

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

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**Name of Building or Site**

*Common Name:* Tierney / Lusson House  
*Historic Name:* Spangenberg House

**Location**

*Street Address:* 627 E. Gorham Street  
*Aldermanic District:* District 2

**Classification**

*Type of Property:* Building  
*Zoning District:* R5  
*Present Use:* Residential



Figure 1

**Current Owner of Property (available at City Assessor's Office)**

*Name(s):* Aleen Tierney & Joseph Lusson  
*Street Address:* 627 E. Gorham Street, Madison, WI 53703

**Legal Description (available at City Assessor's Office)**

*Parcel Number:* 070913311068  
*Legal Description:* Original Plat, Blk 119, NE ½ of Lot 5 & SW 6 Ft of Lot 6.

**Condition of Property**

*Physical Condition:* Excellent  
*Altered/Unaltered:* Some Alterations  
*Moved or Original Site:* Original Site  
*Wall Construction:* Brick Masonry

### Historical Data

*Original Owner:* Christian & Sophie Spangenberg  
*Original Use:* Residential  
*Architect or Builder:* Unknown  
*Architectural Style:* Vernacular Gabled Ell with Italianate style features  
*Date of Construction:* 1877  
*Indigenous Materials Used:* Unknown

### List of Bibliographical References Used

#### **City and State Archives:**

*Cultural Resource Management Plan.* Historic Preservation Division of the State Historic Preservation Office, Wisconsin Historical Society.  
Rankin, K and T. Heggland. *Madison Intensive Survey Report, 2 Volumes.* For the City of Madison and the Historic Preservation Division of the State Historic Preservation Office, Wisconsin Historical Society, 1994.  
Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps: 1885, 1892, 1898, 1902, 1908, 1942.  
Survey Form. City of Madison Intensive Survey. City Planning Department Historic Preservation files.

#### **Periodicals, pamphlets, and websites:**

[www.cityofmadison.com/assessor/property/index.cfm](http://www.cityofmadison.com/assessor/property/index.cfm)  
[www.wisconsinhistory.org/ahi/detailrecord.asp](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/ahi/detailrecord.asp) Wisconsin Architecture & History Inventory.

#### **Books:**

Downing, Andrew Jackson. *Victorian Cottage Residences.* New York, NY: Dover Publications Inc., 1981. Published New York, NY: John Wiley and Son, 1873 edition, first edition published 1842.  
Harris, Cyril M. *American Architecture an Illustrated Encyclopedia.* New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998.  
Levitan, Stewart D. *Madison: The Illustrated Sesquicentennial History, Vol 1 1856-1931.* Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006.  
McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses.* New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992.  
Mollenhoff, David V. *Madison: A History of the Formative Years. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.* Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1982, 2003.  
Williams, Zane. *Double Take: A Rephotographic Survey of Madison, Wisconsin.* Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.

#### **Other:**

Baas, Alexius. "All Around the Town". Capital Times, 12/29/1950.  
National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. "Fourth Lake Ridge Historic District." National Park Service, 1996.  
Personal Communication: Joe Lusson, April 2012.

**Form Prepared By**

*Name & Title:* Peggy Veregin, Heritage Preservation Consulting

*Organization Represented:*  
*(if any)*

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*Date Form Was Prepared:* April 2012

### **Present and Original Physical Construction and Appearance**

The Spangenberg House, at 627 E. Gorham Street, is a one and a half-story vernacular Gabled Ell building constructed in 1877. The house is in good to excellent condition with a high level of integrity having retained original features of both its vernacular form and its Italianate style.

#### The Vernacular Form



*Figure 2*

When describing vernacular architecture, types are defined by their footprint and massing more so than ornamental stylistic details. This house is a vernacular Gabled Ell (also known as Gable-Front & Wing), a brick masonry one and a half-story house with a front gable and a wing at right angles having a uniform roof height<sup>i</sup>, and with an open front porch. (Figure 2) The house has a rear addition and is clad with stucco over brick. The house features decorative elements of the Italianate style.<sup>ii</sup> The footprint of the building is roughly square.

