

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

I. Name of Building or Site

(1) Common

Rudder Grange

(2) Historic (if applicable)

Riley House

II. Location

(1) Street Address

~~2930 Lakeland Ave~~
~~2925 Oakridge Avenue~~

(2) Ward (available @ City Clerk)

Sixteenth District

III. Classification

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

Building

(2) Zoning District

R2

(3) Present Use

Single-Family Residence

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

(1) Name(s)

Marilyn Meyer and Sandra Wallin

(2) Street Address

2925 Oakridge Avenue

(3) Telephone Number

244-1640

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

(1) Parcel Number

0710-053-2201-2

(2) Legal Description Lots 1 through 3,
the E 25' of Lot 4 and Lots 17 through 19,
Block 12, Elmside Addition to Madison.

VI. Condition of Property

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

excellent

(2) Altered or Unaltered?

altered

(3) Moved or Original Site?

original site

(4) Wall Construction

frame

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

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LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (2)

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

The Riley house is a large two-story frame house situated on six lots extending from Maple Avenue on the west between Oakridge and Lakeland Avenues on Madison's east side. The siding is of narrow-gauge clapboards and most windows are six-over-six double-hung with working blinds. The widely overhanging eaves extend out from a moderately-pitched hipped roof covered with asphalt shingles.

Both the Oakridge and Lakeland facades are basically symmetrical around a central entrance. On each of these two sides the roof is pierced by two hipped-roofed dormers. The Lakeland (south) side overlooks Hudson Park and Lake Monona. On this side the central doorway is decorated with sidelights and an elliptical fan light. A small gable-roofed porch with an elliptically arched ceiling and Ionic columns shelters the entrance. To the left of the door is a wide band window of four casements. To the right is a large, one-story bay, also with casements. Above each of these are two double-hung windows spaced more closely together than they are to the central double-hung window over the main entrance.

The Oakridge Avenue (north) side features a central door with sidelights. A pent-roofed hood shelters this door. Above, a semi-circular arched window lights the upstairs hall. On each side are four double-hung windows, two on each floor. The middle two second-story windows are spaced more closely to the center than the first floor windows, so that they are not directly above them.

One tall chimney rises along each side wall of the main block. Projecting from the east side of the main block is a large, one-story screened porch. A piazza is shown at this location on the original plans and it is unclear whether the plans were changed during construction or whether the porch is a later addition. Projecting from the west side is a one-story wing with a smaller enclosed sleeping porch above. The hipped roofed sleeping porch has casement windows.

Northwest of the house in the spacious yard is a tiny "playhouse" of clapboards, with many paned double-hung windows and blinds, built in the 1920s for a family wedding. In 1950-1951 the old barn was demolished and replaced by a two-car garage which stands to the east of the house near Maple street.

The interior is largely untouched from the date of construction. The layout is a standard Georgian plan with a wide central hall running straight through the house. The majestic stairway features walnut banisters. Opening from the stair-hall by a wide arch, the living room occupies the entire east half of the ground floor and is warmed in the wintertime by a twelve foot wide fireplace. Across the hall is the dining room. The focal point of the dining room is another large fireplace, decorated with Delft tiles showing famous Colonial houses and scenes. North of the dining room a butler's pantry and a narrow hall leading to the central hall separate the dining room from the kitchen. Four large bedrooms comprise the second floor. One bedroom retains its original wallpaper.¹

¹Information on interior from Alexis Baas, "All Around the Town," Capital Times, Feb. 23, 1951.

