

**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 Chapel

Same

*Location  
Street Address*

*Aldermanic District*

626 University Avenue

Eighth

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

Building

*Zoning District*

*Present Use*

C2

Tavern and Liquor Store

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

Jongyeon Lee and Hyungirl Lee

*Street Address*

*Telephone Number*

626 University Avenue  
Madison WI 53715

251-0400

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

*Legal Description*

0709-232-0335-4

University Addition to  
Madison, Block 8, part of Lot  
11 described as follows:  
Commencing southwest corner  
Said Lot 11, thence north 90°  
east 50 feet to point of  
beginning; thence north  
00°16'19", east 97.27 feet;  
thence south 89°58'21" east .58  
feet; thence north 00°16'19"  
east 3.43 feet; thence north  
89°58'21" west .52 feet; thence  
north 00°18'23" east 32 feet;  
thence south 89°58'21" east  
36.5 feet; thence south  
00°16'19" west .24 feet; thence

north 89°32'19" west .69 feet;  
thence south 01°20'08" west  
1.5 feet; thence south 44°28'33"  
west 24.98 feet; thence south  
50°32'55" east 22.26 feet;  
thence south 01°02'45" west  
5.6 feet; thence south 00°25'10"  
west 93.38 feet; thence south  
90° west 35.38 feet to point of  
beginning.

***Condition of Property***

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

Excellent

*Altered or Unaltered?*

Exterior largely intact, interior is totally altered.

*Wall Construction*

Street facade limestone, side and rear walls cream brick.

*Moved or Original Site?*

Original Site

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

*Historical Data*

*Original Owner*

*Original Use*

Luther Memorial Chapel Congregation

Church

*Architect or Builder*

*Architectural Style*

Claude & Starck

Elizabethan Revival

*Date of Construction*

*Indigenous Materials Used*

1914-1915

not applicable

*List of Bibliographical References Used*

Madison City Directories.

*The Prairie School Review*, Vol. XIV Claude & Starck special issue).

Rankin, Katherine R. and Timothy F. Heggland. *Madison Intensive Survey*. Madison: City of Madison Department of Planning and Development, 1997.

*Thirty-Fifth Anniversary, Luther Memorial Church*. Madison: Luther Memorial Church, 1942.

*Wisconsin State Journal*, April 25, 1915.

*Form Prepared By*

*Name and Title*

Timothy F, Heggland, consultant

*Organization Represented (if any)*

Department of Planning and Development

*Address*

*Telephone Number*

6391 Hillsandwoods Rd., Mazomanie, WI 53560

608-795-2650

*Date Nomination Form Was Prepared*

August 30, 2001

**City of Madison Landmarks Commission**  
**LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (3)**

*Describe Present and Original Physical Construction and Appearance.*

The small but still impressive Elizabethan Revival style Luther Memorial Chapel is located on University Avenue one building away from the very busy corner of University Ave. and Lake Street. The Chapel was designed by the important Madison architectural firm of Claude & Starck in 1914. Construction was completed in 1915 at a cost of \$18,500. The Chapel is rectilinear in plan and, as originally designed, was free-standing. Its two-story front portion originally contained several smaller rooms that were used by the congregation and the minister but the bulk of the building originally consisted of a one-story auditorium room that could seat 350.

The two-story main facade of the Chapel faces south onto University Ave. It is flush with the sidewalk, two-bays wide, asymmetrical in design, and entirely clad in handsomely crafted dressed limestone. The main entrance is in the first story of the less wide left-hand bay. Early photos of the Chapel show that this Tudor-arched opening originally contained a pair of heavy oak doors. They also show that a transom bar above them separated the doors from the glass transom above that filled the rest of the opening. Placed in the second story above this entrance is a large six-window group. The three lower window openings in this group are each rectangular, the upper three are Tudor-arched, and these openings are each separated from one another by heavy stone mullions and transom bars in a fashion often seen in authentic Tudor and Elizabethan buildings. This bay is then crowned with a shaped parapet and the bay is flanked on either side by massive full height, two-story-tall, polygonal, stone-clad pilasters that project up beyond the parapet. These pilasters are derived from similar elements found on some early Tudor style buildings in England, these Tudor elements being themselves derived from still earlier castellated and fortified houses and buildings that had massive defensive towers flanking heavily guarded entrances. By the time of the Tudor period, such towers had been rendered largely obsolete but their general appearance was still retained in some transitional designs as a way of framing an entrance and was later revived during the Victorian period's rediscovery of its Tudor past.

