

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM

Name of Building or Site

Common:	Historic:
Madison Club	Same

Location

Street Address:	Aldermanic District:
5 East Wilson Street Madison, WI 53703	Fourth

Classification

Type of Property:

Building

Zoning District:	Present Use:
	Club

Current Owner of Property

Name(s):

Madison Club House Association

Street Address:	Telephone Number:
5 East Wilson Street Madison, WI 53715	(608)255-4861

Legal Description

Parcel Number: 0709-242-0117-5	Legal Description: Lot 1, Block 87, Original Plat, exc. that part used for railroad purposes
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Condition of Property

Physical Condition:

Excellent

Altered or Unaltered?	Moved or Original Site?
Mostly unaltered	Original Site

Wall Construction:

Load-bearing brick (1916-18); Reinforced concrete block with brick veneer (1954).

Describe Original and Present Physical Appearance and Construction

The Madison Club is a three story Georgian Revival building erected 1916-18,¹ with a 1954 noncontributing addition.² Designed by Madison architect Frank Riley,³ the total cost to purchase the lot, and erect and furnish the building, was \$155,000.⁴ The mason contractor was L.B. Gilbert, and A.D. and J.V. Frederickson were the carpenter contractors.⁵ The original block measures 60 feet along the Wilson Street (north) facade, and 95 feet along the sides. It is of load-bearing red brick in Flemish bond with concrete trim and a hip roof. The basement is rusticated concrete with a classically profiled concrete water table. The first story is also rusticated, an effect achieved with periodic rows of inset bricks. Between the first and second floors, there is a concrete cornice. Above, a concrete beltcourse with classical profile forms a continuous sill for the second story windows. At the top of the third story is a concrete frieze, and a denticulated cornice. The wall terminates in a brick parapet with regularly spaced concrete panels and a concrete coping. The fenestration pattern is regular. Most of the windows are wood multipane double hung sash. Those on the first and second floors are 12/8. The first floor windows have concrete sills with a classical profile, and brick lintels with a concrete keystone. The second floor windows have classically profiled concrete lintels. Beneath each of these windows is a concrete panel. The third floor windows are 8/8 with classical concrete sills. The front of the building is on the west facade, overlooking Olin Terrace. Four two-story projecting brick pilasters, each on a concrete plinth, rise from the top of the first floor to divide this facade into three sections. Each pilaster has an Ionic capital with a bead-and-reel echinus. Each section has three bays of windows. The central section is recessed slightly. In the center of this facade is a concrete portico with Doric columns and a frieze enriched with disks. There is a balustrade above, with turned balusters and paneled pedestals

¹Building permit dated December 1, 1916, on file City of Madison Building Department; and "Clubmen March Into New Home," WSJ, May 22, 1918.

²Building permit dated March 24, 1954, on file in the City of Madison Building Department.

³Building permit, *ibid*.

⁴Stanley C. Hanks to the Members of the Madison Club, September 30, 1921, in Historic Resource Inventory file, City of Madison Department of Planning and Development.

⁵"Clubmen March Into New Home."

surmounted by urns. The entrance itself is composed of a pair of large paneled wood doors with handles and large lion's head door knockers of brass. Above the door is a transom with leaded glass. The second floor window directly above the entrance is set in an ornate concrete surround with a broken segmented pediment and a cartouche inscribed: "M.C." A concrete walk leads along the west wall from the Wilson Street sidewalk to the entrance. A rusticated concrete retaining wall, topped with a concrete balustrade, separates the walk from Olin Terrace. The north (Wilson Street) facade is five bays wide, with a brick pilaster at either end. Toward the east end of this facade is a single paneled wood door with a brass lion's head knocker. The door has a simple classical concrete surround with a cornice. On either side of the door is a black metal Colonial style coach lamp. A short flight of concrete steps and a wrought iron handrail lead up to the door. On either side of the steps is a concrete pedestal with an urn-shaped planter. The Madison Club crest, devised by Stanley C. Hanks and designed by Frank Riley,⁶ is located on this facade. The crest appears to be of wood and is emblazoned with a badger, a checkerboard pattern, and the initials, "M.C." The south (rear) facade is obscured by the 1954 addition (described below). The east facade presents a more irregular appearance. Like the west facade, it is in three sections, with a central recessed section. In the center of each end section is a wide brick chimney, rising above the parapet. On all three floors, there is a narrow 2/2 wood double hung sash window in the center of the chimney, and, on either side of the chimney is a 12/8 window. In the middle of the central section is one 12/8 window offset between each of the first and second, and second and third floors. This column is flanked on either side by one 12/8 and one narrow 2/2 window at each floor. There is one plain door in the central section. Along the east wall, there is a flight of concrete steps with a wrought iron rail, and a sloping walk leading down toward the lake.

