HISTORIC RESOURCE NOMINATION

Please refer to either the Landmark or Historic District Nomination Form Preparation Guide for instructions on completing this form.

If you need an interpreter, translator, materials in alternate formats or other accommodations to access this form, please call (608) 266-4635

Landmarks Commission
City of Madison Planning Division
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
PO Box 2985
Madison, WI 53701-2985
(608) 266-6552

1.) Identification of Historic Resource

Resource type (choose one): ☒ Landmark ☐ Historic District

Common Name
Old Spring Hotel

Historic Name
Old Spring Tavern

Current Use
Residential

Location of Historic Resource

Street Address
3706 Nakoma Road

Parcel Number(s)
070928320153

Legal Description
CERTIFIED SURVEY MAP NO 16136 AS RECORDED IN DANE, COUNTY REGISTER OF DEEDS IN DOC 5869517, VOL 119, PAGE 109 OF CERTIFIED SURVEYS, LOT 1.

2.) Form Prepared By

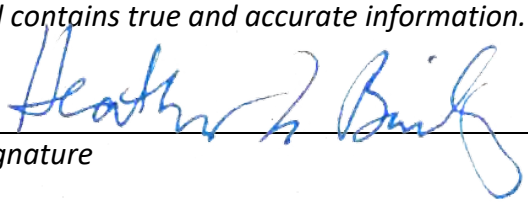
Name and Title
Heather L. Bailey, Ph.D., Preservation Planner

Organization Represented
City of Madison

215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd	608-266-6552
Address	*Telephone Number*

hbailey@cityofmadison.com
Email Address

As the preparer of this document, I am signing below to signify that I believe this document is complete and contains true and accurate information.

	Heather L. Bailey	7/21/2026
Signature	*Printed Name*	*Date Submitted*

3.) General Historical Data

Original Owner	*Original Use*
Charles E Morgan	Lodging Inn/Stagecoach Hotel & Tavern
Architect/Builder/Designer	*Architectural Style*
Charles Morgan	Greek Revival
Date of Construction/Period of Significance	*Moved or Original Site?*
Dates of construction: 1854, 1925 Period of Significance: 1854-1939	Original

Physical Condition (excellent, good, fair, poor, deteriorated, ruins)

Good condition

4.) Describe Present and Original Character and Features

The additional documentation and boundary decrease for the Old Spring Tavern, listed as a Madison Landmark in 1972, is intended to reflect the present condition of the property and to encompass full extent of the historic resource. The current property is bounded on the east by Nakoma Road, on the north by Spring Trail, on the west it shares a property line with the house at 3701 Council Crest, and on the south by the property with the house at 3714 Nakoma Road.

Old Spring Tavern (1854, 1925)

The exterior description of the building in the original nomination remains largely the same. Since its designation it has had exterior maintenance work and the interior was largely remodeled. In 2000 the property owners converted the two-story former kitchen wing from being a garage back into being a habitable part of the house. To do this, they removed the flat-roofed, wood clapboard addition that had been attached to the front of the kitchen wing and it contained two bays of garage doors. The new northwest-facing wall is in line with the original wall of the wing and was constructed of reclaimed brick, and pierced a central wood door under a gabled stoop that is supported by simple wood struts. The door is flanked by two-over-two arched double-hung windows topped with a brick segmented arch lintel and cast stone projecting sill, which replicates the appearance of the two historic windows that face the Nakoma Road (southeast side) of that wing. An underground tunnel connects the house to the adjacent two-story garage, but the tunnel and space between the house and the garage are covered in a terraced stone retaining wall with stone steps.

Garage (2000)

The garage on the property is two-stories and built into the hillside. The bottom level is random uncoursed stone, topped with a wood belt course, and the second story is narrow wood clapboard with corner trim boards. The roof is side gabled and topped with a metal ridge cap. The northwest (front) side only has the second story exposed and it connects to the driveway. The wall is pierced with two garage doors and decorative light fixture on the southern end of the wall. This side also features a central gabled dormer with a pair of four-lite casement windows. The northeast side shows the stone basement level because the ground sharply slopes down to the east. The upper level of this façade is pierced with a centrally located two-over-two lite double-hung window that is topped with a cornice-style window head. The southeast side (back) has the stone basement level fully exposed with a wood pedestrian door on the south end of the wall that is topped with a shed roof stoop supported with simple wood trusses. The basement level is also pierced with two equidistant two-over-two lite double-hung windows that are topped with a large stone lintel over each window. The upper level is pierced with two equidistant two-over-two double hung windows with a corniced window head. The southwest side has half of the stone basement level exposed and it intersects with the terraced stone walkway that connects to the house. The upper level is pierced with a pedestrian door on the west that is topped with a two-lite transom window with a corniced window head, and centrally located two-over-two lite double-hung window with a corniced window head. There is a decorative light fixture to the east of the door.

