

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

I. Name of Building or Site

(1) Common

Brittingham Boat House

(2) Historic (if applicable)

II. Location

(1) Street Address

Shore Drive, Brittingham Park

(2) Ward (available @ City Clerk)

9th Aldermanic District

III. Classification

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

Building

(2) Zoning District

C

(3) Present Use

Boat House

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

(1) Name(s)

City of Madison, Parks Department

(2) Street Address

704 E. Gorham Street

(3) Telephone Number

266-4711.

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

(1) Parcel Number

0709-233-1201-4

(2) Legal Description Part of Sec 23,
T7N, R9E on city-owned property in
SW $\frac{1}{4}$ used for boat house

VI. Condition of Property

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

Deteriorated

(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 Brittingham Boat House is a relatively simple, elongated, brown frame structure, partially screened from Shore Drive by a row of trees. The building measures roughly 150 feet x 23 feet. It is one story high with a double hipped roof over a central area and set back wings. The roof is presently covered with asphalt shingles. It has exposed rafter ends which are ogee shaped. There are bays on the lake side for access to the boat racks. On the street side there are small casement shuttered openings running the length of the building on either side of a central doorway. This doorway which leads through to the lake is rendered as a Gothic arch flanked immediately by torch-like lamps.

The architectural style of the building is informal and mixed. It draws largely from English cottage styles of the turn of the century. Yet, expressed as it is in wood, the building has a distinctly American flavor. A possible explanation for this mixture may lie in the cross-fertilization of English and American forms in this formative period of American architecture, especially residential and residentially-scaled.

From the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Annual Report for 1911 comes this additional information which points to the attribution to Ferry and Clas: "The boat house in the triangle in Brittingham Park was in operation during the past season. As stated in previous reports the boat house was built in compliance with the conditions imposed by Mr. Brittingham at the time of making the donation to the bath house. It was to cost \$5,000." Though the conditions remain unknown to this day, what may be more significant is the linkage between the two buildings in Brittingham's donation. This linkage becomes important because of other items in the report; namely a statement of disbursement to "Ferry and Clas, architects (sic) fees for bath house, Brittingham Park"; and the inclusion of drawings (copies attached), both rendered in the same style, of the boat house and the bath house. The one discrepancy in this line of reasoning arises when the boat house elevation drawing is compared to the structure as it exists today. Either the building has been altered over time or it was built in fashion not entirely true to the original design.

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LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (3)

VII. Significance

(1) Original Owner
 City of Madison

(2) Original Use
 Boat House

(3) Architect or Builder
 Ferry & Clas, attributed

(4) Architectural Style
 Eclectic-Resurgent Period

(5) Date of Construction
 1910

(6) Indigenous Materials Used
 None of distinction

(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. Madison Park & Pleasure Drive, Annual Report, 1910 and 1911
2. State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Historic Preservation Plan Volume II
3. The Inventory, 1973
4. Nolen, John, Madison: A Model City, 1911
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

IX. Form Prepared By:

(1) Name and Title
 Lance M. Neckar, Staff

(2) Organization Represented (if any)
 Landmarks Commission

(3) Address
 2302 Lakeland Ave/210 Monona Av

(4) Telephone Number
 249-2421 - 266-4635

(5) Date Nomination Form Was Prepared
 July 10, 1977

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

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

The Brittingham Boat House has two realms of significance. It is primarily important as a reflection of the era of civic improvement which occurred here and in other cities just after the turn of the century. More specifically it reflects the progressive turn of mind of the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association and Thomas E. Brittingham, lumber baron and friend of the city and the university. Secondarily the building is important as a design attributed to the Milwaukee architectural firm of Ferry and Clas. George B. Ferry and Alfred C. Clas were among Wisconsin's best known architects of public buildings, commercial structures, and residences in the years around the turn of the century.

History

Founded in 1894 the Park and Pleasure Drive Association was dedicated to the acquisition of marsh and other open spaces for the development of municipal parks. For many years the president of the Association was lawyer John M. Olin. He and his directors were responsible for adding Tenney (1904), Vilas (1904), and Brittingham (1909) to the city's meager parklands. In each instance the donations of land and money for improvements (drain, dredge and fill) were made by wealthy and important figures concerned about the city.

Thomas Brittingham was the president of Brittingham-Hixon Lumber Company in the heyday of the Wisconsin pineries. He was, in the tradition of philanthropists of the period, an important benefactor of the city and the University of Wisconsin during his lifetime and after his death through the Brittingham Foundation. He was among the progressive committee of fifty, largely drawn from the ranks of the Park and Pleasure Drive Association, who hired Cambridge landscape architect John Nolen to prepare the master plan, Madison: A Model City (1911).

A major feature of this "City Beautiful" era plan was the acquisition of land for a municipal park system and the improvement of marsh land. The newly completed facilities built on fill land at Brittingham Park were featured by Nolen as model public improvements for a small city.

Architecture

George B. Ferry was born in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1851 and was trained at Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he was a classmate of Louis Sullivan. Alfred C. Clas was born in Sauk City in 1860, the son of German immigrants. The firm is best known for their designs of the Milwaukee Public Library a number of commercial buildings in that city, and the State Historical Society, although the Lake Mills Public Library is closer in feeling, i.e. less formal and classically derived, to the Brittingham boat house and bath house (demolished).