Madison Landmark No. 1 11-1

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

I. Name of Building or Site

(1) Common	(2) Historic (if applicable)
Sigma Phi Fraternity House	Harold C. Bradley House

II. Location

(1) Street Address	(2) Ward (available from City Clerk)
106 North Prospect Avenue	10th

III. Classification

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

(2) Zoning District	(3) Present Use
R2	College fraternity

IV. Current Owner of Property

(1) Name(s)
Alpha of Wisconsin, Sigma Phi; c/o George Ketterer

(2) Street Address	(3) Telephone Number
4333 Britta Parkway	271-7270

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

(1) Parcel Number	(2) Legal Description - University Heights, lots 1, 2, 3 and lots 8, 9, 10 and east 41½ feet of lot 7 in block 19.
0709 - 222 - 2804	

VI. Condition of Property

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

(2) Altered or Unaltered?	(3) Moved or Original Site?
Unaltered, but minor window changes	Original site

(4) Wall Construction
Brick base and piers with wood infill between piers. Wood cantilevers.

(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 (2)

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

In plan the Bradley residence is "T" shaped. The best-known elevation of the building is the top of the "T", and entry is made at the foot of the stem. At the ends of the arms of the "T" are the two cantilevered sleeping porches, of which the eastern one is pictured in "Sandstone and Buffalo Robes." According to Gebhardt's article in the SAH Journal, the cantilevered porches were probably Louis Sullivan's own idea. The stem of the "T" projects northward on the site, and at the crossing a semi-circular bay projects south.

The main body of the house is roofed with simple gables. One major gable sweeps east and west over the arms of the "T", and a double gable, resembling an inverted "W" in end elevation, covers the stem. Smaller projections, such as the southern bay and the entry, are roofed with hipped gables. In elevation these roofs provide strong horizontal lines which tie the whole building together visually.

The house rests on a reddish-brown brick base. Above this base deep brick piers rise to alternate with shingle infill. Beneath the cantilevered elements the brick base continues out to create unenclosed porches accessible from the main floor of the building. The building thus appears married to the earth on its heavy masonry base, and the lighter wooden materials are used above, culminating in the steel-reinforced cantilevered porches which seem to float above the masonry base and establish a lively counterpoint.

The original windows were multi-colored and subdivided into many smaller panes in a design apparently executed by George Elmslie. Later replacement has not been done in the original style, so that today (1971) the house possesses original windows frequently alternating with recent large-paned replacements devoid of detail work. This replacement of windows after their breakage with a modern style is the only significant change in the exterior from the original 1909 design.

The large reinforced brackets on which the cantilevered porches rest are elaborately detailed in a design also most likely done by Elmslie. The cantilevered elements are, according to Brooks, among the earliest and most successful uses of this structural system in a residence.

In the interior, the architect also executed designs for the furniture, rugs, drapes and all of the fixtures. A good share of these can still be found in the house. According to Gebhard, these furniture designs are superior to Frank Lloyd Wright's designs of the same period in that they are more comfortable and functional.

City of Madison Landmarks Commission

LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (3)

VII. Significance

(1) Original Owner	(2) Original Use
Dr. Harold C. Bradley	Private residence
(3) Architect or Builder	**(4) Architectural Style**
George Grant Elmslie, and Louis Henry Sullivan (architects)	Prairie School (or Chicago Style)
(5) Date of Construction	**(6) Indigenous Materials Used**
1909	None unique to area.

(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. Dean & Custer, "Sandstone and Buffalo Robes," City Planning Dept. (1969)
2. Brooks, Charles M., "19th and 20th Century Architecture," Lawrence College (1960)
3. Morrison, Hugh, "Louis Sullivan: Prophet of Modern Architecture," W.W. Norton & Co., (1935) pp. 204-205, 304; Pls. 67-69.
4. Gebhard, David, "Louis Sullivan and George Grant Elmslie," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians; May, 1960; pp. 62-68.
5. Gebhard, D., "William Purcell and George Elmslie and the Early Progressive Movement in American Architecture from 1900 to 1920", U. Minn., PhD, 1957.
6. Gebhard, D., "Guide to the Architecture of Purcell and Elmslie," Prairie School Review, first quarter 1965, pp. 16 on.
7.
8.

IX. Form Prepared By:

(1) Name and Title

Jeffrey M. Dean, Principal Planner

(2) Organization Represented (if any)

Madison City Planning Department; Taychopera Board of Trustees

(3) Address	(4) Telephone Number
414 City-County Building	266-4635

(5) Date Nomination Form Was Prepared

February 12, 1971

City of Madison Landmarks Commission

LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (4)

VII.(7) Significance of Nominated Property and Conformance to Designation Criteria: The George C. Bradley House clearly conforms to items Nos. 3 and 4 of the "Landmarks and Landmark Sites Designation Criteria." Specifically, it embodies "the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period, style..." Further, it is "representative of the notable work of a master... architect whose individual genius influenced his age."

