

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

I. Name of Building or Site

(1) Common

[Robert H.] Lamp House

(2) Historic (if applicable)

Lamp House

II. Location 22 North Butler Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53703

(1) Street Address

22 North Butler Street, Madison, WI

(2) Ward (available @ City Clerk)

III. Classification

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

Building [Dwelling]

(2) Zoning District

(3) Present Use

Two-family dwelling

IV. Current Owner of Property (available at City Assessor's office)

(1) Name(s)

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Neujahr

(2) Street Address

22 North Butler St., Madison, WI 53703

(3) Telephone Number

251-8752

V. Legal Description (available at City Assessor's office)

(1) Parcel Number

(2) Legal Description

VI. Condition of Property

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

Fair to good

(2) Altered or Unaltered?

Altered

(3) Moved or Original Site?

Original site

(4) Wall Construction

Double brick, wooden dimension timbers, single steel I-beam supporting first story, added third story of frame construction, composition roof.

(5) On a separate sheet of paper, describe the present and original physical construction and appearance (limit 500 words).

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

VI. (5) Describe Present and Original Physical Construction and Appearance:

Originally, the building had a roof garden with wooden pergola and yellow brick fireplace. The replacement structure on the roof (now constituting a third story) is the principal alteration. Less significantly, an outer stairwell was added on the rear (southwest) and left (southeast) walls, as an addition to an existing airing porch, which served the stairwell landings; the bay was masked by asbestos sheeting; the terrace facade was pierced by a coal chute and given a coat of stucco; the yellow or cream brick walls were painted white; the ceramic caps of the piers were covered with cement; and the ceramic capping of the parapet wall was replaced by galvanized capping, at which time (November, 1961) the remaining pergola structure was removed. The earlier alterations were made probably in the fall of 1913, using evidence in the Lamp probate file; and it is likely that they were inspired by Mr. Lamp's wife, to whom he had been recently married. The basic construction is brick of the sort locally known as Milwaukee or Watertown cream or yellow brick. The dwelling has parapet walls, an enclosed porch on the right (northwest) wall, a terrace on the front (northeast) wall, a bay on the left (southeast) wall, and the enclosed outer stairway. It has a roughly cubical shape, although it is not modular, as might be expected of the architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, owing to his fondness for the geometric and natural forms. The dwelling's sides measure 31' 6"; the front and back, 29' 6"; height from the floor of the terrace to the parapet, 20' 6". Landfall would have prohibited construction of an exact cube in any case, although one of the walls could have been made a precise square. Piers or pilasters embrace the four corners, rising from the ground to the level of the second-story sills. Courses of brick encircle the exposed walls as continuations of sills and lintels of the first-story windows and as a continuation of the lintels of the second-story windows. Special brickwork dentils decorate the exterior parapet; and a rather elaborate sill of five tapering (front and sides) courses of brick supports the band of five windows across the front of the second story. All windows are casement, with diamond-shaped panes of glass, surrounded by a thin border of white, translucent glass. Some appear to be commercially made; others of irregular size bear marks of hand craftsmanship. The frames are red cypress, rough-sawn on the exterior and stained dark brown, but smoothly finished on the interior and originally varnished (now given an oil and wax finish). Three sets of double windows on the front and three sets of French doors and a four-foot-wide front door give exterior access and light to the living and dining rooms on the first floor. A band of five windows, broken by irregular spacing (1' 9 1/2", then 8 1/2", 8 1/2", then 1" 9 1/2") establishes an asymmetrical pattern on the second-floor facade. The added third story is set inside the parapet. It is of light construction, with a nearly continuous band of windows around it and with a small greenhouse extended on the left wall. Its roof is flat.

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LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (3)

VII. Significance

(1) Original Owner

Robert M. Lamp

(2) Original Use

Dwelling

(3) Architect or Builder

Frank Lloyd Wright

(4) Architectural Style

American style (1903); Prairie School
(modern)

(5) Date of Construction

1903

(6) Indigenous Materials Used

Probably Wisconsin brick and mortar

(7) On a separate sheet of paper, describe the significance of the nominated property and its conformance to the designation criteria of the Landmarks Commission Ordinance (33.01), limit of 500 words.

VIII. List of Bibliographical References Used

1. Harold Allen Brooks, The Prairie School: Frank Lloyd Wright and His Midwest Contemporaries (Toronto, 1972); Leonard K. Eaton, Two Chicago Architects and Their
2. Clients: Frank Lloyd Wright and Howard Van Doren Shaw (Cambridge, Mass., 1969); Henry Russell Hitchcock, In the Nature of Materials: The Buildings of Frank Lloyd
3. Wright, 1887-1941 (New York, 1942); Vincent Scully, Jr., Frank Lloyd Wright (New York, 1960); William Allin Storrer, The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright: A Complete
4. Catalog (Cambridge, Mass., 1974); Robert C. Twombly, Frank Lloyd Wright: An Interpretive Biography (New York, 1973); Frank Lloyd Wright, An Autobiography (New
5. York, 1943); Forest and Stream, 43: 80-82 (July 28, 1894); Madison Democrat, September 6, 1903; Sanborn-Perris maps for Madison, 1892, 1902, 1908; Lamp House project drawings, drawings number 0307.16 and 0402.01 through 0402.07, Taliesin Associated Architects, Scottsdale, Arizona, archives; Dane County Treasurer, Tax
6. Rolls, 1897-1905, City of Madison, series 013/2/2, Archives-Manuscripts Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; Robert M. Lamp probate file, in Dane County, Probate Court, box 488, series 013/10/6, SHSW; Madison City Council proceedings, numerous issues; conversations and correspondence with numerous friends, relatives, and associates of Frank Lloyd Wright and of Robert M. Lamp.