The 1954 addition was designed by Riley's former associate, Lewis Siberz,⁷ and built at a cost of \$150,000.⁸ The addition is three stories tall and measures 60 feet by 60 feet. It is of reinforced concrete block with red brick veneer in common bond. The addition has a concrete foundation, and a flat roof with a brick parapet. The fenestration pattern is irregular. The windows are aluminum. Some of these are awning, some are fixed. While the addition is generally utilitarian in appearance, the rustication from the first

⁶Frank Custer, "Madison Club Marks 75th Year," Madison Magazine, October, 1984, p. 37.

⁷Building permit, *ibid.*

⁸Custer; and "Madison Club 50 years Old," WSJ, March 22, 1959.

story on the original block has been carried over onto the second story of the addition. Other carry overs include the concrete cornice above the rusticated story, the concrete belt course that forms a continuous window sill above the cornice, and the concrete coping on the brick parapet. The south facade of the addition overlooks Lake Monona. The glass and steel curtain wall, and the full facade scallop-edged balcony at each level, take advantage of the view. Originally, the top floor was an open, roof-top terrace. In 1977, architect J.H. Gravens redesigned the terrace, enclosing it for use as a dining room.⁹ The east facade has irregularly distributed windows, and one plain door opening onto a metal fire escape. The lot east of the building, now an asphalt parking area, was purchased by the Madison Club at the time the addition was built.

In the basement, the plan consists of a central corridor with rooms on all sides of it. On the first and second floors there is a central lobby or hall with an elegant oval spiral stair at the north end. The corridor runs north and east of the lobby and stair, with rooms along the outside of the corridors. On the third floor, the central element is a block of rooms, with corridors on four sides, and small rooms all along the outside. On the first and second floors, the interior features plaster walls with wood chair rails, picture rails and cornices. The space between the rails is papered, or inset with raised panels of wood. The walls on the other floors are generally plaster-finished as well. Most of the floors are carpeted, although there is some tile (basement, kitchen, bathrooms), parquet (second floor) and narrow maple board (third floor and corridors) flooring. The ceilings are plastered, but there is dropped acoustical tile in some areas. Some of the doors and windows have classical surrounds. Many of the doors are paneled wood. Most of the lighting is incandescent. Interesting fixtures include the first floor Colonial style wall sconces that look like candle branches, and the Art Deco ceiling fixtures on the third floor. There are many decorative details of note, including ornate fireplace mantelpieces in the original dining room and the Wedgewood Room, a stone fireplace in the basement tap room, plaster medallions around the lights near the staircase and an oval multipane skylight (now enclosed) at the top of the stair. The mural in the lobby, painted in 1963, is a duplicate of one created for Mrs. John F. Kennedy and installed in the White House diplomatic reception room.

The Madison Club was designed to house all the functions expected of a premiere early twentieth century social club. In the basement, there was a large billiard room, as well as a kitchen, a grill with a bar for men only, a restroom with showers for members,

⁹Building permit, *ibid.*

and a dining room and a restroom for the servants. The first floor featured a spacious lobby, a large dining room, a ladies dining room, a ladies parlor, two private dining rooms and an enclosed dining porch overlooking the lake. On the second floor at the lake end of the building was a reading room (or lounge), a library and a smoking porch. There were a total of 27 sleeping rooms on the second and third floors, each with a shower bath attached. These were intended primarily for guests of club members, and bachelor members.¹⁰ At the time of the 1954 addition, the porches and the billiard room were lost, the basement restroom converted to a card room, and the two private dining rooms on the first floor remodeled into restrooms. Otherwise, the interior spaces are unchanged. There have been some changes in use. The dining rooms and parlors are no longer segregated. Use of the sleeping rooms was discontinued in the 1960s, except as office or storage space.

The Madison Club has very good integrity. On the exterior, alterations to the original building have been limited to three or four fixed replacement windows. While the addition is noncontributing, its placement to the rear of the building makes its impact minimal. The club interior was redecorated in 1963, but the plaster finishes, decorative details and woodwork were retained. Three five-foot crystal chandeliers imported from the Netherlands were installed in the second floor lounge. The grill room in the basement was transformed into an early American style tavern.¹¹ During the 1980s and 90s, the first and second floors were again redecorated. All of these alterations are minor, and do not affect the Club's integrity. The architectural character of the Madison Club is intact on both the exterior and the interior.