Shed (2000)

A single-story front-gabled shed is clad in wood clapboard and topped with a wood shingle roof with a metal ridge cap that projects out over the front (northwest) entrance, where the overhanging roof is supported by a simple wood truss on each side and a simple raised-tie king post truss. The building has a random uncoursed stone foundation and the rest of the building is clad is wood clapboard. The front (northwest) elevation is pierced by a double wood door. The sides of the building (southwest and northeast) are pierced by a single four-lite awning window with simple wood framing and a projecting sill.

Stone Wall (ca. 1924)

The perimeter of the property along Nakoma Road and Spring Trail have a randomly coursed stone wall that has similarly coursed stone piers, all of which is topped with a projecting coping stones. There is a raised area in the

center of the wall along Nakoma Road where the Daughters of the American Revolution installed a historic marker in 1929. At the southern end of the wall along Nakoma, it insets and there is a small cast-iron pedestrian gate. Along Spring Trail, the wall steps up the rising hill until it reaches the driveway, which is flanked by two tall piers with lantern-style light fixtures on top of them. There is a cast-iron pedestrian gate to the east of the driveway opening in the wall. The stone fence continues only a few additional feet west past the driveway opening, where it terminates into the hill.

Statement on Historic Integrity

The historic building is able to convey its historic associations from when it served as a stagecoach inn and later when the exterior was updated in 1925 to the NeoClassical style as it transitioned from a rural tavern to a house located within the Nakoma neighborhood. The historic resource retains its historic integrity.

5.) Describe Significance of Property and Conformance to Designation Criteria
Per MGO 41.07 or 41.10:

☒ (a) The landmark/district is associated with broad patterns of cultural, political, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or community.
☐ (b) The landmark/district is associated with the lives of important persons, and/or with important events in national, state, or local history.
☐ (c) The landmark/district encompasses an area of particular archaeological or anthropological significance.
☒ (d) It embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable as representative of a period, style, or method of construction, or of local materials or craftsmanship.
☐ (e) It is representative of the work of a builder, designer or architect of note.

Statement of Significance
The Old Spring Tavern building remains significant under Criterion A for its transportation history for its association with the stagecoach route from Madison to Monroe. The original nomination set the period of significance at 1854, but this period of significance should span from 1854 to 1895, which is when this building operated as a stagecoach inn and tavern. Additionally the property is associated with the growing development of Madison and is an example of a property that shifted from a rural property to one that transitioned to being a suburban house, and that story is captured between 1854 to 1939, which covers its early stagecoach era to the modifications made by the Dickson family to convert the house to be a part of the Nakoma neighborhood. The period of significance ends when the Dickson's sold the property in 1939. Finally, the original nomination named this as significant for its architecture as a stagecoach inn, with a date of significance of 1854. Because the Dickson family significantly altered the house in the 1920s, it should have a second date of significance for its architecture with the construction of the three-story NeoClassical porch with Chinese Chippendale railings in 1925.

Additional Documentation
Originally constructed in 1854, this house served as a stagecoach stop for the route between Madison and Monroe. In addition to operating a hotel and tavern out of the house, the surrounding property served as farmland. In 1925, a University of Wisconsin professor bought the house and began to remodel it so that it matched the Period Revival-style houses that were quickly populating the growing Nakoma neighborhood (the period of significance for the Nakoma National Register historic district is 1915 to 1946). No longer surrounded by farm fields, this house was then surrounded by substantial and architecturally distinctive homes. The simple vernacular masonry house became more ornate with a three-story Chippendale front porch and the replacement of the old wire fence in front of the property with a masonry wall (allegedly designed and site supervised by Frank Lloyd Wright). That transformation shifted this property from a rural agricultural context and character to one that integrated with the suburban neighborhood.