IX. Form Prepared By:

(1) Name and Title

John O. Holzhueter
 Editorial Assistant, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

(2) Organization Represented (if any)

none

(3) Address

816 State St., Madison, WI 53706

(4) Telephone Number

(608) 262-9695

(5) Date Nomination Form Was Prepared

July 25, 28, 1975

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

VII.(7) Significance of Nominated Property and Conformance to Designation Criteria:

Aspects of the Lamp House meet all four nominating criteria. For nearly three-quarters of a century, Frank Lloyd Wright has been looked upon as a seminal artist whose buildings profoundly influenced other architects. They have been cited for their use of materials, innovative and functional designs, harmonious proportions, and expressiveness of the architect's philosophy. Apart from Wright's long friendship with Lamp (beginning in the 1880's and continuing until Lamp's death in 1916, and noted in the architect's Autobiography), the notability and typicality of the Lamp House are other questions. Owing to the obtrusiveness of the added story, it is easy to misjudge the dwelling. Examination of its floor plans and of the external structure as it existed from 1903 to 1913, however, demonstrates that the building is a notable work of the architect and that it is typical of the important Prairie School style. Wright himself believed that it was. He was proud of its roof garden and of the house generally. He nearly duplicated the basic design and innovative open floor plan in the important 1906 Ladies' Home Journal plan for a low-priced concrete house, for which the Lamp House certainly served as a model. Had Wright chosen to give the Lamp House a slab roof rather than a garden, the dwellings would be more similar, and confusion would not have arisen over the style of the dwelling. Apart from its roof and cube-like form (though not a cube), the Lamp House displays decided Prairie School traits: open floor plan; banded fenestration (or nearly banded) on the second floor; broad horizontal members in the terrace, porches, bay, and courses of brick trim; use of diamonds, squares, and the juxtaposition of odd-numbered elements throughout (three against five in window treatment, for example)--especially noteworthy in light of Wright's frequent allusions to the influence of Froebel's kindergarten techniques and to natural geometric forms; and the Far Eastern-style pergola. Adaptation of dwelling to site--another Prairie School emphasis--is exceptional. From the roof garden, occupants can see both Lake Mendota and Lake Monona (Wright and Lamp shared a fondness of boating and of Madison's famous lakes). The Lamp lot, although only one-and-a-half blocks from the Capitol Square, since 1903 has been enclosed by other buildings and plantings and fences, giving it seclusion in the very center of town. The fortress-like quality (the suggestion of ramparts and the formidable vertical and horizontal elements) of the dwelling and its relatively obscure entrance bear out the modern thesis that Wright's dwellings reflected his attitude that a home should be a shelter from the outside world, a secure place for the family. His intimate association with Lamp's large family during their adolescence over a period of several years, and the Lamp family's close-knit quality contrast markedly to the turmoil that existed then in Wright's own household, and suggest strongly that Wright intended, consciously or unconsciously, that this dwelling reflect all of his feelings about family. As a reflection of broad social history, the Lamp House is a product of an artistic movement that is recognized internationally as an eruption of Americanism into art and architecture, as a part of the progressive spirit. So it is with most of Wright's early buildings. Wright assigned personal importance to the house, and his association with it (personal and artistic) lends it cachet. Further, Lamp himself was important in his community as a Democratic politician, former city treasurer for two terms, real estate speculator and developer, boating enthusiast and promoter regionally and locally, and as a well-known, well-liked and colorful Madisonian. His dwelling fits handily into Madison's history of development, for it was erected in the central city at a time when subdivisions were proliferating and older sections were being consolidated into smaller, denser lots. Thus, it and its site have architectural, social, and urban historical importance, as do the architect and the original owner.

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. The Lamp House as it appeared from 1903 to 1913, when the pergola was altered and a third story added. No original print of a picture of the unaltered house has been located. This may have been the first structure with piers erected after a design by Wright, and it is among the earliest designs (1902-1903) of buildings with piers.
2. Plans for the Ladies' Home Journal, 1906, "A Fireproof House for \$5000." Often hailed for its open floor plan adapted to a small house and for its use of materials, this house derived in significant part from the Lamp House. The floor plans are very similar. From Henry Russell Hitchcock, IN THE NATURE OF MATERIALS (New York, 1942), illustrations 128 and 129.
3. The Lamp House as it appears, more or less, today. Photograph by Paul Vanderbilt, taken about 1967.
4. Same.