The main facade's wider right-hand bay is also flanked by full height, two-story, polygonal, stone pilasters as well. The base of this bay consists of a raised basement story that contains five small square window openings. Placed directly above in the first story are five larger Tudor-arched window openings that are separated from one another by stone mullions. Placed directly above these in the second story and separated from the first story by a broad stone-clad spandrel are five more windows of identical design. This bay is then crowned by another and taller shaped parapet wall of stone, this one having a large carved stone cross centered on it.

The windows on this facade originally provided light for several different rooms inside including the entrance hall, a reception room, a ladies rest room, and an office, all of which have now either been removed or altered beyond all recognition. Most of the facade itself is still intact, however, and in good condition, the only changes that have affected it being the replacement of the original doors with modern ones and the replacement of all the original windows (which early photos show had multiple lights kept in place with metal comes) with modern one-light windows.

*Description - page 2*

The west-facing side elevation of the Chapel is still visible and accessible and it is unadorned and is clad in cream brick. Originally, there were seven window openings arrayed along its length that once lit the auditorium space inside, but these have now been filled with masonry, as has a side entrance door opening. The elevation is crowned by a straight parapet wall and the upper edge of the wall is protected by terra cotta coping.

The north-facing rear elevation of the building is also still visible and accessible and what few openings it originally had have now been filled. The original east-facing side elevation of the Chapel is now largely hidden by an attached modern building. Originally, though, it is believed to have been a mirror image of the west elevation.

While the exterior of the Chapel is still in good, largely original condition, the interior has fared less well. In the years since the congregation moved to its new much grander church further up University Avenue the building has been used as a funeral home and more recently as a tavern and night club. The inside has been greatly altered and bears almost no resemblance to the original.

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

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

The Luther Memorial Chapel building is being nominated for Madison Landmarks designation because it is a very rare small scale example of Elizabethan Revival architecture and is also a fine though atypical work of the important Madison architectural firm of Claude & Starck. In addition, the Chapel was also the home of the first Lutheran church congregation in Madison to give all of its services in the English language and was the first Protestant Church to be erected near the University of Wisconsin and the first such church to be intended largely for the use of its student body.

The first English Lutheran Church in Wisconsin was founded in Milwaukee in 1889 as the Church of the Redeemer and was the first Lutheran Church in the state to offer all its services in the English language. By 1905, the success of this church and one affiliated with it in Racine were being reflected in the concern of member parents who were about to send their recently graduated high school-age children to college in Madison. This resulted in services being held for the first time in Madison on May 28, 1905 in the Y.M.C.A. parlors on the UW campus grounds. Subsequent services were held in public halls over Keeley's "Palace of Sweets" on State Street and the College book Store at 412 State Street and on May 23, 1907, the congregation was officially organized as the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church of Madison. By September of 1908, the congregation, a mix of local residents and students, had grown to the point where larger quarters were needed so on September 1, they moved to the Gates Of Heaven Synagogue on West Washington Ave. and remained there while plans were developed for a new church of their own.

In the fall of 1910, the congregation bought a lot on the northeast corner of Lake Street and University Avenue for \$15,500 and set about making plans for a church to be built on the site. By 1914, the congregation was ready to proceed and the firm of Claude & Starck was hired to prepare the plans. Funds were raised and the new Chapel was finally dedicated on April 25, 1915. An article in the *Wisconsin State Journal* published that day had the following to say about the new church and its place in Madison's religious life.

Luther Memorial Chapel is intended as a place of worship not only for the local congregation, but also for university students of the Lutheran faith. The aim is to provide a church home while they are in Madison and to preserve and strengthen their affiliation with the church of their childhood.