Reason for the Boundary Adjustment
The parcel when the City of Madison designated this property in 1972 contained two lots. The lot configuration and landmark site boundary as of 2026 represent on the lot containing the historic resource. In 2022 the Landmarks Commission approved a lot line adjustment between the two lots contained within the parcel and required that redevelopment of the second lot that faced out onto Council Crest must have archaeological

monitoring during ground-disturbing activities. That archaeological report is attached. The archaeologist noted no archaeological materials and the site yielded no additional information.

6.) List of Bibliographical References

City of Madison Preservation Files, Madison, WI.
City of Madison Building Inspection Files, Madison, WI.

7.) Additional Information



Figure 1. Early photo of Old Spring Tavern prior to 1920s remodel on left (note wire fence and with metal posts) and current photo on the right. Preservation Files, City of Madison, WI.



Sunday, October 13, 1929 Madison THE WISCONSIN STATE JOURNAL

Many Weddings Weekend Events Near Madison

Misses Ruchti, Marburger, Manthe, Wolter and Saunders Among Those to Be Wed in Nearby Towns

THE present weekend has been the time for many weddings in the vicinity of Madison.

Ruchti-Davidson

In a ceremony performed by the Rev. Otto J. Wilke, Miss L. Elizabeth Ruchti, daughter of Mrs. Robert Ruchti, Madison, and William B. Davidson, Long Beach, Cal., were married Saturday at 5:30 p. m. in St. John's Lutheran church, Westport.

The bride wore a gown of deep blue chiffon velvet with a hat to match and a corsage of tea roses. Matron of honor and maid of honor were Mmes. C. E. Swanson and Emma Ruchti Hoffman, sisters of the bride. Flower girl and ring bearer were Carol and Helene Swanson, the bride's nieces. Best man and usher were C. E. Swanson and Arnold Hoffman.

A wedding dinner was served to immediate relatives at the C. E. Swanson home, 1223 Sherman avenue.

The couple left on a short trip and will be at home after November 1 at Long Beach. The bride attended the Wisconsin School of Music.

* * *

Marburger-Kerr

The wedding of Miss Vilas Marie Marburger, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Marburger, Lancaster, to Downer S. Kerr, Madison, son of Mr. and Mrs. S. W. Kerr, Lancaster, took place on Saturday at noon at

Mark Site of Old Spring Tavern

played the Lohengrin Wedding march for the processional, and the Mendelssohn march as the recessional. Preceding the ceremony H. L. Olson sang "Oh Promise Me", and

Members of the John Bell chapter of the D. A. R. gathered in Nakoma on Friday morning to place a marker on the site of the Old Spring Tavern, the first stopping place between Monroe and Madison in the middle of the past century. The tavern, somewhat remodeled, is now the home of Prof. and Mrs. J. G. Dickson. Members of the Monroe chapter were guests at the unveiling and at the luncheon following.

Euterpe Club to Meet Tomorrow With Mrs. Anson

THE Euterpe club will hold its first meeting of the season on Monday, October 14, at the home of Mrs. O. H. Anson, 1229 East Johnson street. The program follows:

1. "Prelude," "Danse," and "Romance," Whiting, played by Mrs. R. W. Risley on the piano; 2. "Go Down Moses," Johnson, "Heav'n Boun' Soldier," Johnson, and "Water Boy," Robinson, sung by Mrs. H. H. Wood; 3. "Japanese Sunset," Doeppen, played on the violin by Mrs. James Johnson; 4. "Andantino" and "Allegretto," MacDowell; Mrs. P. E. McNall; 5. "Song of the Little Shepard," and "When I Awake" by Winter Watts, sung by Mrs. G. G. Glasier; 6. "The Lamb," Winefrid Ryan, sung by Mrs. M. O. Withey; 7. "Pastorale," Makrejs, played by Mrs. Anson; 8. "April Goes a'Walking," Dickson, and "Pierrot," Winter Watts, sung by Mrs. Peter Carr; 9. "Sundown," R. Huntington-Woodman, by Mrs. E. C. Vandenburgh; 10. piano duet, "County Dance," Nevin, played by Mrs. G. R. Qually and Mrs. James Watson.

