

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

I. Name of Building or Site

(1) Common

(2) Historic (if applicable)

Edward Charles Elliott house

II. Location

(1) Street Address

137 North Prospect Avenue

(2) Ward (available @ City Clerk)

10th Aldermanic District

III. Classification

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

Building

(2) Zoning District

R 2

(3) Present Use

Single-Family Residence

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

(1) Name(s)

John D. Ferry (U.W. Prof. of chemistry.)

(2) Street Address

137 N. Prospect Ave.

(3) Telephone Number

Home: 233-4936

Office: 262-1485

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)

Excellent

(2) Altered or Unaltered?

Unaltered

(3) Moved or Original Site?

Original Site

(4) Wall Construction

Frame. Stucco covering.

(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:

The Edward C. Elliott house basically is square in plan with a porch off the east side. The porch is rectangular in plan at the first floor, and shifts to a partial octagon in plan, using five sides, at the second floor.

The roof is a simple, low-pitched hipped form with dormers to the sides and rear. While it currently has asphalt shingling, originally it would have had a more elaborate cover such as cedar shingles.

The stucco walls are battered at the sides and are painted a sandy color. Horizontal wood battens at the second floor now are painted mostly to match the stucco, but originally were a contrasting dark color. The windows are original.

The main entry is a major design element. Flanked between advancing, battered wing walls, it is covered by a cantilevered roof in the shape of a segmental arch with flat horizontal wings at each end. The doorway, sidelights, canopy, and stairs of this centered element are original.

Taken as a whole, the house bears a striking resemblance to the Henry W. Schultz house in Kenilworth, Illinois, designed by George W. Maher and built in 1907. It varies from this prototype, however, in its use of horizontal contrasting battens at the second floor level, and the lack of a ribbon-window effect, with extended horizontal planter, at the same level. The Shultz house, in addition, lacked the substantive porch of the Elliott house.

The house, while clearly in the Prairie School mode, is of the more compact and vertical type which the architects occasionally used. It is located next door to Wright's Eugene C. Gilmore house in University Heights, and must be considered one of Claude and Starck's most memorable designs.

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LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (4)

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

The Edward C. Elliott house conforms to criteria three and four of these adopted by the Madison Landmarks Commission and incorporated into Madison General Ordinances 33.01. On January 17, 1972, the Landmarks Commission designated the William Beecroft house a landmark for architectural reasons. The architectural significance of the Elliott house is virtually identical with that of the Beecroft house and it equals, if not surpasses, the latter in design quality.

The Elliott house was built ca. 1911 and designed by the Madison architectural firm of [Louis Ward] Claude and [Edward F.] Starck. The client for this house was Edward Charles Elliott, a professor of education at the University of Wisconsin who spent eleven years living in Madison. He came to Madison in 1905 with a PhD from Columbia University to direct teachers' training programs for the state. He waged a continual battle to increase the educational requirements of teachers in the state, once proposing a five-year teacher-training curriculum, but was largely unsuccessful in his efforts. In 1911, he was instrumental in the establishment of the University of Wisconsin High School, a demonstration school closed a few years ago. Very highly regarded in academic circles, Elliott left Madison in 1916 to become chancellor of the University of Montana, and in 1922 he was named the president of Purdue University.

The significance of the firm of Claude and Starck has been explained to the Landmarks Commission via previous landmarks nominations (William Beecroft and Adolph Marschall.) The major designing partner of the firm was Louis W. Claude, a graduate of the University of Wisconsin engineering curriculum who worked first with Allan D. Conover, and then Burnham and Root in Chicago, and then Adler and Sullivan. He started practicing architecture in Madison in 1896 and was joined by Starck around 1898. Born in Devils Lake in 1868, one year later than Wright's birth, he died in Madison in 1951.

Claude and Starck was the premier Prairie School architectural firm in Madison. Their practice extended throughout the state, principally because of their extensive practice designing libraries (an excellent example of which is in Evansville.) Though the majority of their buildings were in other styles than Prairie, a significant minority were in this style. The quality of their Prairie School designs, no doubt due to Claude's experience with Louis Henri Sullivan, is unequalled in the Madison area, excepting Wright. The firm designed numerous Prairie houses in Madison, though only a handful equal or surpass the Elliott house. The Prairie School itself, of course, was one of, if not THE architectural achievement of the upper Midwest. The role Wisconsin and Madison played in the evolution of this style and in its regional proliferation was of major significance. The Elliott house stands today as a major local manifestation of this important midwestern phenomenon.

[An additional area of significance for the Elliott house, though not one of most direct and immediate concern to the Landmarks Commission, is its role as an ingredient, and a major one at that, in the University Heights historic architecture district. Within a few blocks of this house stand others by Louis Sullivan and George Elmslie, Frank Lloyd Wright, Allan D. Conover, Charles Sumner Frost, and George Fred Keck. Together, these houses comprise a living history of modern American architecture from 1890 to World War II; from the Shingle Style to the International Style.]

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

VII. Significance

(1) Original Owner

Edward Charles Elliott

(2) Original Use

Single-Family Residence

(3) Architect or-Builder

Claude and Starck

(4) Architectural Style

Prairie School

(5) Date of Construction

Circa 1911

(6) Indigenous Materials Used

(None)

(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. Orr, Gordon D., Jr. Prairie Architecture in Madison, Wisconsin: Influences, Forms and Form-Givers. Unpublished M.A. thesis, U.W., 1971.
2. Wisconsin State Journal. Madison Past and Present. (Madison, 1902.)
3. Wisconsin State Journal, "L.W. Claude, 82, Designer of Many Area, Wisconsin Buildings, Dies." Obituary August 11, 1951.
4. Rudd, J. William. "George W. Maher: Architect of the Prairie School." Prairie School Review, Vol. 1, No. 1. (Park Forest, Ill., 1964.)
5. Madison City Directory, 1911.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

[September 26, 1973]