

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

I. Name of Building or Site

(1) Common

City of Madison Parks Dept.

(2) Historic (if applicable)

William Collins House

II. Location

(1) Street Address

704 E. Gorham Street

(2) Ward (available @ City Clerk)

4th Aldermanic District

III. Classification

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

Building - Office (converted residence)

(2) Zoning District

R5

(3) Present Use

City of Madison Parks Department

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

(1) Name(s)

City of Madison

(2) Street Address

210 Monona Avenue  
City-County Building

(3) Telephone Number

266-4711

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

(1) Parcel Number

(not parcelled)

(2) Legal Description

Block 138 (no lot subdivision)

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

Masonry/stucco end gables

(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 William Collins house is a superb example of Prairie architecture as practiced by the Madison architectural firm of Claude and Starck. The concept of the building is a simple rectilinear mass capped by an imposing gable roof.

The pitched roof is covered with asphalt shingles today, and while sensitively selected for matching the other colors of the building, it does not reflect what must have been the original design. The original roof may have been either wood shingles or clay tile roofing.

A strong gabled dormer window faces the street, much in the manner of Frank Lloyd Wright's design of 1900 published in the Ladies Home Journal or as seen in Purcell and Elmslie's Einfeldt house in River Forest. The walls are of a dark red brick with deeply raked horizontal joints. The plane of the wall is divided at the level of the second floor window sills with a stone belt course, and powerful bracketed balconies, somewhat in an Arts and Crafts style, are on the end walls. The decorative brackets offer a design form not unlike Sullivan's delicate carved woodwork on the cantilevered brackets of the Harold C. Bradley house in Madison. The brick of the walls changes only on the dormer and high on the gable end walls where stucco panels are used. The soffit of the roof's generous overhang is finished in stucco with wood trim set in to emphasize horizontal lines.

Trim, where it does appear, is painted a cream color. This may be an original color as it does contrast nicely with the rest of the building, and some of Claude and Starck's buildings do have painted trim as opposed to the preference for deep earth tone stains by many other architects of this period.

The glazing of the windows, and in the door, is enriched with leaded glass borders and small geometric patterns in the corners. This detailing is very characteristic of other buildings of this style and a similar window decoration in leaded glass exists in Frank Lloyd Wright's Hardy house in Racine, or the E.A. Gilmore house in Madison.

Excellent oak woodwork detailing remains in the stair hall and several of the rooms.

The house, while no longer in private ownership, is in a good state of repair.

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

**VII. Significance**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>(1) Original Owner<br/>William Collins</p>                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>(2) Original Use<br/>Residence</p>                        |
| <p>(3) Architect or Builder<br/>Louis Claude and Edward Starck</p>                                                                                                                                              | <p>(4) Architectural Style<br/>Prairie</p>                   |
| <p>(5) Date of Construction<br/>c. 1911</p>                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>(6) Indigenous Materials Used<br/>None unique to area</p> |
| <p>(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.</p> |                                                              |

**VIII. List of Bibliographical References Used**

1. On Claude and Starck:  
Madison Past and Present, 1852-1902 published by the
2. Wisconsin State Journal. And obituaries of August 11, 1951 in the Capital Times and Wisconsin State Journal for Louis W. Claude, and of October 28, 1947 in the Capital Times for Edward F. Starck.
- 3.
- 4.
5. On Prairie Architecture in Madison and Claude and Starck's Work  
Prairie Architecture in Madison, Wisconsin; Influences
6. Forms and Form-Givers by Gordon D. Orr, Jr., 1971  
 Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Wisconsin.
- 7.
- 8.

**IX. Form Prepared By:**

|                                                                                                          |                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <p>(1) Name and Title<br/>Gordon D. Orr, Jr., Architect</p>                                              |                                          |
| <p>(2) Organization Represented (if any)<br/>Wisconsin Chapter, The American Institute of Architects</p> |                                          |
| <p>(3) Address<br/>2729 Mason Street</p>                                                                 | <p>(4) Telephone Number<br/>262-3000</p> |
| <p>(5) Date Nomination Form Was Prepared<br/>August 19, 1974</p>                                         |                                          |

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

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

The William Collins house is a fine example of Claude and Starck's residential work in the Prairie style and possess architectural merit at a local level. Many of the homes designed by this firm still exist, and this building so well shows their full grasp of the compact-cubical form executed in the Chicago area by George W. Maher, and widely published in the journals of the region (Western Architect and Inland Architect and News Record). Yet, this building has features strongly its own.

The bracketed porches and railings of the building lessen the severity of the very pure geometric forms and indicate a sympathy for a feeling of the Arts and Crafts movement.

The firm of Claude (Louis W.) and Starck (Edward F.) is an important one in the history of Madison's architectural development during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Both men obtained some of their experience in offices of architects associated with the Prairie School; Claude with Louis H. Sullivan and Starck with Handy and Cady. This experience, undoubtedly contributed to the very high level of design that was seen in their buildings reflecting their interest in Prairie architecture. Claude and Starck's practice was a broad one encompassing all types of structures and extended beyond Madison to a large part of Wisconsin. Their popular libraries were also found in some neighboring states.

The Collins house is pretentious enough that a feeling for the owner's prosperity is present. It is not a small house, and it possesses fine details, such as wood trim set in the plaster, finely leaded glass designs in the windows, a quality of masonry for the entire exterior and a carefully studied amount of wood detailing in the brackets, balconies and railings, all lending a certain amount of grace to an otherwise simple form.

Mr. William Collins was a lumber company executive. The house was built about 1911 and has undergone a succession of owners. It is now used by the City of Madison as the offices for the Parks Department, a use which should be encouraged.