#7

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

I. Name of Building or Site

(1) Common
Knapp House

(2) Historic (if applicable)
Governor's Mansion,
Executive Residence

II. Location

(1) Street Address
130 East Gilman Street

(2) Ward
Fourth Ward

III. Classification

(1) Type of Property (building, monument, park, etc.)
Residential, multi-unit dwelling

(2) Zoning District
R6

(3) Present Use
Multi-unit dwelling, dormitory

IV. Current Owner of Property

(1) Name(s)
University of Wisconsin Board of Regents

(2) Street Address
Van Hise Hall

(3) Telephone Number

V. Legal Description

(1) Parcel Number
0709-144-0203-0

(2) Legal Description
Block 95, lots 8, 9 and ½ of 7, original plat

VI. Condition of Property

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

(2) Altered or Unaltered?
Altered

(3) Moved or Original Site?

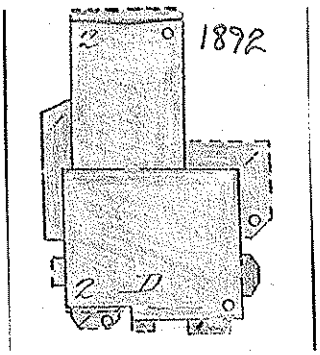
(4) Wall Construction
Sandstone

(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:

Unfortunately one can only speculate about the original appearance of the Governor's Mansion, for no photograph or detailed description of the exterior exists prior to 1900. However it is likely that in its essential architectural features, the house is as it was in 1856. quotes an early visitor as describing the house as a "square, comfortable" building.[1] Mrs LaFollette indicates that the house may have also consisted of a wooden shed which was removed when the stone wing was added during the 1870s.[2] Nor is there indication of the original porch treatment. Evidence indicates that it consisted of a small front porch and a frame bay window to the left. In 1898-99 these were removed and replaced with a a sweeping front and side porch. Recently this porch was replaced by a small one story porch with Corinthian columns.



The style of the house is an understated, but elegant example of the Italianate mode. With its low,hipped roof, tall, narrow windows, and large, horizontal brackets, the house appears smaller and lower than in actuality. The house is constructed of native sandstone from the Westport quarry,[4] and the walls measure 18 inches thick.[5] Built before the advent of central heating, the roof is topped by 4 centrally placed chimmneys.

The starkness of the original square design is relieved by the arrangement of three assymmetical masses on the front facade. The areas are delineated by three pilasters cut into the wall and topped with small capitals. To the right of the entrance is a one story flat rooved stone bay with paired windows. Unlike the other window of the old block these windows are unadorned by hood molds. The hood molds above the other windows consist of narrow, sandstone outlines with keystones above each slightly curved windowstop. The front door is similarly treated with a large curved pane above and verticle panes to either side of the single door. Other than the window treatment perhaps the most outstnading feautre of the house is the wide horizontal gutters supported on enormous white brackets the main thrust of which is perpendicular to the exterior walls. The corners of the gutters are decorated with paired brackets and recessed rosettas.

On the right side of the house is a white,one-story, frame bay window, and in addition a cement block garage now joins the house at this point.

The architecture of the rear wing is much less elaborate, although built of the same material. The whole roof line is lower than the main block, and the windows are shorter and have only plain stone lintels and sills. The brackets are smaller and paired on this part of the house. They are also used as decoration on the frame porch which runs along the rear of the wing. The left side of the wing now has a plain porch which is topped by a small bay which emerges peculiarly from the line of the wall.

The grounds are well maintained[6] although there are only traces of the terraced Norwegian garden. None of the original outbuildings are present.

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LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (3)

VII. Significance

(1) Original Owner	(2) Original Use
Julius T. White	Residential, single family dwelling
(3) Architect or Builder	(4) Architectural Style
	Italianate
(5) Date of Construction	(6) Indigenous Materials Used
1855-1856	Sandstone

(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 Tax Assessment Records, SHSW Archives, 1854-1885
2. Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1898, 1902, SHSW
3. Street file, Madison Public Library
4. WPA Walking Tour of Madison, SHSW
5. Title Abstract, Held by UW Regents, Vice President for Business and Finance
6. Jeremiah Rusk Papers, SHSW, 1883, Nov. 7
7. Robert M. LaFollette, Sr. Papers, SHSW, 1903, Jan. 23
8. Delaplaine and Burdick Papers, SHSW

(cont. on following page)