The Bradley House was one of two major residential designs that came out of Louis Henry Sullivan's office in Chicago during its later period, from 1895 to 1924.[1] Of the two houses, "the Bradley House indicates a growth in architectural form over the earlier Babson House."[2] Architectural historians concede that George Elmslie, Sullivan's chief draftsman until 1909, played a major role in the design of the Bradley dwelling, but this takes no significance away from the house as being a major work of architecture from an important phase in Sullivan's career. Indeed, Elmslie's involvement with the design is, in itself, a commentary on Sullivan's practice at this time.

Sullivan, of course, is one of the most important architects in American history. He is second only, perhaps, to his architectural protege, Frank Lloyd Wright. Sullivan's importance centers around his designs for skyscrapers in Chicago in the late 19th century, for which he is termed "the father of modern architecture." Wright shared a cubicle in Sullivan's office with George Elmslie for some years, as Wright worked there from 1887 to 1893. Sullivan taught Wright many of the architectural principles he later carried to fruition in his world-famous practice.

The Bradley House is extremely important to the student of Sullivan's work because it came out of his office during a very turbulent period in Sullivan's career, and because it is one of very few residences with which he was involved. The rarity of Sullivan houses in itself makes the Bradley dwelling one of the most significant historic buildings in Madison.

The Bradley dwelling is also very important for its influence on the Prairie School, also known as the Chicago Style. This is a type of architecture peculiar to the northern midwest area of the United States, and is characterized by bold horizontal lines paralleling the earth, sensitive and natural use of materials, and innovative ornamentation and detail work. Madison is fortunate to have literally dozens of Prairie School residences, but the single most important of all these is the Bradley House. Its richness and maturity of design are equalled by few other Prairie houses. The famous Gilmore, or "Airplane," House by Frank Lloyd Wright is another Prairie residence and is located yards from the Bradley home. The Parks Department is housed in a fine Prairie house design by a local architectural firm, Claude and Starck.

The Bradley House served as a prototype residence for George Elmslie in his continuing practice in the Prairie idiom.[3] After leaving Sullivan's office in 1909 he formed a partnership with William Purcell and began an eleven-year architectural practice. The importance of this practice has only been recognized relatively recently. Future studies will undoubtedly reveal more about the historical importance of George Elmslie and the Bradley House.

1-Morrison; 2-Gebhard, SAH Journal; 3-Gebhard, PhD thesis.

Harold C. Bradley House

Attachment No. 1

Excerpts from Hugh Morrison's book, "Louis Sullivan: Prophet of Modern Architecture," W. W. Norton & Co. (1935), pp. 202, 204-205.

"Sullivan designed only two residences during this whole period (1895-1924). Both were fairly elaborate buildings in which cost was a secondary consideration, and they are of particular interest for the comparison which they afford with Frank Lloyd Wright's residences of the same years. The first was a residence built for Mr. Henry Babson in Riverside, Illinois, in 1907...

"The second of the two residences was built for Mrs. Josephine Crane Bradley at Madison, Wisconsin, in 1909. In plan it is T-shaped, with the main facade fronting south, and a long wing extending northward from the middle of the back. The south facade is a long, low mass, similar to the Babson residence, except that the horizontal lines are broken at intervals by strong vertical piers of brick, extending from foundation to cornice and projecting some eighteen inches from the wall surface. In the middle is a polygonal projecting bay, similar to that on the garden front of the Babson residence except that it is only one story in height. The two ends of this main block offer the most extraordinary features of the house: large overhanging porches on the second story, supported by steel cantilever beams, encased in wood, with projecting ends elaborately sawed. The gable at the west end overhangs an open porch enclosed by a brick parapet; the gable at the east end, exactly the same in form, overhangs a side entrance on to the lawn. The parallelism with Wright's projecting gables of this period is evident, but there is a superior vigor and force in the weight and salience of these features as compared with Wright's. The wing extending toward the back is quite wide, and the roof consists of two gables, presenting twin gable-ends side by side over the rear facade. The main entrance is from a porte-cochère at the back of this wing, from which one enters a long hall. Built for a large family of children, the house has numerous bedrooms, two sleeping porches, and large playrooms, and since the Bradley family left it, it has served admirably for a fraternity house. It seems just to attribute the design of this house to at least an equal cooperation between Sullivan and Elmslie."

Harold C. Bradley House

Attachment No. 2

Excerpts from David Gebhard's article in the May, 1960, issue of the Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, "Louis Sullivan and George Grant Elmslie," pp. 64-68.

"The three most widely known Sullivan buildings of the last years were the dwelling for Henry Babson, Riverside, Illinois, built in 1907, the National Farmer's Bank, Owatonna, Minnesota, 1907-1908, and the house for Harold Bradley, Madison, Wisconsin, 1909. Both of the residences were designed by Elmslie with only occasional suggestions from Sullivan. All of the existing sketches, presentation, and working drawings are from Elmslie's hand. Many of the design elements involved in these houses were continued by Elmslie when he joined in partnership with William Gray Purcell in 1909.

