

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

I. Name of Building or Site	
(1) Common Alpha Phi House	(2) Historic (if applicable) Frank G. Brown House
II. Location	
(1) Street Address 28 Langdon Street	(2) Ward (available @ City Clerk) 4th District
III. Classification	
(1) Type of Property (building, monument, park, etc.) Building	
(2) Zoning District R6H	(3) Present Use Sorority House
IV. Current Owner of Property (available at City Assessor's office)	
(1) Name(s) Alpha Phi Chapter House Association	
(2) Street Address 28 Langdon Street	(3) Telephone Number 257-2519
V. Legal Description (available at City Assessor's office)	
(1) Parcel Number 0709-144-0901-0	(2) Legal Description Lot 1, Block 78, Original Plat, City of 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
(4) Wall Construction Frame with red brick veneer	
(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 (3)

VII. Significance

(1) Original Owner Frank G. Brown	(2) Original Use Residence
(3) Architect or Builder unknown	(4) Architectural Style Early Colonial Revival
(5) Date of Construction 1905	(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. 1981 appraisal of Alpha Phi House.
2. Biographical Review of Dane County, Wisconsin, Chicago: Biographical Review Publishing Company, 1893.
3. Durrie, Daniel Steele, A History of Madison, The Capital of Wisconsin: Including the Four Lake Country to July, 1874, Madison: Atwood and Culver Printers, 1874.
4. Madison, Past and Present, Wisconsin State Journal, Madison, 1902
5. Tipler, Gary, Mansion Hill: Glimpses of Madison's Silk Stocking District, March, 1981.
6. Wisconsin Necrology, Vol. 18, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
7. Wisconsin: Stability, Progress, Beauty, Vol. 3, Wisconsin Biography by Special Staff Writers, Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1946.
8. Wisconsin State Journal, August 31, 1947

IX. Form Prepared By:

(1) Name and Title Wendy Schultz	
(2) Organization Represented (if any) Alpha Phi Chapter House Association	
(3) Address 5802 Roanoke Drive Madison, WI 53719	(4) Telephone Number 274-8573
(5) Date Nomination Form Was Prepared October, 1982 - January, 1983	

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (2)

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

The Frank G. Brown house is a 2½ story red brick residence located on a hill on the shore of Lake Mendota. It is an example of the early Colonial Revival style. The home was built as a single family residence, but has been a sorority house since 1927.

The house has an L-shaped plan with a gable roof. The gable end has an unusual elliptical arch window. The roof has dormers and features fancy cornice and rake moldings and scalloped edges. The walls below the eaves are corbeled. The brick work also includes quoins at all main corners.

The house has black shutters and white trim. It has a period porch to the left of center and a fan light over the front door. The existing rear summer porch was enclosed, probably between 1947-50. The front yard is enclosed by a black wrought iron fence with red brick posts.

The interior of the Frank G. Brown house features fancy mouldings, wainscoting, beamed ceilings and ornate arches. The original wood pocket doors can close off the main hallway from the other downstairs rooms. The house has front and rear stairways, and a circular stairway to the lower level (basement) dining room.

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

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

The Frank G. Brown house is significant due to its historic inhabitants and its architectural style.

The house was built for the family of Frank G. Brown, real estate developer, in 1905. He was a son of Timothy Brown, a founder of the First National Bank and on its first board of directors. Timothy Brown also owned a controlling interest in Madison Gas Company (now Madison Gas and Electric Company), and was a director and treasurer of Madison Fire Insurance Company. In 1893 a biographer stated that Mr. Timothy Brown was "one of the most successful, as well as one of the most wealthy men in central Wisconsin". In 1902 Mr. Brown was mentioned as the founder of the real estate and money loaning business which is now known by the name of the Estate of Timothy Brown which is conducted by his two sons Frank G. Brown and Fred M. Brown." According to one source the fortune was carefully managed by the Brown sons who "possess much of the business ability, skill and tact of their deceased father". Mr. Timothy Brown died in 1879.

Frank G. Brown was First Vice President of The First National Bank and with his brother "contributed to the growth of the city (Madison) by their participation in founding The Central Wisconsin Trust Company, now the trust department of The First National Bank, the French Battery Company, now Ray-O-Vac, the Maple Bluff Golf Club and the Mendota Yacht Club". The Brown brothers also owned and operated a number of business blocks in Madison, including Machinery Row which was designed by the prominent architectural firm of Conover and Porter.

Mr. Frank Brown bought the property at 28 Langdon Street in 1903 from O.D. Brandenburg, editor of the former morning Madison Democrat. The house on the property had been the residence of the late Chief Justice William Penn Lyon during most of the years he served on the Supreme Court. Mr. Brown sold the Lyon house to Rudolph Tracy, an employee of the Timothy Brown estate, who had the house moved to its present location at 1142 East Gorham Street. The movers cut the large house in half and moved each section separately to its new location where it was reassembled. Mr. Brown then built his red brick Colonial Revival style home on the site. There, according to his obituary in 1920, he "vastly enjoyed himself with flowers and shrubs... and at the lake end of his lawn had a commodious conservatory (now gone) for winter diversion".

Frank G. Brown was born on March 27, 1852 at Salina, New York, now Syracuse, and came to Madison with his mother in 1860 (his father having arrived in 1856). He went to the local schools and graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1872. He died on January 5, 1920 at the age of 67. Mrs. Brown and her two daughters continued to live in the home at 28 Langdon Street until 1927 when it was sold to its present owner, the Alpha Phi sorority.

Architecturally, the house is an example of the Colonial Revival style. Although the architect is unknown at present the home has fine attention to detail and is representative of fine craftsmanship. It is one of the finest Colonial Revival style houses remaining in Madison and is especially interesting because of its early date of construction for a building of its style.