IX. Form Prepared By:

(1) Name and Title
Carolyn J. Mattern

(2) Organization Represented (if any)
Madison Landmarks Commission, Citizens' Advisory Committee

(3) Address	(4) Telephone Number
104 Langdon St. Madison	262-3338; 255-0676

(5) Date Nomination Form Was Prepared
1971, November 16

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LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (3)

VIII. List of Bibliographical References Used (cont.)

9. J.G. Thorpe, Jr. Papers, SHSW

10. Taylor and Willits, "Map of Madison, 1872"

11. Harrison, Map of Madison, 1855

12. Isabel LaFollette, "Executive Mansion" Wisconsin Magazine of History, 1937, Dec.

13. Mortimer Smith, Life of Ole Bull, 1943

14, Belle Case LaFollette and Fola LaFollette Middleton, Robert M. LaFollette, 1953.

15. J. Drury, Historic Midwest Houses, 1947.

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LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (4)

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

The house at 130 East Gilman Street is one of the few houses in Madison of truly statewide, if not national, significance. From 1885-1950 the house served as the official residence of Wisconsin's governors. Merely to repeat their names is to indicate the political importance of the house. In addition, however, for the thirty years before it became the governor's residence, it was the home of three prominent Madison families and the scene of much of the important social and cultural life of the young city. However despite its official position records of the history of the house are few. Much of the information used in this nomination form comes from an article by Mrs. Philip LaFollette who took an active interest in the house and collected reminisences of early citizens about the house. In addition her article serves as the source for the few descriptions of the interior of the home.

There is some discrepency between the secondary sources which date the construction in 1854 and the tax assessment records which indicate that construction took place c. 1856-1857. The original owner of the house was Julius T. White, a prominent businessman. On June 16, 1857 he sold the property to George T. Delaplaine secretary to Governors Farwell and Dewey and co-owner of of one of the largest real estate development firms in the city. These first two owners of the house established for it a reputation as the site of lavish entertainments with noted guests. Horace Greeley,was one of those who visited White and complimented him upon the beauty of his home. Delaplaine became the subject of derision when he attempted unsuccessfully to install Madison' first central heating system.

In 1868 the house rose to even greater social prominence when it was purchased by State Senator, J.G. Thorp, a millionairelumber baron. Mrs. Thorp, reportedly the dominant force in the family and greatly interested in social prestige, was attracted to the house because it was considered then Madison's finest home. During their interrupted periods of residency until 1883 the Thorps were a most interesting although not beloved family in Madison society. Their guests included leading national figures. In 1870 Sara Thorp, then 20, married the 60 year old Norwegian violinist, Ole Bull, and their wedding was the occasion for the most elaborate festivities Madison has even seen. In order to further her entertaining Mrs. Thorp carried out extensive changes in the house, removing a wall between the parlor and drawing room, installing Madison' first hardwood floors, and removing the wooden shed and replacing it with the large rear wing. Secondary sources describe in glowing detail the ornate manner in which she decorated the interior. Bull, who made his home with the family, was responsible for landscaping the exterior in Norwegian terraces, a billiard room, and a croquet ground.

In 1883 the house was purchased for $15,000 bu Jeremiah Rusk when he was elected governor. Although a frontier type, Rusk continued the tradition of giving lavish parties in the house. In 1885 the house was sold to the state for a sum "not to exceed 20,000." Mrs. LaFollette mentions that this was considered reasonable price, for Rusk had made extensive improvements. When he was succeeded to the governorship in 1889 by William Hoard, noted agricultural publisher, Rusk went on to achieve national prominence as Secretary of Agriculture. In 1901 a new era was initiated at the mansion when Robert LaFollette took office. LaFollette founder of Wisconsin's foremost political dynasty held a philosophy of government which saw the governor as an active legislative leader on behalf of the people. He

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LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (4)

VII. (Cont.)

and his progressive successors, Davidson, McGovern, Blaine, and Zimmerman were responsible for much reform legislation. Mrs. LaFollette also carried the progressive political tradition into her entertaining and, departing from predecessors Peck, Upham, and Scofield who had used the house only for official entertaining, changed the name of the house to the less pretention "Executive Residence" and gave large public receptions. The Wisconsin Idea which saw an active cooperation between the University and the State, meant that the LaFollette's private guests were professorsrather than society. Later during the Depression years the state again became a laboratory for democracy during the administration of LaFollette's son Philip, who like his father served three terms. After the Second World War the house was no longer felt to serve the needs of the state and upon the selection of a new mansion, the house was sold to the University Regents as a home for the Knapp graduate scholars.