

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

I. Name of Building or Site

(1) Common

Bethel Parish House

(2) Historic (if applicable)

Steensland Residence

II. Location

(1) Street Address

315 N. Carroll St.

(2) Ward (available @ City Clerk)

4th ward

III. Classification

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

House

(2) Zoning District

R6

(3) Present Use

antique, boutique, thrift shop

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

(1) Name(s)

Bethel Lutheran Church

(2) Street Address

312 Wis. Ave.

(3) Telephone Number

257-3577

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

(1) Parcel Number

0709-144-1704-7

(2) Legal Description

VI. Condition of Property

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

Good

(2) Altered or Unaltered?

unaltered

(3) Moved or Original Site?

original

(4) Wall Construction

brick; interior walls are plaster

(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:

When Halle Steensland built his house on N. Carroll St. in 1896 the entire block was residential. The house was covered with vines, there were elm and oak trees on the property, and in the back yard was a shed for a cow, horse, carriage and surrey. In later years before the shed was torn down, the Steenslands kept their car in it. In the early 1900's the Jackson family lived next door.

At the present time the Steensland House serves as a combination thrift-antique store for the Bethel Luthern Church. Its main rooms, with the exception of the third floor, are filled with the cast-offs of peoples lives. One can find dishes, silver, china, crystal, kitchen utensils, tablesclothes, knives, forks, spoons, jewelry, old fur coats, rugs, books, cuboards, tables, dresseres, chairs, and all kinds of clothing.

At the entrance there is a set of double doors, small vestibule, and then another set of double doors. The original brass hardware remains on the doors. The first floor has a library, living room-parlor, dining room, pantry and kitchen. The second floor has six bedrooms and the original bathroom, although the bathtub has been removed. There is a heavy oak sliding door separating the largest bedroom into a sitting room. The third floor has three bedrooms and a large working area which once housed a billiard table and piano. The library, hallway and bathroom walls have a flower motif in the plaster.

Although the building needs some repair and the wood need cleaning it is basically in sound condition interiorally. The external wood framing the windows has decayed in areas and the front porch is sagging so it appears that more work needs to be done on the exterior than interior, but it does not seem extensive.

When the house was first built it must have been quite handsome; several front windows are leaded, the brass hardware is good and there was indoor plumbing. The original bathtub has been removed. Although there are two fireplaces in the house, a coal furnace heated it. The lot is approximately 54x132 feet.

Luckily, the house was never remodeled for apartments or offices and so the original floor plan exists just as it did in 1896/

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

VII. Significance

| | |
|--|--|
| (1) Original Owner Halle Steensland | (2) Original Use private residence |
| (3) Architect or Builder R.B. Gordon | (4) Architectural Style |
| (5) Date of Construction 1896 | (6) Indigenous Materials Used brick |
| (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. Wis. State Journal Aug. 22, 1910, Aug, 23, 1910. Aug. 30, 1910
2. Norweigan American, Northfield, Minn. Aug. 26, 1910
3. Madison Democrat, March 28, 1907
4. Conversations with Louise Steensland Payton, Miss Halburta Steensland, and Laurentine Steensland Greene.
5. Dane Co. Title Com.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

IX. Form Prepared By:

| | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| (1) Name and Title Lois Stoler (Mrs. Norton Stoler) | |
| (2) Organization Represented (if any) | |
| (3) Address 1129 Frisch Rd. | (4) Telephone Number 271-2548 |
| (5) Date Nomination Form Was Prepared Jan. 21, 1974 | |

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

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

When Halle Steensland came to the United States from Norway with very little money in his pockets, nobody knew that he would become a well-to-do business man which would enable him to travel extensively and purchase beautiful things. To quote the Wis. State Journal of August 22, 1910. Halle Steensland's career is the story of a farm lad's rise. He was born on a farm on June 4, 1832 and came to Madison in 1855. In 1857 Halle married Sophia Halvorsdatter and by 1859 he felt confident to enter into the grocery business. By 1871 a new business was started, the Heckla Fire Insurance Company and then the Saving Loan and Trust Co., which has evolved into the present day Bank of Madison.

Sometime around 1860 the Steenslands moved to what was then considered the country into a farm house which has become a national landmark. This is the LaFollette House in Maple Bluff and the Steenslands lived there until 1888. During his life time Halle owned all the land in Maple Bluff. At this time a new home was built on Langdon St. and then not satisfied with the location a moving firm from Chicago moved the brick building one half block closer to the lake. However, this was too far away from the square and so another house was built. This is the house at 315 N. Carroll. It cost \$5,000/ and the land was purchased from Wayne Ramsey.

The property stayed in the Steensland family until 1938 when it was ~~deeded~~ ^{deeded} to the Savings Loan and Trust Co. At this time there was \$15,000. value on the property. In 1942 it was sold to the Vilas Estate for \$9500/, and they sold it to the American Red Cross. In 1949 the Farmers Mutual Automobile Insurance Co. bought the property for \$35,000/ ~~on~~ In 1952 it was sold to the Crawford Heights Corp. for \$23,000 and in 1953 it was sold for \$12,000. By 1956 the property was sold to Bethel Lutheran Church for \$50,000 on a land contract and this was satisfied in 1958. The parish shop has existed in the house for the past 16 years. Thus the Steensland have been the only family to ever live in the house.

The Steensland had six children during their fifty years of marriage. Halle loved to travel and was able to go to Africa, Asia and Europe. One trip lasted 7 months. He was also very public spirited and gave much money to St. Olaf's College and built the library there which is named after him. He was knighted twice by the King of Norway for his benevolent work. He also built the bridge on W. Washington Ave. to celebrate his 50 years of business in Madison. When he died the governor came to his funeral along with other city dignitaries and also the Acting Consul of Norway attended. People felt that Halle Steensland was the kind of a man who enlightens and betters his fellow men. He was considered industrious, educational and scholarly. His oil portrait is in the State Historical Society.

One of his favorite maxims was "Do not try to get money fast. Too many financiers of our day go into an early oblivious grave on this rock."