* * *

MILWAUKEE R. R. WOMAN'S CLUB

The Chicago, Milwaukee Railroad Woman's club will have its annual banquet at the Drake hotel, Chicago, on Saturday, October 26, at 1 o'clock. For reservations Mrs. C. Kenney, F. 3323, or Mrs. F. A. Maxwell, F. 1794, may be called, and for tickets Mrs. Grace Zuwalkse, F. 5032, may be called.

* * *

GUDRID CIRCLE

The Gudrid Reading circle will meet on Tuesday at 3 p. m. with Mrs. Robert N. Nelson, 2829 Milwaukee street.

* * *

Figure 2. Photo of D.A.R. plaque installation ceremony. October 13, 1929, Wisconsin State Journal.



Figure 3. Picture of building in 2000 prior to altering the kitchen from a garage back into being a residential part of the house. City of Madison Preservation Files.



Figure 4. Ca. 1920 photo of building from Nakoma Road. Wisconsin Historical Society, WHI 3498.

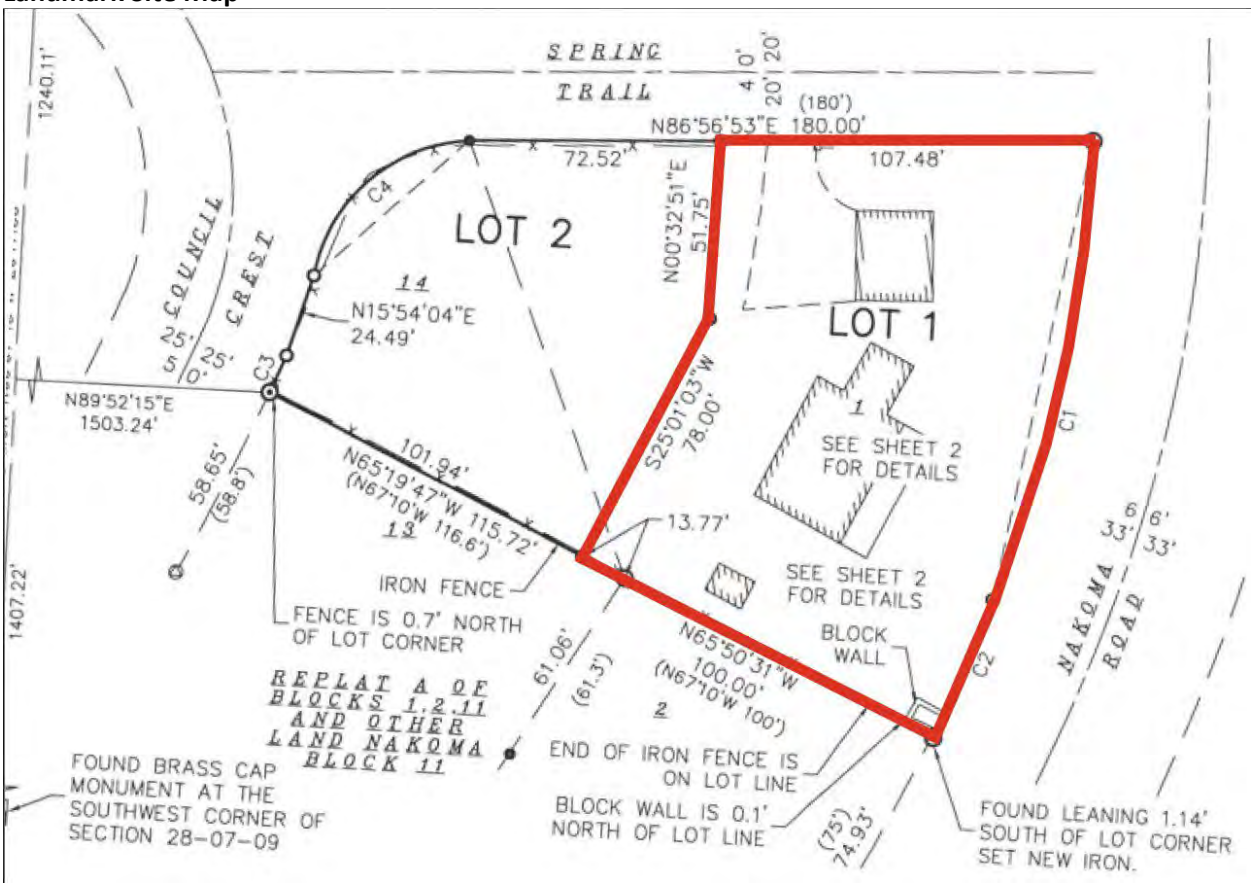


Figure 5. Ca. 1920 photo of building from Nakoma Road. Wisconsin Historical Society, WHI 51558.