#### Exterior Description

The house is located on E. Gorham Street which is oriented in a northeast-southwest direction; the street is adjacent to and parallel with the southeast shore of Lake Mendota. The house is located on the southeast side of the street and faces James Madison Park and the lake across the street. The front (primary) façade faces northwest. There is a non-original cast iron ornamental fence which wraps around the front yard and features a non-gated passage which aligns to the front entry. The main massing of the house is three bays wide at the ground floor and two bays wide above, the pitch of the gable reducing the width of the second floor. The side wing is one bay wide.

The foundation is of sandstone which has been parged with a cementitious coating on all four facades. The foundation is slightly raised at the front of the house and as the grade drops toward the rear of the lot, the foundation wall is increasingly visible above grade until at the back of the house it is almost

completely visible above grade. There is a tooled stone watertable at the top of the foundation wall at the front (NW) and side (SW) facades.

The house is of solid masonry construction with wood floor and roof framing. The walls are of red brick, visible at the rear façade but covered with stucco elsewhere. The stucco was applied between 1942 and 1950; the reason for this alteration is unknown at this time<sup>iii</sup>. This change has been in place for over 60 years and is recognized as an integral part of the progression of the building and has significance for representing changes over time. The cornice is of wood and has a simple squared profile. The slightly projecting, open eaves are also of wood. The roof form is varied. The original main massing of the house has a gabled roof with a moderately steep pitch at the front which transitions to a hipped form at the rear. The side wing also has a gabled roof which matches the pitch of the front. At the rear of the house, there is a small gabled roof dormer and the rear addition has a shallow-pitched shed roof. The roofing material is asphalt shingles except for the roof over the front porch and the rear addition shed roof, which are both rubber membrane. The house has a single brick chimney, located at the front-gabled ridge.

Although the form of the house is vernacular, it has Italianate style ornament. The most prominent Italianate features include the treatment of the windows and front door. The house retains its original front door, located at the SW side of the façade's main massing, which is of wood with four panels. (Figure 3) The top two panels are long, narrow and of glass; the lower panels are shorter and of wood. The glass panels are elegantly arched at the top as are the wood sticking holding the glass in place. The lower panels have slightly recessed centers surrounded by decorative molded profiles. The door surround is of limestone featuring a segmental arch at the top and detailed with a series of concave and convex profiles typical of the period. The threshold is also of stone. At the front door is an open entrance porch. The non-original porch deck is of concrete and one step up from grade. There is a pair of simple, squared, wood columns at the front of the porch supporting an unadorned entablature and slightly sloping shed roof.



Figure 3



Figure 4

The house retains its original tall, 2-over-2 wood double-hung windows, supplemented with wood storm windows which match the divided light profile. (Figure 4) Adjacent to the door at the front facade are two windows; with two above and centered under the gable. At the side wing, facing NW, there is a single, first floor window. Facing SW at the wing, there are two windows, one at the first floor and one above under the gable. At the other side (NE) of the house there are two, first floor windows; the window closest to the back of the house is an original tall, 2-over-2 window and the window closer to the front of the house is a small, non-original wood window, having three vertical lights and an arched top light with four radiating muntins. Although this window is not original it was installed sometime prior to 1950<sup>iv</sup>. At the rear of the house there is one original window at the first floor and a pair of casement windows in the dormer.

The windows have squared openings and all retain original segmental arched decorative features; the sills are of limestone. At the front façade, the windows are further ornamented with Italianate segmental arched, limestone surrounds. The brickmold is curved and the surrounds are made up of a series of concave and convex profiles typical of the period. At the first floor, the windows also have curved brackets set below the sills and placed toward the edges. At the front façade, the door and window surrounds match each other. Basement windows are visible at the side facades and are simple small rectangular sash. The limestone features throughout have been painted.

#### Rear dormer

There is a gabled roof dormer at the rear of the house which appears to be original.

#### Rear Addition

A series of changes have occurred over time at the rear of the house. Originally, as documented on Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, there was a full width one-story porch above the basement level. The kitchen was located in the basement, accessed by an interior stair. The full-width back porch was accessed from the dining room. Later, the porch was altered and enclosed to become the kitchen, below which was a garage addition. Later still, the second story was added above the kitchen. This shed roof addition allowed for an enlarged bedroom area at the second floor. These alterations, in the form of additions to the house, have occurred at the rear and as such do not detract from the building's integrity.

