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

I. Name of Building or Site

(1) Common: Mears House

(2) Historic (if applicable): Mears House

II. Location

(1) Street Address: 420 N. Carroll St.

(2) Ward (available @ City Clerk): 8

III. Classification

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

(2) Zoning District: R 6

(3) Present Use: Multiple Residence

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

(1) Name(s): Elsie Gertrude Klein

(2) Street Address: 420 N. Carroll St.

(3) Telephone Number: 256-4052

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

(1) Parcel Number: 0709-144-1825-1

(2) Legal Description: NE 18 ft. of NE 66 ft. of Lot 8 and NE ½ of Lot 9 Block 62, Original Plat.

VI. Condition of Property

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

(2) Altered or Unaltered?: Unaltered

(3) Moved or Original Site?: Original

(4) Wall Construction: Cream brick on sandstone foundation

(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 Mears House on the SW corner of North Carroll and Gilman streets is a fine example of a Wisconsin "square" house in a style sometimes referred to as Wisconsin Federal.

The main portion of the house is a two story square of cream brick set on a rough cut sandstone foundation. Brick pilasters at the corners and a dental corbel of brick under the roof frame and accent the square form. The hipped roof is marked by a low rise with a single dormer window in front on the Carroll Street side. The projecting horizontal underside of the roof is supported by ornamental brackets set in pairs. The long windows of the central section are surmounted by molded stone lintels and set on stone sills mounted on two decorative molded stone brackets per window. There are three chimneys, one of which has been repaired.

In the rear is a one and a half story rectangular section also of cream brick but topped by a peaked gable roof. This section has smaller windows with simple stone sills and lintels. A one story porch set on brick pillars runs along the Gilman Street side of the rear section. On the back of this section is a sloped outside entry to the cellar done in sandstone with a wood cover.

The real decoration of the Mears House is in the finished wood details. Recall the roof brackets and note the green shutters for all the windows, but most importantly dicover two architectural features done in wood. First, examine the one story bay on the Gilman Street side; a partial octagonal structure with simple rounded half pillars dividing the five window panels, each pillar surmounted by a delicate and ornately curving bracket. Second, enjoy the fine portico on the Carroll Street front. The entire doorway is framed in wood with glass side and top lights set around the glass and wood door. Four square fluted columns support the small flat porch roof topped by a wrought iron railing.

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

VII. Significance

(1) Original Owner	(2) Original Use
James R. Mears	Residence
(3) Architect or Builder	(4) Architectural Style
	Wisconsin Federal
(5) Date of Construction	(6) Indigenous Materials Used
1871	Sandstone and cream brick

(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. Alexius Baas, "All Around the Town," Capital Times Jan. 18, 1956.
2. "Aspects of Our Architectural Heritage," Capital Times Dec. 31, 1969.
3. Richard Perrin, Historic Wisconsin Buildings (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Museum, 1962), pp. 46ff.
4. Sandstone and Buffalo Robes (Madison, 1969), # 17.
5. History of Dane County Wisconsin (Chicago: Western Historical Society, 1880), p. 1012.
6.
7.
8.

IX. Form Prepared By:

(1) Name and Title
R. R. Wagner

(2) Organization Represented (if any)
Citizens Resource Committee

(3) Address	(4) Telephone Number
136 E. Gorham St.	257-5270

(5) Date Nomination Form Was Prepared
Jan. 16, 1972

City of Madison Landmarks Commission

LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (4)

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

The Mears House is significant as an example of the Wisconsin "square" house. As Richard Perrin states in Historic Wisconsin Buildings (p. 52)

> A very popular house type of modified Federal Style was the so-called "square" house, usually built with a hipped roof, balanced elevations, and the main entrance off to one side. Even of this once very common type very few specimens remain.

As a late example of the "square" house, the Mears residence has touches of Victorian ornamentation such as pilasters, corbel, and brackets. Yet, the basic sense of proportion that is so pleasing is characteristic of Federal architecture and is perfectly suited for the flat lot at Carroll and Gilman. The rear section, probably a service area, ties the house to the larger neighborhood of Mansion Hill. Though not massive in size, the simple eloquence of proportion and the details in wood make the contribution of the Mears House intergral to the Carroll Street area.