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

I. Name of Building or Site

(1) Common	(2) Historic (if applicable)
Groves Co-op	Elisha W. Keyes House

II. Location

(1) Street Address	(2) Ward
102 E. Gorham	4th

III. Classification

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

(2) Zoning District	(3) Present Use
R6	Cooperative residence

IV. Current Owner of Property

(1) Name(s)
J. M. Fisher

(2) Street Address	(3) Telephone Number
119 Monona Ave	2570489

V. Legal Description

(1) Parcel Number	(2) Legal Description
0709-144-0414-3	Lot 17 except, N.W. 70' of S.W. 29' & S.E. 62' of lot 18. Block 96.

VI. Condition of Property

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

(2) Altered or Unaltered?	(3) Moved or Original Site?
Altered slightly.	Original Site

(4) Wall Construction
Sandstone foundation, masonry supporting walls, 18" thick

(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 Keyes house is an imposing structure of brick on a foundation of sandstone blocks. It sets well back on an ample lot which has a frontage of 132 feet on Gorham Street and also on Pinckney Street. Three ancient stone stairways adorned by griffin like stone carvings with stretches of brick wall between lead to the entrance. The architectural design of the house is agaqmarely simple Italianate box except for a bay like turret which occupies the east wing of the second story. A frame bay window breaks the monotony of the Pinckney St. side of the house. Both of these bay windows are interesting in that they appear to be a Victorian afterthought which leads one to believe that they may have been added to fit the fashion of the times. In fact the Sandborn Insurance map of 1892 doaes not show the bay window on the Gorham St. side, and it does appear on the one of 1898. Floor to ceiling rectangular windows give a regular rhythm to the almost stark design of the main structure. The sills are sandstone, and each window was originally shuttered by double louvered shutters, some of which remain today. The Sandborne map of 1898 shows a porch which extended from the bay window on the Pinckney side around the front of the Gorham side. It was a frame porch with half height columns, a solid bannister and a lattice work basement. Today there is a masonry and concrete enclosed porch which is on the Gorham Street frontage where part of the original porch foundation still remains. Two styles of roof are visible, a gabled roof in the rear portion and a hipped roof on the main mass of the house. One of the reasons one might consider this an Italianate building stems from the rather heavy protruding cornice with denticulated molding and brackets.. The supporting masonry of the house itself is 18" thick. The supporting beams are massive oak. This form of construction is carried out from basement to roof. In the course of an alteration job in the upper story, it was found that the oak timbers had been joined by oak plugs instead of nails- another evidence of the great age of the building.

Originally there was a huge, red brick barn with a cupola atop and curious stone ornaments over its wide windows adjoining the house, according to an earlier description of the house. This was leveled for additional parking last year.

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

VII. Significance

(1) Original Owner Lansing W. Hoyt	(2) Original Use Residence
(3) Architect or Builder	(4) Architectural Style Italianate
(5) Date of Construction 1853-4	(6) Indigenous Materials Used 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 Street Directories
2. Sandborne Insurance Map
3. Wisconsin Necrology
4. Madison Tax Assessment Records
5. Alexius Baas (Madison Public Library Street File)
6. Sandstone and Buffaloe Robes
7.
8.

IX. Form Prepared By:

(1) Name and Title
Catherine Ballantyne, Citizens Resource Committee

(2) Organization Represented (if any)

(3) Address 4833 Sheboygan Ave.	(4) Telephone Number 271-1255

(5) Date Nomination Form Was Prepared
December 4, 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 architectural significance of Elisha Keyes' house is secondary in importance to its place in Madison's history as the residence of one of the pivotal figures in Wisconsin politics in the 19th century. Even the land on which the house was to be built was closely linked to many of Madison's early citizens. In 1937 James D. Doty acquired the title from the United States government. Numerous following trades placed the land in the hands of such people as Princhette, Mason, the Four Lakes Co., Shackleford, Levi Blossom, Delaplaine, and H. L. Dousman. According to the tax records a jump from $300 to $4000 occurred between 1853 and 1854; so we assume that the house was constructed at that time. The original owner was Lansing W. Hoyt, one of Madison's early settlers. After the house passed through three other owners Elisha Keyes acquired the title from Mary E. Taylor in 1867.

Elisha W. Keyes was one of Wisconsin's most colorful characters in the turbulent politics of the late eighteen and early nineteen hundreds. Keyes became affliiated with the Wisconsin Republican Party almost form the time of its inception. As a result of his friendship with Sherman Booth, who was then head of the Republican Party in Wisconsin, Lincoln appointed him postmaster in 1861, a post he was to hold for 20 years. His prominence in the councils of the party together with his statewide influence earned him the name of "Boss" Keyes. As the "Boss" he dictated most of his party's political policies in the state. During his reign of power Keyes was the first Republican mayor of the city in 1865 and later in 1886; Regent of the University of Wisconsin in 1877-1889; Assemblyman from Wisconsin in 1882; and Municipal Judge from 1889-1893. Those years marked the time when the Keyes house was the scene of manyaa political conference. Robert M. La Follette Sr. challenged him in a county election for district attorney and won in the 1880's.

Keyes was one of the last politically powerful men in Madison whose influence and power derived from his personal style. After Keyes, economic influence became the more usual basis of political power as exemplified by the lumber barons and the capitalists who held public office in the state.

With the death of Keyes and his wife, the house was bought by Louis Hobbins in 1914. Once again it became a center of social activity. Later under the Brikkens (Mr. Brikken was director of the university music during his Madison residence) it was a music center. Now after many years and numerous owners the house is a co-op, housing university students.

Although the exterior of the house has been altered it remains a symbol of the history of Madison, not only in its list of owners, but also as an example of the architecture which developed in the Midwest during its "life". Not a grand mansion, but a solidly built home representative of the vigor the men who molded the history of Madison possessed.