Figure 6. 1939 photo of building from Nakoma Road. Wisconsin Historical Society, WHI 43805.

Landmark Site Map



Lot configuration from approved 2022 Certified Survey Map. Landmark Site Boundary shown in red, containing Lot 1. City of Madison Preservation Files, Madison, WI.

Photographs
Photographer: Heather Bailey



Photo 1. Oblique view looking southeast. Non-historic garage on left and historic house on right. 10 July 2026.



Photo 2. Oblique view looking southwest. Side facing Nakoma Rd. 10 July 2026.



Photo 3. Streetview of non-historic garage, looking northwest. 10 July 2026.

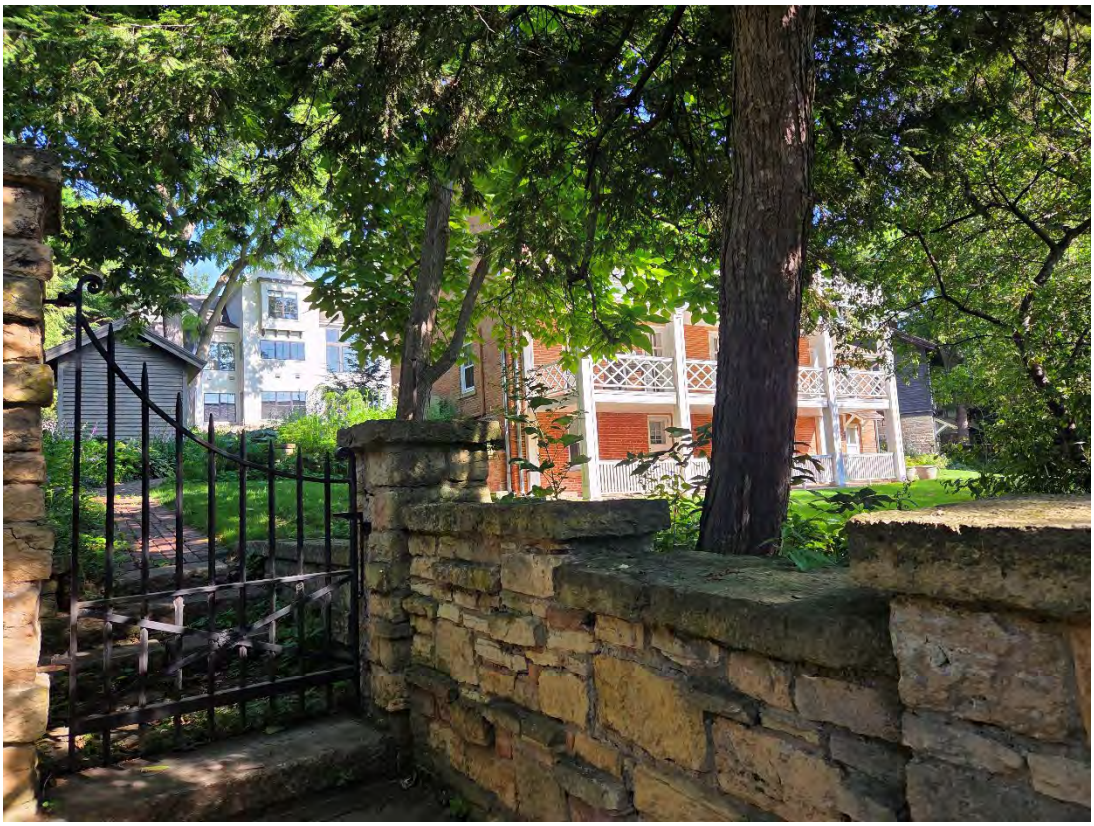


Photo 4. Oblique view of historic house, facing northwest from southeast boundary of property. 10 July 2026.