For effective religious work in a university community the location is truly strategic. Luther Memorial Chapel, situated at the corner of Lake Street and University Avenue, is located in the center of the student population, one block from the [street] car line. It is the only Lutheran church in the city in which all of the services are conducted exclusively in the English language. Likewise, it is the only Lutheran church in the city west of the capitol square. Furthermore, it is the only Protestant chapel erected in the University district and serving a constituency composed largely of students. The site was purchased three years ago and is now valued at \$22,500.

The new chapel was designed in the Elizabethan Revival style, examples of which are very rare in Madison. As the recently completed *Madison Intensive Survey Report* noted:

Elizabethan Revival buildings, which are typically larger and more formal than their Tudor Revival cousins, are generally of stone or brick with stone detailing. Because the elaborately dressed and carved stone detailing that is associated with this style was both expensive and required a sure design sense, examples are much less frequently observed here than less highly decorated Tudor Revival buildings. Madison has very few examples of this style and the best are the work of Frank Riley. The largest and most elaborate is his excellent East Senior High School (2222 E. Washington Ave.), built in 1922 with additions in 1925, 1932, and 1939. Similarly, the best, and

accurately speaking, the only residential example of the style in Madison is Riley's Ross W. Harris house (8 N. Prospect Ave., University Heights Historic District, NRHP 12/17/82), built in 1923. Law, Law, & Potter also designed a school in this style, the Longfellow School (1010-1014 Chandler St.), built in 1918 and added to in 1924 and 1938-1939, and even Claude & Starck has an example to their credit, the Luther Memorial Chapel building (626 University Ave.), built in 1914-1915.

The choice of Claude & Starck as the architects was an interesting one since this firm is now known primarily for its Prairie School style work and was actively producing such designs when the Chapel was being built. Claude and Starck was Madison's most prolific architectural firm in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The principals of the firm, which was in existence from 1895 - 1929, were Louis W. Claude (1868-1951), who was the principal designer of the firm, and Edward F. Starck (1868-1947), who was the managing partner. Their most notable work, done in the Prairie School style, is especially well documented and the firm's Madison examples are among the city's most important buildings from this period.

Claude and Starck was especially well known in its day for its library designs. The best of these buildings were done in the Prairie School style and they constitute an important part of Wisconsin's architectural legacy, but the work of the firm also included designs for many other types of buildings as well, ranging from schools, such as the superb Prairie School style Lincoln School in the Fourth Lake Ridge Historic District in Madison, to retail buildings and factories. It is for their many residences, though, that the firm is best known today. Interestingly, the only religious works known to have been produced by the firm were both designed for the Luther Memorial congregation, which changed its name when their new Chapel was built. Also interesting is the fact that the Chapel was intended to be only the first part of a larger building program. Again, to quote the April 25 *Wisconsin State Journal*:

The chapel is only part of the building as planned. The church proper will be built on the very corner of the site. As the name indicated, the building is to be a fitting memorial commemorating the four hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation.

Luther Memorial Chapel has a seating capacity of 350. In addition to the auditorium, it is provided with a reception room, ladies' rest room, office, etc. The cost is \$18,500. The main part of this religious plant, or the church proper, will represent when completed, an additional expenditure of \$50,000 to \$60,000, making the total valuation including the site nearly \$100,000.

A recently discovered postcard owned by Anne Waidelich of Madison shows that what was originally intended was a much grander Gothic Revival style church that would have occupied

