is known as "Federal" to reflect our independence. In general, twentieth century houses based on these precedents can be simply called Georgian, especially since such houses are often somewhat eclectic in their use of early or late Georgian details....

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An example of the early Georgian Revival style in the Fourth Lake Ridge Historic District is the Joseph E. and Emlen Davies house at 428 N. Livingston Street, built in 1907 overlooking Lake Mendota. This two-story house is rectilinear in plan, has a stone foundation, is wood frame, clad in clapboard, has corner pilasters, and has a hip roof with overhanging eaves supported by modillion blocks. The detailing is centered on the east-facing main entrance with an elegantly curved balconet. The Davies house is a fine representative example of its style and period; although somewhat altered (it now contains several rental units) it is still in a largely intact state and is in good condition (Fourth Lake Ridge Historic District, NRHP 1987).

Like many houses in Madison that were built before the use of building permits, the original architect of the Davies house is unknown. The short-lived Madison architectural firm of Jennings and Kronenberg produced a drawing for an earlier scheme for the Davies house in a considerable more elaborate design in the same style. The exact reasons that the Davieses built a less elaborate but more forward-thinking design is not known.

In 2006 it would appear that little has changed the physical construction since the 1987 assessment in the National Register of Historic Places nomination. The internal and external surface conditions have changed from good to fair due to neglect and wear. The structure has a new roof.

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LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (4)

Significance of nominated Property and conformance to Designation Criteria.

Joseph E. & Emlen Davies House

The Davies house is eligible to be designated as a Madison Landmark because it meets criteria (4)(a)2. in that it is identified with Joseph E. Davies, “an historic personage ... in national, state or local history,” with the house at 428 N. Livingston Street representing his almost meteoric early career as a lawyer, politician, real estate developer and national government administrator. The Davies house is also significant (4)(a)3. as a representative and important residential example of the transitional phase from the Victorian to Georgian Revival styles and embodies “the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period [and] style.”

Historical Significance

Joseph Edward Davies was born on November 29, 1876 in Watertown Wisconsin. His father was a blacksmith who had come to the United States in 1840 from Wales. His mother was of Welch and Norman French extraction, the daughter of a barrister and at the age of twenty-two was an ordained minister (Usher, 1914). She had been visiting the United States on a religious lecture tour and met Mr. Davies at a stop in Watertown where they later married.

Joseph Davies attended public schools in Watertown and graduated valedictorian of his class in 1894. He then attended the University of Wisconsin and was elected president of his freshman class. This was the beginning of his Madison connection. As an undergraduate he was very successful in debate, oratorical contests, student leadership and gymnastics, and track (Usher 1914, Muggah & Raihle 1946, Staff MCT 1958, Plumb 1963, MacLean 1992). He graduated from law school 1901 having been the president of the senior law class. During this time he became interested in business and politics. In 1902 he was made temporary chairman of the Democratic State Convention. That same year he married Miss Emlen Knight, daughter of Colonel J. H. Knight, a wealthy lumberman of Ashland, Wisconsin and Madison (Usher 1914, NRHP 1987). Soon thereafter he entered into the Madison law firm of Aylward, Davies, Olbrich and Hill (Usher, 1914, MacLean, 1992) and built the house on N. Livingston Street. The Davieses had three daughters, Eleanor born in 1904, Rahel 1909, and Emlen “Bijou” 1916. The latter two were born while the family was living at 428 N. Livingston.

Joseph Davies’ political career evolved locally in Madison as a lawyer, State Attorney General and Chairman of the State Democratic Central Committee. He also partnered with his brother-in-law Leslie Brooks Rowley in the real estate business, a business that Rowley had learned from his father here in Madison. In 1911 Davies became actively involved in the nomination of Governor Woodrow Wilson for President. It was Davies’ leadership and organization of the Democratic Party in Wisconsin, the mid-west and west that piloted Wilson to victory in 1912 (Usher 1914, AHP 1991). At that point Davies had a budding career as a prominent national politician.

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Davies was appointed Commissioner of Corporations by Wilson in 1912 and was instrumental in the development of the emerging Federal Trade Commission (FTC). In 1915 Wilson appointed Davies as the first Chairman of the FTC. During this time Davies also worked in various legal capacities for the government, including serving as the economic advisor to President Wilson at the Versailles conference in 1915-1916. In about 1916 the Davies family moved to Washington D.C. and rented out the house on Livingston to E. F. Mutter (the house was eventually sold to the Lewis family in 1927). Davies retained, however, his local interests as a member of his law firm and as President of the Madison Development Corporation which he had incorporated with his brother-in-law.