## **Significance of Nominated Property and Conformance to Designation Criteria**

### Summary

The Spangenberg House is being nominated as a City of Madison Landmark under criteria 1 and 3 of section 33.19(4) of the City of Madison Code of Ordinances. Under Criterion 1, the building reflects the broad cultural and social history of the community. The house is an excellent, intact example of housing which reflects residential settlement patterns as neighborhoods expanded away from the Capitol Square and the earliest developed neighborhoods of Madison. Further, it exemplifies housing types of the middle class in Madison in 1877 and the years immediately preceding and following. Under Criterion 3, the building embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type, inherently valuable for the study of vernacular forms of residential architecture in Madison during the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Criterion 1: Cultural and Social History**

#### Historic Context

The entire developmental history of the city of Madison, the subject of books, will not be described here; however, it is important to note milestones which influenced the growth of the neighborhood. Madison was incorporated as a village in 1846 and became a city in 1856. The following developmental evolution is summarized from David Mollenhoff's book, *Madison – A History of the Formative Years*.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, settlement in Madison was concentrated on the southeast side of Capitol Hill then spread to encompass all of Capitol Hill. Growth was generally limited by the distances that were reasonable for walking, primarily walking to work and which is why Madison's earliest residential neighborhoods were located around the Capitol. Between 1846 and 1856 Madison enjoyed a population boom which increased resident numbers from 600 to 9,000, a 1,500% increase. As the areas around Capitol Hill were already developed, people were forced to develop new residential areas, especially northeast and southwest of the Capitol.

A vast area of the isthmus between Lake Mendota (historically named Fourth Lake) and Lake Monona (historically named Third Lake) was low-lying and wet; uninviting for easy residential development. As a result, the preferred location for new residential settlement was on the higher ridgeline areas along the two lakes. Therefore by the mid-1870s, neighborhoods had developed along Third Lake Ridge and Fourth Lake Ridge.

The Spangenberg House was constructed during this early, but second wave of residential development and therefore is a physical representative example of the location of housing from this era. The house is located approximately six blocks from the Capitol Square, the Square being the historic commercial and civic center of the city. Additionally, the establishment of a school (1867, Second Ward School, in the

700 block of E. Gorham Street), the improvement of roads and later, transportation in the Fourth Lake Ridge neighborhood encouraged and supported the expansion of residential settlement in the neighborhood.

#### The Spangenberg

The home was constructed by Christian and Sophie Spangenberg, a family of German origin. In 1877, this house was the second to be constructed on the block. Little is currently known about Christian; city directories indicate that he was a beekeeper by occupation and he and his family lived in the house until c1907. At that time the house was sold to Louis and Marie Hirsig who then lived in the house from c1907 until c1915. Louis Hirsig worked in the hardware business and according to a 1950 newspaper account was considered a prominent businessman.<sup>v</sup> The Hirsig family then sold the house to Ewald and Pearl Scheibel. The Scheibel's were also of German ancestry. Ewald's second wife lived in the home until 1984. Stephen Pecha and Greg Upward rented the house from 1984 until they purchased it in 1995. In 2007, the current owners purchased the home from Pecha and Upward.

The Spangenberg House is representative of the homes and building traditions of the middle class in the later part of the nineteenth century. While a few mansions and homes for the wealthy were built in the neighborhood, primarily the community was made up of the middle class. Middle class houses help to tell the story of their residents, those who were small business owners and professionals. These people and the houses they lived in represent another component of the social and economic development history of the community.

#### **Criterion 3: Architecture**

The Spangenberg House is a vernacular Gabled Ell, a masonry one and a half-story house with a front gable and a wing at right angles having a uniform roof height and with an open front porch. The house has decorative elements of the Italianate style.

The Gabled Ell was a common house form in the rural Midwest in the mid-nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century. This house form was most commonly constructed of wood due to the abundance of milled wood accessible to rural areas via the rapidly expanding railroad system and accessible in cities due to the close proximity of local mills. Vernacular houses constructed of brick were considered to be of higher quality, in part because of the use of more expensive building materials. In turn, masonry construction influenced the perception of the quality of a neighborhood because it represented permanence and therefore lent a certain degree of stability and status to a neighborhood.