¹⁰Original plans reproduced in "The Madison Club of Madison, Wisconsin," The Hotel Monthly, 1919, pp. 58-65.

¹¹"Redecorated Madison Club's Rooms Combine Beauty, Use," Wisconsin State Journal, July 23, 1963.

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM

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Original Owner:

Madison Club House Association

Original Use:

Club

Architect:

Frank Riley

Architectural Style:

Georgian Revival

Dates of Construction:

1916-18, 1954, 1977

Indigenous Materials:

Bibliographic References:

Custer, Frank. "Madison Club Marks 75th Year." Madison Magazine, October, 1984.

"The Madison Club of Madison, Wisconsin." The Hotel Monthly, 1919.

Mollenhoff, David V. Madison: A History of the Formative Years. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1982.

Rankin, Katherine H. Unpublished report of the Intensive Survey of the Historic Resources of Madison, no date.

Wisconsin State Journal. 1918, 1959 and 1963.

Wyatt, Barbara L, editor. Cultural Resource Management In Wisconsin. Three volumes. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.

Form Prepared by

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Organization Represented: City of Madison
Planning and Development

Address: 215 Martin L. King Blvd
Madison, WI 53707

Telephone Number:
266-6552

Date Nomination was Prepared: October, 1993

Significance of the Nominated Property

The Madison Club is eligible to be listed as a Madison Landmark because it meets criteria 1, 3 and 4 of the Landmarks and Landmarks Sites Designation Criteria (see Madison Ordinances Sec. 33.01(4)(a)). Specifically, the Madison Club "exemplif[ies] or reflect[s] the broad cultural, political, economic or social history of the . . . community" in that it was the leading social club in the city. It "embod[ies] the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of . . . style . . ." as an outstanding local example of Georgian Revival design, and it is "representative of the notable work of a master . . . architect whose individual genius influence[d] his age" because it was among the finest works of talented Madison architect Frank Riley.

Historical Background

The Madison Club was one of Madison's most important and influential social clubs, if not the most important. It was certainly the longest lasting and was the only club ever to build its own clubhouse. Other social clubs uncovered by the survey of Madison's historic resources included the "Sans Souci Club" and the "Young Men's Club" which both met early in Madison's history but did not have permanent rooms as far as is known. The "Contemporary Club" was an influential club formed in 1880 at the suggestion of the Unitarian minister. Although it had connections with the Unitarian Society, it was open to people of all ages, sexes and religions. The club sponsored free discussions and lectures and was instrumental in the formation of the Madison Benevolent Society (an important early charity) and the Art Association. From 1880 to 1882 it met in members' homes. From 1882 to 1886 it met in the old Synagogue (extant) when it was being used as the Unitarian Society Meeting House. When the Unitarian Society built its new edifice at the corner of E. Dayton and Wisconsin Avenue (gone) the club moved there, where it remained until its dissolution sometime after 1902. Two town-gown clubs met at the turn-of-the-century. The "Town and Gown Club" did not have permanent rooms as far as is known. The "Six O'Clock Club" was probably a more successful group. In 1902, it was reported to be a "most popular" and "flourishing club," with 260 members. It met in the large banquet room of Keeley's Palace of Sweets in the Wisconsin Building (102 State Street, building extant, meeting room completely altered).

In the late nineteenth century, advancement associations or commercial clubs were formed in many cities. Each club promoted their community's business, social and educational advantages, in order to draw new business and new residents. Many of these clubs played a major role in the growth and development of cities all around the country. In Madison during the 1880s, there were three

of these organizations, all of which had fizzled by early 1890s. After the turn of the century, new commercial clubs were formed which have proved long-lived and successful. The most influential of these was the Board of Commerce (later, Chamber of Commerce). Another which has had a significant impact is the Madison Club. Its membership, made up of the elite among business, professional and political men, closed business deals and influenced legislation in the relaxed atmosphere of the club rooms. Although one of the Madison Club's major goals was to encourage new businesses, it has been not so much a commercial club as a social organization.¹²