After his move to Washington, Davies' political career rapidly expanded nationally and internationally counseling, advising and negotiating with numerous governments and countries. The following is an overview of his accomplishments (Usher 1941, Plumb 1963, AHP 1991, MacLean 1992):

Chairman Federal Trade Commission 1915-16

Economic advisor to President Wilson at the Versailles conference in 1918

Counsel for the government of Mexico, Peru, Holland, Greece, and the Dominical Republic
1920s

Counsel for the U.S. taxpayers in the Ford Stock Valuation Tax Case 1924-1927

U.S. ambassador to Russia 1937-38

U.S. ambassador to Belgium 1938-39

Special assistant to Secretary of State Hull, in charge of War Emergency Problems and Policies
1939-41

Vice chairman Democratic National Commission 1936

Chairman of President Roosevelt's Inaugural Commission 1941 & 1945

Chairman of the President's War Relief Control Board 1942-46

Special envoy to confer with Stalin 1943

Special envoy to confer with Winston Churchill 1945

Special envoy to Potsdam Conference 1945

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He received numerous honors for many of these accomplishments including the Medal for Merit (the highest civilian decoration of the U.S.), and decorations from France, Peru, Greece, Russia, Belgium, Panama and many others (AHP 1991).

Joseph Davies kept a journal and a diary and was also an avid correspondent. His personal notes about his many contacts are embodied in the book that he wrote "Mission to Moscow" that was published in 1941 and was later produced as a film in 1942-43. His correspondence to others and family have been collected or archived and provide a detailed record of his thoughts and accomplishments.

Early in 1935 Davies met Marjorie Merriweather Post Close Hutton at a dinner party in Florida. Marjorie Hutton was the heiress of the General Foods Empire of Charles W. Post. She was married at the time to the Wall Street broker E. F. Hutton. A romance developed and Davies divorced Emlen, Marjorie divorced Hutton and they both married that same year in Watertown, Wisconsin. It was Marjorie that accompanied Ambassador Davies to Russia in 1939. Both Davies and Marjorie had a great interest in fine art and it was during this time that Davies, Marjorie and Bijou acquired Russian icons, furniture and paintings. Davies donated a large portion of this collection to the University of Wisconsin. At that time the collection was valued at over \$100,000.

He also established the Joe Davies Scholarship Foundation that offered, and continues to offer, to Watertown and surrounding high school graduates, four-year scholarships to the University of Wisconsin (MacLean 1992). There is also an annual Joe Davies scholarship at the University of Wisconsin Law School.

Davies continued an active role in U.S. foreign policy for many years. By 1953 his influence had waned. A Republican Administration was in office. The Korean War had started, and the Soviets were shaken by the death of Stalin. His diplomatic role had evaporated (MacLean 1992). His health was beginning to fail along with his marriage. During this time he focused on editing his papers and managing his charitable contributions.

Joseph Davies died on May 9, 1958. Funeral services were held at the National Cathedral in Washington D.C. In the buttress of the cathedral at the entrance to Woodrow Wilson's tomb it reads: "In Memoriam: Joseph E. Davies, Son of Wisconsin, Civil Servant, Ambassador, Advisor to Presidents" (MacLean 1992).

Architectural Significance

The Joseph and Emlen Davies house was built in 1907. It is of architectural significance as one of the best and most representative examples of the period at the turn-of-the-last century when Victorian design was transitioning into the more historically correct period revival styles, in this case Georgian Revival (see description for more information on the style). In the Department of

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Planning and Development's draft "Architectural Styles" component of the Madison Intensive Survey, the Davies house is listed as one of the eight best examples of this turn-of-the-century transitional phase in architecture. The Davies house includes a Victorian emphasis on decoration, including a distinctly free use of classical forms in the balconet over the main entrance, a leaded glass window bay and interior wood paneling of English Arts and Crafts influence, and a neo-classical exterior design reflecting the Georgian Revival.

The Davies house is one of the most refined examples of residential architecture remaining in Madison, important as an example of architectural thought at the turn-of-the-last-century, when many wealthy families opted for designs that spoke of their success without resorting to what was considered the stuffy pretension of the Victorian era. The fact that it is less elaborate and freer than some examples is a sign of its modernity. Later examples of Georgian Revival design lost that sense of Arts and Crafts modernity by becoming more archeological correct.



Lake Mendota

PROSPECT PLACE

WASHBURN PLACE

428 NORTH LIVINGSTON STREET

NORTH LIVINGSTON STREET

EAST GORHAM STREET