Stylistic influences were widely distributed through pattern books on architectural taste, popular at the time and commonly available across the country. Between 1820 and 1880 the "Romantic" styles articulated in pattern books dominated residential architecture and included the Greek Revival, Italianate, Gothic Revival, Octagon and the Exotic Revivals such as Swiss Chalet, Egyptian and Oriental styles. The movement in architectural taste toward a varied combination of romantic styles is attributed

to Andrew Jackson Downing. His books were the first of their kind, describing and illustrating tasteful and fashionable home designs. The success of his book *Cottage Residences*, published in 1842, established him as an authority on the subject of architectural style and influenced the tastes of the American public in regard to residential architecture. *Cottage Residences* encouraged the use of Italianate, Gothic Revival, and the other Exotic Revival styles as appropriate tasteful design for new construction. His books specialized in describing the small inexpensive detached house in the country (suburban) setting. The application of stylistic ornament to popular vernacular forms was the perfect marriage of practical construction and fashionable adornment.

Data analysis was conducted using the “Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory” (AHI) database which is located at the State Historic Preservation Office of the Wisconsin Historical Society in Madison and online. This database has survey data from all of the comprehensive surveys conducted in Madison. By searching the AHI, one is able to understand the degree to which various historic resources in Madison are extant. The database shows that of the 4,418 total houses surveyed, 136 are Gabled Ell, 104 of which were constructed in 1900 or earlier, 44 were constructed between 1856 and 1876 and 5 were constructed in 1877. This tells us that of all of the Gabled Ell houses surveyed in Madison, only 3.6% are from 1877, one of the earliest periods of Madison’s history, and Gabled Ell houses from 1877 make up only 0.11% of all of the houses surveyed.

This number illustrates the fact that while vernacular forms such as the Gabled Ell were commonly built housing types, they certainly are no longer common in Madison. Furthermore, the fact that Gabled Ell houses from 1877 make up approximately one tenth of 1% of all extant houses surveyed, means that this vernacular type of this age has become quite rare. Vernacular forms are arguably our most vulnerable building types, often demolished because of the perception that they are ordinary or commonly found and the perception that they are insignificant as architectural specimens and therefore dismissed as not something to be retained or valued. The Spangenberg House is an increasingly rare example of vernacular architecture in Madison and is valuable for the study of a period and architectural type in Madison.