The Madison Club was formed in 1909 by a group of prominent business and professional men, led by F.W. Montgomery, president of the Madison Street Railroad (street car) Company. The men wanted a place where they could meet for lunch to discuss topics of mutual interest, especially municipal issues, conduct business informally and socialize. Club membership was initially limited to 150. The first members subscribed \$3,300 in order to lease a small boarding house known as the Harnan Hotel. It was located at 122 West Washington Avenue, the current site of the Hovde Building. The club opened September 1, 1910. The establishment of the Round Table, where any member could eat lunch and join discussions on any topic, contributed to the Madison Club's immediate popularity. Membership grew steadily, and in 1915, Stanley C. Hanks was delegated to find a location for a new clubhouse. In 1916, Hanks recommended purchase of the present site for \$29,000. At the time, the property was owned by pharmacist Edwin Sumner, and there was a frame house on the lot, built in the 1870s. The present clubhouse was erected in 1916-18 at a cost of \$102,000.¹³ It was designed by prominent Madison architect Frank Riley. The Madison Club opened on May 21, 1918. On May 28, 1918, while in Madison to give a patriotic speech at the University of Wisconsin Stock Pavilion, Teddy Roosevelt stayed at the Madison Club as F.W. Montgomery's guest. Montgomery also hosted a dinner at the Madison Club in Roosevelt's honor that evening.¹⁴ While there, Roosevelt informally dedicated the building, by hoisting the Club's flag. Other notables that the Club has hosted include Senator Robert A. Taft, son of the former president, and Wendell Wilkie, presidential candidate in 1940.¹⁵ The Madison Club has also been the home of

¹²David V. Mollenhoff, Madison: A History of the Formative Years, (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1982), pp. 257-264.

¹³Custer.

¹⁴"T.R. is U. of W. Guest Tonight," WSJ, May 28, 1918.

¹⁵Custer, pp. 38-39.

the Madison Gyro Club (founded 1939) and the Madison Real Estate Board (1919). During the 1930s, the club affiliated with other city clubs, and today members can enjoy reciprocal memberships with clubs all over the world. During World War II, the Club board made all officers stationed at Truax Field temporary club members. In the 1970s, women were permitted full membership.

Historical Significance

From nearly its inception to the present, the Madison Club has been Madison's elite social club. Since it opened in 1918, it has been the social center for Madison's prominent business and professional men. Many business deals have been made and legislative decisions influenced in its club rooms. The other important social and business clubs have already been outlined above. The Madison Club is the only building known to have been built in Madison for a social club.

Other types of clubs established and operating in Madison's history included fraternal, temperance, religious, women's and ethnic associations. While there were many of these clubs in the historic period, only a modest number had the means to build clubhouses and of those clubhouses only a fraction are left intact. Besides the Madison Club, there are five relatively intact clubhouses remaining. They include the Italian Workmen's Club at 914 Regent Street (a Madison Landmark), the Masonic Temple at 301 Wisconsin Avenue (a Madison Landmark), the University Club at 803 State Street, the Madison Catholic Association Clubhouse at 15 E. Wilson Street and the Turner Hall at 21 S. Butler Street. Another important clubhouse that has been somewhat altered is the Beaver Insurance Building at 119 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. Other clubhouses have been either significantly altered or destroyed (see attached list). Therefore, the Madison Club is significant as one of the few relatively intact clubhouses of any type remaining in Madison.

Architectural Significance

The Madison Club is architecturally significant as an excellent local example of the Georgian Revival style; and as one of the finest works of an outstanding local architect, Frank Riley.

Built between about 1900 and 1940, Georgian Revival was most popular in residential, and to a lesser extent, church design. It borrowed from the classical forms of Georgian architecture, an eighteenth century style. Georgian Revival is characterized by a formal symmetrical facade, rectangular plan and hip roof. A centrally placed entrance in a classical surround, belt courses, denticulated cornices, broken pediments and classical columns are

typical.¹⁶ The Madison Club incorporates all these elements. There are numerous fine Georgian Revival buildings in Madison, most of them residential and many of them designed by Frank Riley. The Madison Club is among the best of the nonresidential designs.

