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

I. Name of Building or Site

(1) Common
Airplane House

(2) Historic (if applicable)
Professor Eugene A. Gilmore House

II. Location

(1) Street Address
120 Ely Place - originally listed as 143 North Prospect Ave.

(2) Ward (available @ City Clerk)
Tenth

III. Classification

(1) Type of Property (building, monument, park, etc.)
Building - Single Family Residence

(2) Zoning District

(3) Present Use
Single Family Residence

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

(1) Name(s)
Mrs. Howard Weiss

(2) Street Address
120 Ely Place

(3) Telephone Number
238-1681

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

(1) Parcel Number
0709-222-2602-6

(2) Legal Description

VI. Condition of Property

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

(2) Altered or Unaltered?
Minor Alterations and One Additiona

(3) Moved or Original Site?
Original Site

(4) Wall Construction
Wood Frame, Stucco Exterior Finish

(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:

The E. A. Gilmore House is constructed in a manner typical of the best of the Prairie School architecture. The house exhibits strong horizontal lines by virtue of extended walls, sweeping eaves and windows grouped together in horizontal bands. Wood trim, set against the stucco, encircles the house further emphasizing the feeling of a building united with the site. The casement windows contain lights with geometrical patterns of leaded glass. The skin effects of stucco, as an exterior material, provides sharp junctures at the corners of the building and where building forms join one another. The batten seam roof of copper uses a material that Wright was fond of, although found only infrequently in his homes. Usually less expensive materials with shorter lives were used.

The house has remained virtually unchanged except for a minor alteration at the front entrance, and the addition of a three car garage to the rear, all constructed in 1929 (designed by the firm of Law, Law and Potter). The altered front entrance now allows one to enter the house at the main level. Originally one entered the house via a ground level entrance, similar to the forms found in the Heurtley House (Oak Park, Illinois, 1902) and Robie House (Chicago, Illinois, 1909) to cite several of the better known examples[1], raising the main living floor one-half story above the surrounding grade. The garage addition to the rear cannot be sighted from Ely Place.

The E. A. Gilmore House is recognized by Manson as among these that were created by Frank Lloyd Wright during the "heyday" of Prairie Homes. He likens the Gilmore House to the Hardy House in Racine as "dramatically related to the site".[2]

This house fulfills the criteria found in Gebhard, Brooks, Manson and Hitchcock to classify it as one of the finer examples of this architectural form so unique to the Midwest and so specifically the creation of fertile architects that produced an American architecture related to the characteristics of their land, the prairie.

[1] Manson, p. 126 and pp. 198-200 for descritions of these houses.

[2] Ibid, p. 185 and Hitchcock, p. 40

[3] See VIII for Bibliographic information on these.

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

VII. Significance

(1) Original Owner Professor Eugene A. Gilmore	(2) Original Use Single Family Residence
(3) Architect or Builder Frank Lloyd Wright	(4) Architectural Style Prairie Style
(5) Date of Construction 1908	(6) Indigenous Materials Used Stucco, Wood trim finished natural

(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 City Directories from 1909 to 1931.
2. "Frank Lloyd Wright to 1910, the First Golden Age," Grant Carpenter Manson, Reinhold Publishing Co., New York 1958
3. "In the Nature of Materials, the Buildings of Frank Lloyd Wright 1887-1941," Henry Russell Hitchcock, Duell, Sloan and Pierce, New York 1942
4. "Frank Lloyd Wright; Writings and Buildings," Ed. by Edgar Kaufman and Ben Raeburn, Meridian Books, 1960
5. Unpublished dissertation; "The Prairie School, The American Spirit in Mid-western Architecture, 1893-1916", H. Allen Brooks, Northwestern Univ. 1957
6. Unpublished Dissertation; "William Gray Purcell and George Grant Elmslie and The Progressive Movement in American Architecture from 1900 to 1920", David Gebhard, University of Minnesota 1957 (descriptions of Prairie Style)
7. Unpublished Master's thesis; "Prairie Architecture in Madison, Wisconsin; Influences, Forms and Form-Givers", Gordon D. Orr, Jr., The University of Wisconsin, 1971

IX. Form Prepared By:

(1) Name and Title

Gordon D. Orr, Jr., A.I.A., Architect, Chairman, Citizens Advisory Committee

(2) Organization Represented (if any) Society of Architectural Historians, American Institute of Architects, Taychopera Foundation, Citizens Advisory Committee

(3) Address 2729 Mason Street, Madison, 53705	(4) Telephone Number 238-1683

(5) Date Nomination Form Was Prepared

November 19, 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 E. A. Gilmore House stands as the most significant example of Prairie architecture in Madison. While many minds share in the development of Prairie architecture, it was Frank Lloyd Wright who continuously espoused this new form in in his work, his talks and his writings. Prairie architecture was the form that would relate to the sweeping horizontals that nature had given to the Midwest. Prairie architecture, of course, was more than this. It represented a complete rejection of prevailing architectural forms derived from past historiczl styles. Some midwestern architects courageously swam agains t the tide in developing this form.

As the Prairie Style matured under the hand of Frank Lloyd Wright, a particual form became identified with his work. The Gilmore House is indicative of this form with its feeling of horizontality suggested by sweeping roof overhangs, and horizontal trim members set in the stucco girding the structure. Groups of casement windows create a linear pattern. A freshmess of thought is found in his use of simple geometric forms combined in an understandable composition, his use of exterior materials, such as stucco, emphasizes the skin effect of the wall and creates sharp junctures of wall planes. Decoration is limited to the geometric leaded glass patterns set within the windows. All of these characteristics have been treated by scholars of American Architectural history.[1]

The E. A. Gilmore House represents an exemplary piece of architecture created by one of America's greatest architects. In acknowledging the great contribution that Wright has made to American architecture, one would also seek an example of his work in the city that was home and school to him for a portion of his life. Madison has several, but the Gilmore House stands as the finest example of Prairie architecture from his hand for many miles around.

The Gilmore house must be recognized for its dual contribution to Madison's architectural heritage; as a prime example of Prairie architecture and as an example of Frank Lloyd Wright's work.

The E. A. Gilmore House was built in 1908 for Professor Eugene a Gilmore of the faculty of the University of Wisconsin. The house was occupied by Professor Gilmore and his wife, Blanche, until about 1922 when Phi Chi fraternity occupied the building. In 1929, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Weiss (He was director of the C. F. Burgess Laboratories) purchased the house. In 1911, Professor Edward C. Elliott and his wife, Elizabeth, also resided with the Gilmores. The Elliotts erected the Prairie House, designed by Claude and Starck, that occupies the site directly adjacent to the west.

Mrs. Weiss has kindly confirmed the information contained in this Nomination form.

[1] See Bibliography - Item VIII - for publications on the subject.