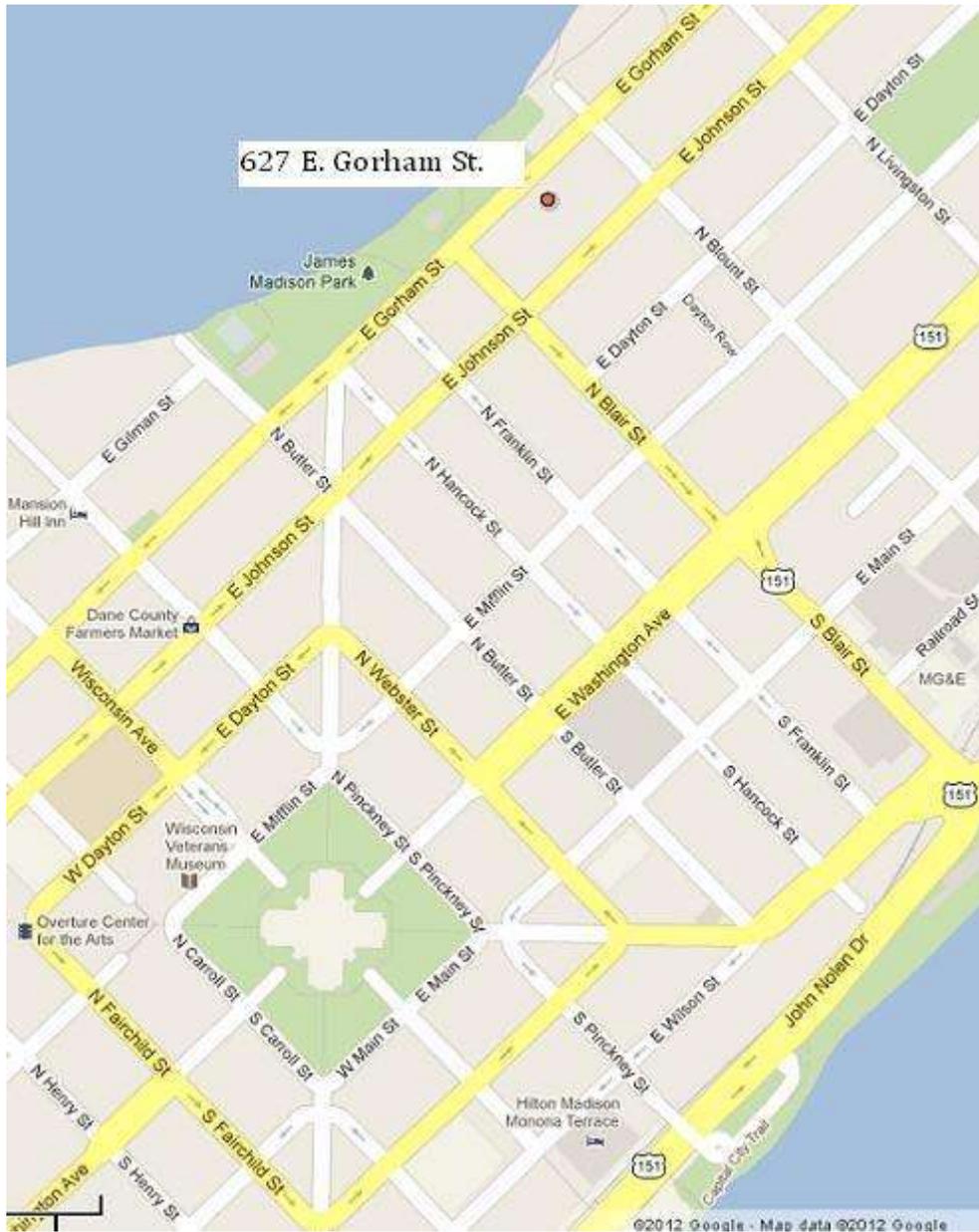
The Spangenberg House represents one of the earliest periods in the developmental history of residential architecture in Madison. Historically, the Madison Landmarks Commission and staff, as articulated in the city-wide survey report of 1994, has advocated that, “[vernacular building types]...play a crucial role in defining the look of the American landscape.” As such, the Spangenberg House plays a crucial role in representing the historic look of the Madison residential landscape.

#### Other Designations

The Spangenberg House is located within the existing National Register of Historic Places, Fourth Lake Ridge Historic District. The district is roughly bounded by Lake Mendota to the northwest, Giddings Park and N. Brearly Street to the northeast, James Madison Park and N. Franklin Street to the southwest and the southeast side of E. Gorham Street. As a result of the extensive research conducted in the

preparation of the nomination, the Spangenberg House was identified as a contributing resource representing the period of significance and the architectural character of the district.

Furthermore, vernacular forms of architecture have been recognized in the statewide study of historic themes (subjects) and architecture: the State of Wisconsin's *Cultural Resource Management Plan* (CRMP). These themes were researched and developed to aid researchers, historians and citizens to understand subjects significant to the history of Wisconsin, and are intended to aid in the evaluation of resources for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.



<sup>i</sup> The vernacular form of the Gable-Front-&-Wing, or Gabled Ell is distinguished from the similar Upright-and-Wing by the height of the wing. Gable-Front-&-Wing houses have a uniform roof height; the lower height of the side wing defines the Upright-and-Wing form.

<sup>ii</sup> The Madison Intensive Survey mistakenly identifies this house as a Front-Gable. Although the house features a prominent gabled front, the distinction of the vernacular types holds that a Front-Gable type does not generally include side wings. In depth analysis of vernacular types is found within *A Field Guide to American Houses*: McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992.

<sup>iii</sup> The Sanborn Fire Insurance map dated 1942 shows the house to be brick veneered. Later, a newspaper feature story describes the house and states that the house is covered in stucco. Baas, Alexius. "All Around the Town". Capital Times, 12/29/1950.

<sup>iv</sup> Baas, Alexius. "All Around the Town". Capital Times, 12/29/1950.

<sup>v</sup> Baas, Alexius. "All Around the Town". Capital Times, 12/29/1950.