

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

**Name of Building or Site**

Common

Historic (if applicable)

Irene and Robert Connor Residence

**Location****Street Address**

640 East Gorham Street

**Aldermanic District**

2

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

building

**Zoning District**

R5

**Present Use**

residence, multi-unit

**Current Owner of Property (available at City Assessor's office)****Name(s)**

City of Madison

**Street Address**

City Municipal Building

6100

Madison, Wisconsin 53710

**Telephone Number**

(608) 266-4711

**Legal Description (available at City Assessor's office)****Parcel Number**

0709-133-1221-4

**Legal Description**Original Plat, SW 50' of Lot 7, block  
260**Condition of Property****Physical Condition (excellent, good, fair, deteriorated, ruins)**

Good

**Altered or Unaltered?**

Unaltered

**Moved or Original Site?**

Original Site

**Wall Construction**

Brick Veneer over platform frame

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LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (2)

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**Describe Present and Original Physical Construction and Appearance.**

Constructed in 1920 and Colonial Revival in style, 640 East Gorham Street is a three bay by two bay side gable building with a perpendicular rear gable extension. The gable roof is clad in asphalt. A chimney is located at each end of the roof ridge. Quarter-round leaded windows flank the chimneys beneath the gable eaves. The eaves project slightly over a narrow cornice and return on the gable ends.

The red brick walls are also largely unornamented. Surface treatment occurs around the windows as round arched lintels of header brick with brick infill of header bricks above each rectangular window opening on the first floor. On the side elevations, the lintels are of soldier bricks laid flush to the wall while the sills of header bricks protrude from the wall. Fenestration is regular with six over six double hung wood sash windows. Regular size windows occupy the bays on either side of, and over, the main entrance. West side elevation windows are smaller six over six double hung wood sash for the kitchen and bathroom. East side windows are regular six-over-six flanking the chimney on both floors and a series of three windows in the rear block.

The main entrance is a simple door surmounted by a projecting brick segmental arch over a spider web fanlight. A brick path leads from the sidewalk to the stairs leading to the door. The landing is a unique design of two brick layers - a rectangular layer supporting a half circle layer.

The brick walls are delineated from the concrete foundation by a belt course of header bricks.

The house has an interesting floor plan with the stairs to the four bedrooms on the second story immediately in front of the front door. The kitchen occupies the west side of the main block of the house, with the living room on the east side. A dining room and sunroom occupy the rear wing. Four bedrooms are on the second floor with the main bathroom. A fifth bedroom is on the third floor attic. An additional bathroom is located in the basement.

Few alterations have been made to the house. One of the quarter-round leaded glass windows has been replaced with an undecorated quarter-round pane. None of the alterations affect the integrity of the house.

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LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (3)

Original Owner	Original Use
Irene and Robert Connor	Residence
Architect or Builder	Architectural Style
	Colonial Revival
Date of Construction	Indigenous Materials Used
1920	

List of Bibliographical References Used

Madison City Directories 1904-1940

National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form,  
William Collins House, Division of Historic Preservation,  
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Maps, Madison, 1908, 1942

Site Files, Historic Preservation/City of Madison Planning Office.

Wyatt, Barbara. Cultural Management in Wisconsin: Volume 2; A Manual for  
Historic Properties, (Historic Preservation Division; State Historical  
Society of Wisconsin, June 1986), Industry Chapter.

Form Prepared By:

Name and Title

Rebecca Sample Bernstein, Historic Preservation Consultant  
309 Norris Court  
Madison, WI 53703 (608) 251-4615

Organization Represented (if any)

Old Market Place Neighborhood Association, Madison Trust for Historic  
Preservation, Historic Madison Inc.

Address

Telephone Number

Date Nomination Form Was Prepared

September 23, 1992

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

**Significance of Nominated Property and Conformance to Designation Criteria:**

The house at 640 East Gorham is locally significant for its association with the Collins and Connor families, local lumber business families in the first half of the twentieth century. Its spatial relationship to the C.C. Collins Residence and the William Collins Residence reflects the cultural, economic, and social history of Madison during that time.

The Colonial Revival style house at 640 East Gorham was constructed in 1920 for Irene Collins Connor and her husband Robert Connor. Irene was the daughter of Cornelius C. Collins, founder of the lumber firms Collins Brothers Lumber Company, C.C. Collins Lumber Company, and C.C. Collins and Son Lumber Company. Irene's mother Anna had been Vice President of C.C. Collins and Son. After Anna's death in 1932, Irene became Vice President. Robert Connor became Manager of C.C. Collins and Son by 1925, and Secretary of the company by the early 1950s. Irene and Robert's son then became general manager.

The Connors lived with her parents at 636 East Gorham until their own home was completed. Anna and Cornelius Collins lived at 646 East Gorham until Anna's death. Cornelius continued to live there until his death in 1950. Irene Collins Connor was the niece, and Cornelius Collins the brother, of William Collins. William Collins lived in the Claude and Starck house at 704 East Gorham. This house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. William Collins was the president of the Collins Brothers Lumber Company, and handled most of the local concerns while Cornelius was on the road scouting lumber sources and establishing new business ties.

While the architect of the Connor home is unknown, it may well have been Edward F. Starck, one half of the team that designed the Collins houses at 646 and 704 East Gorham. The house, although not a unique example of the Colonial Revival style in Madison, is nonetheless competently executed. Its restrained symmetry and simplicity is more reflective of the vernacular Federal style than many of the exuberant Colonial pastiches found throughout Madison. The pleasing effect of the house physically represents the offspring of Cornelius Collins, and as such, adds to our understanding of the history of this neighborhood.

640 East Gorham is one of three Collins houses within close proximity to one another on the south shore of Lake Mendota. 646 East Gorham, designed by Claude and Starck, was built for Cornelius and Anna in 1908. 704 East Gorham was the home of William Collins, also designed by Claude and Starck. It was constructed in 1911. The Collins/Connor houses at 640, 646, and 704 East Gorham represent a pattern of family living common in Madison around the turn of the century. Other family compounds include the Herfurth houses at 703 and 709 East Gorham Street and the Brown houses at 116 and 130 East Gorham Street and 121 East Gilman Street. This house is integral to the historic Collins/Connor grouping.