"The Bradley House at Madison, Wisconsin, indicates a growth in architectural form over the earlier Babson House. Two schemes were evolved for the house, the first of which was more elaborate than the later realized plan. This first scheme was cruciform in shape with living room and porch projecting off the rear, an entrance and porte-cochere faced the driveway, a library to one side, and the kitchen and service area in the other wing. Numerous bays projected out from the main mass of the house onto the wooded site and a long band of casement windows lighted the second-floor rooms. This plan was rejected by the Bradleys primarily because they felt that it did not express the modest house which they had in mind for a university professor. Even the final scheme called for a far larger house than they had envisioned and in the end proved to be too expensive for them to maintain. This second revised scheme contained the famous pair of cantilevered sleeping porches of the second floor. It would seem that this particular feature was probably Sullivan's, and it was Elmslie's task to integrate them into the plan. Although Elmslie himself was never fully satisfied with the final result, the design and detailing of these porches constitute one of his most mature designs.

"In numerous ways both the Babson and the Bradley dwellings served as prototypes for a number of later residences designed by Purcell and Elmslie between 1909 and 1920.

"The creative and original design solutions which were expressed in the later buildings of the Sullivan office before 1909 were not than an indication of a resurgence of Sullivan's creativity, but rather they demark the architectural development of George Grant Elmslie as a designer in his own right. With this in mind the work of Sullivan's later years becomes comprehensible, and the later designs of the firm of Purcell and Elmslie assume a new and increased importance in the history of twentieth-century American architecture."

Harold C. Bradley House

Attachment No. 3

Excerpt from a PhD dissertation at the University of Minnesota by David Gebhard, "William C. Purcell and George G. Elmslie and the Early Progressive Movement in American Architecture from 1900 to 1920," (1957) State Historical Society microfilm file #P36340, pp. 82-83.

" Although still tending toward the monumental, the use of material such as brick and especially shingles in the Bradley House led to a certain lightness of mass not found previously in his (Elmslie's) work. The plan was simply a 'T' shape with a large semicircular bay projecting outward where the two arms join the stem and porches and sleeping balconies at the ends for the two arms. In many ways this house served as a prototype for a number of residences constructed by Purcell and Elmslie — the famous Bradley bungalow at Woods Hole, Massachusetts, the Decker House, Holdridge, Minnesota, and the Hoyt House at Red Wing, Minnesota. The culmination of the Bradley House were the two cantilevered porches. The ornament which Elmslie evolved and the disposition of masses was one of his most happy results.

"In the interior Elmslie designed the furniture, rugs, and drapes, and all of the fixtures, a good share of which are still in the house today (1955). His interior designs tended away from the curvilinear toward the simple rectilinear. His furniture, while rigorously rectilinear, was more functional than Wright's designs during the same period. In the design of the chairs he carried the back well down, almost to the floor. The use of a high back on these chairs was a visual device to frame the face, the back forming a softly lighted but firm background which brought out the contours of the face. Much of Elmslie's furniture, as well as his interior fixtures, was an attempt to relate his belief in the use of a geometric machine pattern with his feeling for human needs and requirements."

George C. Bradley House
Attachment No. 4

A page from "Sandstone and Buffalo Robes: A Walking-Tour Guide to Madison's Historic Downtown Buildings."



Bradley House, 106 North Prospect Avenue

Sullivan and Wright Buildings

Madison is fortunate to have buildings designed by two of America's greatest architects, Louis Henry Sullivan and his protege, Frank Lloyd Wright. Though well beyond walking distance from the downtown area, these buildings should be seen by those interested in local architecture.

The Bradley House, at 106 North Prospect Avenue, was designed by Sullivan in 1909, and is one of Madison's finest historic buildings. It was designed late in Sullivan's career, and shows the influence of his former pupil, Wright.

In this house, Sullivan employs one of the earliest and most successful residential uses of the cantilever, a form of construction which Wright later carried to the ultimate in his masterful Falling Water house in Pennsylvania. A huge house, the Bradley dwelling is now used as a college fraternity. It was laid out on a compartmentalized, structural grid reminiscent of Sullivan's earlier steel frame buildings in Chicago and St. Louis.

There are several buildings designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in or near Madison, some of which are quite well known. A list of these follows:

Unitarian Meeting House	900 University Bay Dr.	1949
Gilmore House	120 Ely Place	1908
Pew House	3650 Mendota Drive	1940
Jacobs House I	441 Toepfer Avenue	1937
Jacobs House II	Seen from Pleasant View Road south of Old Sauk Road in Middleton	1949
Erdman Prefabricated House	5817 Anchorage Avenue	1957