

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

**I. Name of Building or Site**

(1) Common

Hickory Hill House on Site (1)

(2) Historic (if applicable)

"Mendota Village" Farm (2)

**II. Location**

(1) Street Address

1721 Hickory Drive

(2) Ward (available @ City Clerk)

21st

**III. Classification**

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

Farm building (only house still standing) and site of Faulkner's "paper city" Mendota Village in 1855

(2) Zoning District

Residential 2

(3) Present Use

Single family home

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

(1) Name(s)

Mr. and Mrs. Walter E. Scott

(2) Street Address

1721 Hickory Drive, 53705

(3) Telephone Number

233-6140

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

(1) Parcel Number

0709-182-1405-1

(2) Legal Description

Lots 63, 64 E½ 65, and 74  
 Mendota Beach Heights Plat

**VI. Condition of Property**

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

House, good; barn, ruins; nearby hand-dug well (70") one roadway, closed

(2) Altered or Unaltered? Original house exterior unaltered except for some additions & one closed doorway

(3) Moved or Original Site?

Original site

(4) Wall Construction

Madison Sandstone over 20" thick (West Madison quarries)

(5) On a separate sheet of paper, describe the present and original physical construction and appearance (limit 500 words).

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**VI.(5) Describe Present and Original Physical Construction and Appearance:**

The house is probably one of the oldest Madison sandstone homes in the city and was dated by Prof. John Kienitz, formerly of the UW art history department, as "definitely 1840 period" in Greek Revival style. The farmhouse is on Govt. Lot 1 (on Lake Mendota), Sec. 18 T 7 N, R 9 E in the Town of Madison. A barn (hit twice by lightning and burned), granary and other outbuildings, and a hand-dug well with stoned-up sides six feet or more across is on the nearby Hickory Drive road shoulder and now filled to close it up. A picture taken in 1910 shows the view from the hill permitted complete vision of Lake Mendota.

The original house structure of a basement and two stories containing a rectangle of four rooms had deep windowsills (still preserved) and primitive soft wood floors now under a hardwood floor laid later. A red brick fireplace reported to have been in the original house is now replaced with one of limestone. A kitchen wing of Madison sandstone was added some years after the original structure, approximately 1866.

A clapboard addition on the east side of the kitchen wing was made prior to 1910 and still remains in altered form (about 1929). A "summer kitchen" addition on the west of the kitchen wing had been converted to a garage before the Scotts purchased the place in 1941. In 1951 this was replaced by a slightly larger structure of old Madison sandstone secured from demolished houses in the central city.

Most of the fire-damaged barn foundation of Madison sandstone and fieldstone was torn down and built into a "filled wall" to complement an American chestnut split rail and post fence erected about 1947. Much of the old farmhouse charm remains and is accentuated by a two-acre arboretum setting of trees and gardens. Architecturally desirable orientation of the house with one corner facing north allows sunshine to reach every window in the house at some season of the year.

A considerable number of the original window sash and glass panes remain. An attempt at restoration was done by removal of a large "front" porch and replacement with a small porch (somewhat like that shown in a 1910 photograph) using posts salvaged when the Old Fauerbach home in Madison was torn down.

The apron of the old house is of dressed stone as are the heavy windowsills and lintels above the windows and doors and the corner quoins. Remainder of the exterior walls are laid at random and two handmade metal supports are visible on the side wall (now front of house) in between the first and second floors. The old soft wood floors are of one inch pine board 5½ to 6" wide and the dimension lumber in basement is rough sawed 2" x 10" set about 14" apart. Original plaster still remains in most of the rooms as does some original interior doors and door fittings.

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**VII. Significance**

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| <p>(1) <b>Original Owner</b> - John G. Hicks<br/>         1842-50. Land entered in 1835-36 and patented by F.R. Tillou in 1837</p> | <p>(2) <b>Original Use</b> Farmhouse &amp; Land Speculation. Faulkner Farm 1854-1860 Henry Roder Farm 1860-1897<br/>         Baker Place 1903-1941</p> |
| <p>(3) <b>Architect or Builder</b><br/>         John G. Hicks (or probably for him)</p>  | <p>(4) <b>Architectural Style</b><br/>         Greek Revival</p>   |
| <p>(5) <b>Date of Construction</b><br/>         Reported as 1842 in city assessor's records and newspaper article (3)</p>          | <p>(6) <b>Indigenous Materials Used</b><br/>         Madison sandstone and fieldstone<br/>         Sawed rough pine boards (4)</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.