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

VII. Significance

(1) Original Owner

Edward F. and Eliza C. Riley

(2) Original Use

single-family residence

(3) Architect or Builder

Frank M. Riley

(4) Architectural Style

Colonial Revival

(5) Date of Construction

1908

(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

- Baas, Alexis, "All Around the Town: Riley Home, 2925 Oakridge, Beauty, History," Capital Times, Feb. 23, 1951.
Building permit file, Development Assistance Unit, DPD, City of Madison.
City Directories for the City of Madison, 1907-1966.
"Eastward, A Bright Flame," Wisconsin State Journal Centennial Edition, Sept. 24, 1949.
"Edward F. Riley Dies at his Home," Wisconsin State Journal, Dec. 6, 1926.
"Frank M. Riley," Wisconsin State Journal, May 23, 1949.
Inventory of Wisconsin Architects, Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
Original drawings and blueprints for Rudder Grange.
Quaife, Milo, ed., Wisconsin: Its History and Its People, Chicago, 1924, v. IV, pp. 184-186.

IX. Form Prepared By:

(1) Name and Title

Katherine H. Rankin, Preservation Planner, Margaret Bloczinski and Dick Wagner

(2) Organization Represented (if any)

Madison Landmarks Commission

(3) Address

215 Monona Avenue

(4) Telephone Number

266-6552

(5) Date Nomination Form Was Prepared

July, 1981

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

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

As the home of one of the finest architects ever to practice in Madison, the Riley house is primarily significant for its association with an historic personage, Frank Morris Riley. In addition, the house is an important example of the Colonial Revival style, embodying the "distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen." Finally, the house is also identified with two men who were influential in the development of the east side, Edward F. Riley and Charles G. Riley.

Frank Riley designed the house in 1908 for his parents, Edward F. and Eliza C. Riley. Edward Riley was born in 1847 in Livonia, New York. He came to Lodi, Wisconsin with his parents in 1857. After serving in the Civil War, Riley gained a few years of experience as a clerk and bookkeeper in retail stores in Lodi, Sun Prairie and Madison. In 1881 Riley became the private secretary to Wayne Ramsay to manage the Bowen Estate. In 1888 Riley was elected secretary to the Board of Regents, a position which he maintained until 1906 when he was given a leave of absence due to ill health. When he regained his health Riley became trust officer of the Savings Loan and Trust Company. He later served as Secretary to that organization. Around the year 1910, Riley served as the second of three presidents of the short-lived Village of Fair Oaks. In the next decade Riley took on the duties of secretary of the T. S. Morris Co., J. I. Olds Seed Co., Roden Florida Grapefruit Co. and the Ramsay Land Co., but a recurrence of ill health forced him to retire in 1918. He died in 1926.

Edward Riley's son, Frank, was working as an architect in Boston when he designed the Colonial Revival home for his parents. After studying civil engineering at the University of Wisconsin, Riley moved to Boston to study architecture at MIT. He graduated in 1900 and then worked in Boston with three of the leading architectural firms of that city. From 1911 to 1915 Riley toured Europe. During World War I Riley came back to Madison to live in the house at 2925 Oakridge, where he would live until his death. He developed a highly successful practice in Madison and designed many of the finest buildings ever erected in the City. His work includes the Madison Club, the Maple Bluff County Club, Madison Gas and Electric Offices and Kessenich's Department store, Lakewood School and Madison East High School, the First Church of Christ Scientist (Madison Landmark) and Security State Bank. He is perhaps best known for his many residential designs in the Colonial and Tudor Revival styles, including the Brittingham house and the William Beecroft house in the Highlands, the current Executive Mansion, the Maurice Johnson house and the Stanley Hanks house in Maple Bluff, and many sororities and fraternities on Langdon Street. In the 1920s Riley and the architectural firm of Law and Law produced the finest domestic structures in the period revival styles in Madison. Riley died in 1949.

The Riley house was Frank Riley's first commission in Madison, the first in a long succession of fine Colonial Revival house designs with superb details and gracious proportions that were to become Riley's trademark.

After Riley's death, his brother, Charles G., moved into the house and lived there for several years. A local attorney, Riley's real estate company platted the area around Madison East High School. He was active in east side civic affairs, and served as the secretary-treasurer of the East Side Advancement Assn. in 1912.