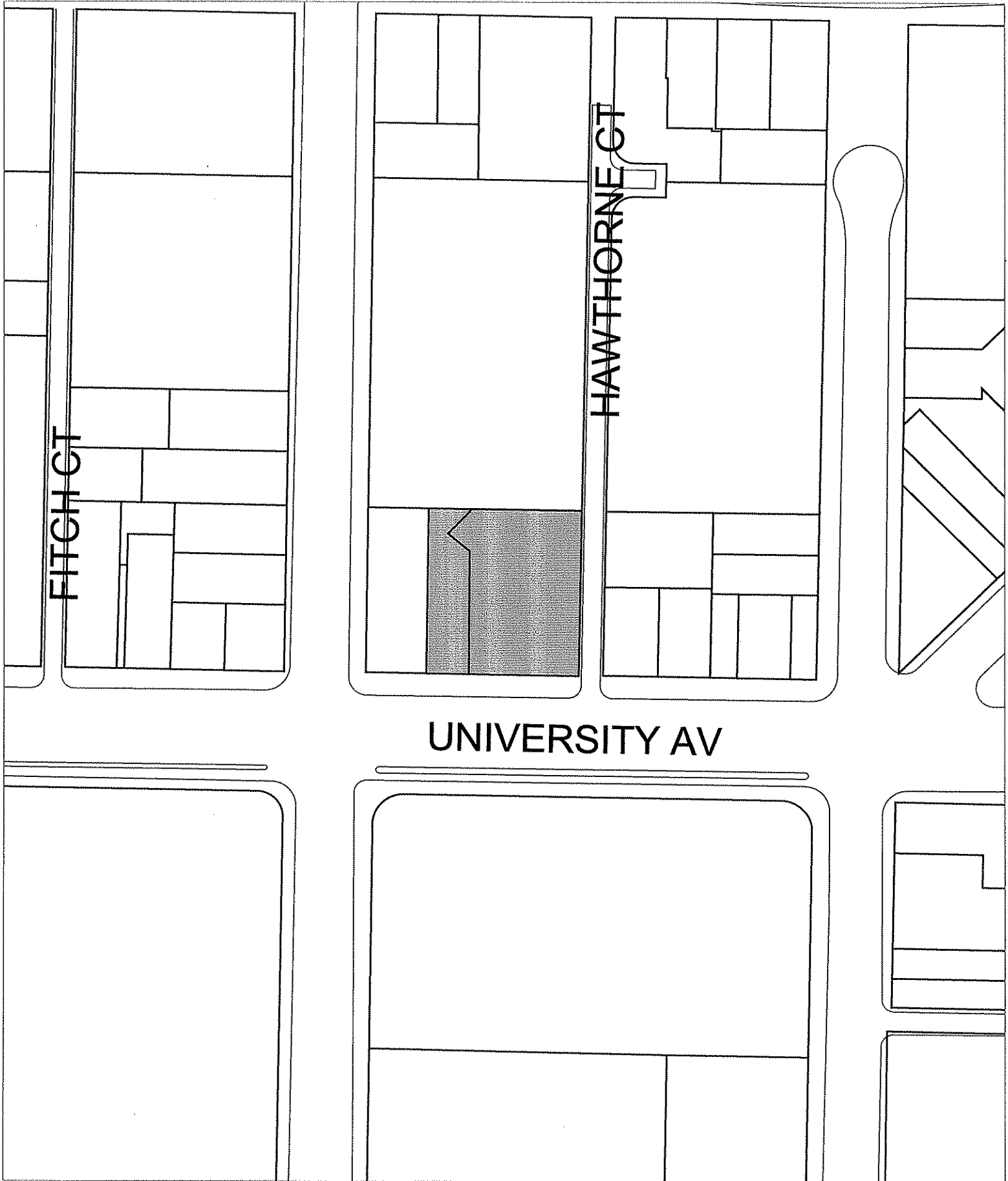
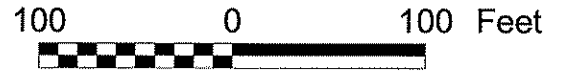
*Significance – page 3*

the entire corner of the lot with the Chapel being located adjacent to it and used as a subsidiary building. What actually happened, though, was that the congregation finally decided to build a new and quite similar but even larger church on another site further up University Avenue, which was built in 1923 to a design by Claude & Starck at 1019 University Avenue.

Subsequently, the Chapel and its lot was sold and later owners and tenants were the Fitch-Lawrence Funeral Home and several taverns and night clubs, including "Headliners" and the current "The Church Key." Today, the Chapel is connected internally to new buildings next door but its historic appearance is still largely intact and gives evidence of the building's origins.



# 626 UNIVERSITY AVE





1981 file photo