**VIII. List of Bibliographical References Used**

1. Chapman's Handbook of Wisconsin (1855). See James Faulkner's advertisement for sale of land in "Mendota Estates"
2. Wisconsin State Journal photo and subtitle, Apr. 20, 1941
3. Abstracts of title on Lots 63, 64, E½ of 65 & 74, Mendota Beach Heights Plat
4. "Hickory Hill Herald," Vol. I, No. 1, Dec. 1941 (and 33 subsequent annual issues; see No. 33 with 1910 pictures of house and barn)
5. Map of Dane County by Ligowsky ca. 1861 (plat showing houses and owners' names).
6. Foreclosure on James P. Faulkner mortgage, Jan. 1, 1860 (Vol. 22, p. 494,) Dane County Circuit Court
7. Sherriff's Deed (156 acres) for \$2,506 on foreclosure recorded Nov. 5, 1860 (Vol. H, Misc. Records, p. 253), Register of Deeds, Dane Co.
8. Dane County Probate Court and City of Madison assessors and tax files (Additional References in Appendix)

**IX. Form Prepared By:**

(1) **Name and Title**

Walter E. Scott, Past-President

(2) **Organization Represented (if any)**

Historic Madison, Inc.

(3) **Address**

1721 Hickory Drive, 53705

(4) **Telephone Number**

233-6140

(5) **Date Nomination Form Was Prepared**

September 4, 1975

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

The James P. Paulkner farm location and house conforms to items one and three of the "Landmarks and Landmark Sites Designation Criteria." It clearly exemplifies and reflects a broad cultural and economic aspect of Madison's social history as one of the oldest (if not the oldest) remaining Madison sandstone structures in the city. It is also architecturally characteristic of the Greek Revival style and reflects the primitive craftsmanship of Wisconsin's early builders, who created a farmhouse out of native and locally available materials.

Madison tax records date the house as 1842, which should be accepted until proven otherwise. The wife of the previous owner said a rafter somewhere in the house, now covered up, was marked 1847. A State Journal report at the time the present owners bought the house, in 1941, said the house was built in 1842 by the Roder family. This may have been found of the Roder family. A Roder family did own the house from 1866 to 1897 and may have made the addition on it, starting the legend about Roder building the place.

The land was entered by Francis R. Tillou in 1835 and sold to John G. Hicks in 1841. It changed hands again presumably, after the house was built, when Hicks' widow Lavinia Hicks Mead and her second husband Charles D. Mead sold the land to John D. Clute in 1850. Thus, probably either Hicks, Mead or Clute built the house. The most logical assumption is that Hicks built it in 1842, the year after he purchased the property. However, as he was listed in New York City directories at that time, the house probably was used by tenants.

The will of a John G. Hicks was filed early in Dane County Probate Court history but the will itself has been lost and the exact date is not known. Historian Jack Holzhueter of the State Historical Society said a house of such substantial construction probably was built by the owner for a permanent residence, but it is possible such residence was planned and then abandoned due to unexpected contingencies.

Clute, a widower, sold the land in 1854 to James P. Faulkner (or Falkner) who was acting as a trustee for his minor children Andrew Charles, Eliza Moffat and Frederic Faulkner. Faulkner, who attempted to subdivide the land as "Mendota Village," took out a \$1,500 mortgage from Clute. When he was wiped out in the recession of 1859, Clute sued him and the would-be buyers of Mendota Village property and won. The mortgage was foreclosed and the property auctioned off to the Grubb family in 1860.  
(7)

In 1866, the Grubbs sold to Henry Roder, who owned the house and farm about 30 years. The property passed through several other hands before being bought by Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas D. Baker, who lived there for more than 40 years. In recent times it has been called "the Baker place" as they had the farmland platted for sale in smaller lots.

The present owners, Mr. & Mrs. Walter E. Scott, have lived there since 1941. They have attempted to conserve and preserve the property for posterity. (8)