Frank Riley headed one of the two major architectural firms in Madison between the World Wars. Riley (1875-1949) studied civil engineering at the University of Wisconsin, and architecture at MIT. From 1900 until 1911, he worked for three of Boston's best architectural firms. Riley then spent several years in London, Italy and Germany. He returned to Madison in 1915, and embarked upon a prolific career. Riley is best known for his Georgian and Colonial Revival residential designs, but he was also skilled in the Tudor Revival style. He designed many of the finest houses in Maple Bluff, University Heights, Shorewood Hills, the Highlands and Nakoma. Riley's most important nonresidential designs in the Madison area were East High School, Security State Bank, Kessenich's Women's Clothing Store, First Church of Christ-Scientist, Lakewood School and the Madison Club. Riley was associated with architect and artist Lewis A. Siberz from about 1935 until 1941.¹⁷

A list of other known non-residential designs by Riley is attached. The Madison Club, the Maple Bluff Country Club and the Vilas Park Zoo Lion House were probably Riley's first important non-residential commissions in the Madison area. The Maple Bluff Country Club has either been extensively altered or demolished. Besides the Madison Club, the finest non-residential designs by Riley include East High School; the First Church of Christ, Scientist; Kessenich's Clothing Store; the MG&E Offices; the Rentschler-Hanks Building and Security State Bank. The First Church of Christ, Scientist is already listed as a Madison Landmark and plans are underway to consider designating the Kessenich's Clothing Store. All of the others mentioned are probably eligible as good examples of Riley's design and it is even possible that others on the attached list might be eligible to be landmarks as good examples of their style or type of architecture.

Frank Riley and his contemporaries Law, Law and Potter were the most important and artistically accomplished architects in Madison during the time of their practices. They happened to work in a

¹⁶Barbara L. Wyatt, editor, Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, vol. 2, p. 2-28; and Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), pp. 320-330.

¹⁷Katherine H. Rankin, Unpublished report of the Intensive Survey of Historic Resources of Madison, no date.

time of rapid development and economic prosperity and therefore were fortunate to receive commissions for large buildings with expensive designs that have made a more significant impact on the architectural character of Madison than have other designs created in less prosperous times. The Madison Club is significant as one of the finest of Riley's non-residential designs. In addition, it retains its original interior design, including layout, plumbing fixtures, lighting fixtures and architectural detail.

In conclusion, the Madison Club is historically significant as the home of Madison's premiere social club. It is architecturally significant as an excellent example of the Georgian Revival style in Madison; and as the work of prominent local architect Frank Riley.

Buildings over 50 years old in Madison that were built as clubhouses and that still remain:

- Wingra Park Advancement Assn. Hall** 1893
1723 Monroe Street
Moved from its original location on Grant St. in 1920s.
Built as a meeting hall for residents of the Wingra Park and Oakland Heights developments, who considered themselves an "unincorporated village."
significantly altered
- Women's Building** 1906
240 W. Gilman St.
Built by a federation of women's groups, including the Madison Women's Club, which from 1895 to 1906 was located in the Grace Episcopal Guild Hall (extant)
significantly altered
- University Club** 1912
803 State Street
Built to house single professors and serve as a meeting place for university-connected men. Addition in 1924 demolished the 1908 original section, which appears to have been a converted house.
relatively intact
- Madison Club** 1916
5 E. Wilson St.
See nomination form. Only building built as a social clubhouse.
relatively intact
- Beaver Insurance Co.** 1921
119 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Built to house a fraternal insurance lodge and other commercial office space.
somewhat altered
- Italian Workmen's Club** 1922
914 Regent Street
Built to house a mutual benefit society for Italian families.
Remodelled in 1936.
relatively intact, designated Landmark
- Masonic Temple** 1923
301 Wisconsin Avenue
Housed (and still does) several Masonic organizations.
relatively intact, designated Landmark
- Madison Catholic Assn. Clubhouse** 1938
15 E. Wilson St.
Housed the Catholic Knights and also diocese offices.
relatively intact
- Turner Hall** 1941
21 S. Butler St.
Housed several German groups, but the original and second Turner Halls, both also on this site, were associated more significantly with the German community in Madison.
relatively intact

Non-residential buildings designed by Frank Riley remaining in
Madison:

Madison Club	1916
Vilas Park Zoo Lion House	1916
Security State Bank	1920
MG & E Offices, 100 N. Fairchild	1922
East High School	1922
Kessenich's Clothing Store	1923
Menges Pharmacy, 1511 Monroe	1924
Seventh Day Adventists, 1124 Colby	1924
Rentschler-Hanks Building, 116 N. Fairchild	1924
Penn. Oil Co. Warehouse, 736 E. Washington	1926
Koen Stores, 1247 E. Johnson St.	1927
Unique Shop Building, 128 State	1928
First National Bank, 905 University	1928
Monarch Building, 311 State	1928
First Church of Christ, Scientist	1929
Allis School	1936
Blessed Sacrament Church	1937
Opland Building, 2425 University	1945