Archaeological Monitoring of New House Construction at Lot 2 along Council Crest St., City of Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin

Robert A. Birmingham
Consulting Archaeologist
November 2024

Abstract

Between between July 9 and 15, 2024, archaeological monitoring was conducted for new house construction by land owner Jon Furlow on Council Crest St. in Madison Wisconsin to determine if burials and/or other significant archaeological deposits were present. The project area is located in the SW 1/4 of the NE 1/4 of the SW 1/4, Section 28, T7N R9E. The lot is in the backyard of the Old Spring Tavern built in 1854 as a stage coach stopping place and inn and became a private residence in 1895. The structure is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a City of Madison Landmark. The property is also within the previous boundaries of an uncatalogued burial site, the Nakoma Mounds (47 Da-153), consisting of two Native American linear burial mounds. An archaeological survey was conducted in 2022 or the entire back lot for the then landowner, David Gordon, who sought to subdivide and sell part of back lot for new house development. The survey, which included historical research and close order shovel testing, was conducted because subdivision and future development would require Wisconsin Historical Society and City of Madison historic preservation approvals. The survey, which included extensive historic research, found no evidence of archaeological sites or features. It found that the mound group, now destroyed, had existed on adjacent lot. The survey also found no features or major artifact deposits associated with the historic Old Spring Tavern. On this basis the Wisconsin Historical Society and the City of Madison gave approvals for future development but the City of Madison stipulated that any new construction be monitored by a professional archaeologist for any culturally significant features that might have been missed in the original sampling survey. A large, ancient oak tree that was also to be preserved, Grading for new house construction was monitored by the author who found no further evidence of archaeological sites and house construction proceeded without interruption.

Introduction

Between between July 9 and 15, 2024, archaeological monitoring was conducted for new house construction by land owner John Furlow on Council Crest St in Madison, Wisconsin to determine if burials and/or other significant archaeological deposits were present. The project area is located in the SW 1/4 of the NE 1/4 of the SW 1/4, Section 28, T7N R9E (Figure 1). The lot is in the backyard of the Old Spring Tavern built in 1854 as a stage coach stopping place and inn and became a private residence in 1895 (Figure 2). The structure is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a City of Madison Landmark. The property is also within the former boundaries of an uncatalogued burial site, the Nakoma Mound Group (47 Da-153), consisting of two ancient Native American linear burial mounds.

An archaeological survey was conducted in 2022 or the entire back lot for the then landowner, David

Gordon, who sought to subdivide and sell part of back lot for new house development (Birmingham 2022). The survey, which included historical research and close order shovel testing, was conducted because subdivision and future development would require Wisconsin Historical Society and City of Madison historic preservation approvals. The survey, which included extensive historic research, found no evidence of archaeological sites or features and that the recorded mound group, now destroyed, had existed on adjacent lot. The survey of the landscaped back lot also found no features or major artifact deposits associated with the historic Old Spring Tavern. On this basis, the Wisconsin Historical Society and the City of Madison gave approvals for future development but the City of Madison stipulated that any new construction be monitored by a professional archaeologist for any culturally significant features that might have been missed in the original sampling survey. A large, ancient oak tree is also to be preserved during construction.

Project Area.

The project area measures 10 530 sq..ft. and occupies the side of a rather steep hill that slopes up to the west. The two story house with garage and driveway being constructed covers 3690.9 sq. ft. with a the entrance and drive way along Council Crest St. (Figure 3). The property is bounded by Lot 1 (the historic Old Spring Tavern) on the east, Spring Trial on the north, Council Crest on the west, and another house and lot on the southwest. Prior to house construction grading in 2024, the modern visible landscape had been terraced in the 1990s to improve drainage and deter erosion according to a former landowner. The terraces had been graded and bordered with limestone features on the upslope sides. There were flower gardens, bushes and several trees at the edges of the lot including the large oak at the south end (Figure 4).

Grading and Excavation

The lot was first cleared of small trees, brush, and modern landscape features by contractors (Figure 5) and the exposed bare ground was inspected for artifacts and cultural features .A wide utility

trench was dug in thin layers by backhoe to approximate depth of five feet across Spring Trail Rd. to the house site in western part of the lot and this was also inspected for cultural features and artifacts (Figure 6). Old Spring Trail itself was found to have been previously disturbed by installation of utilities leading to Nakoma Rd. The rest of the lot was then graded by approximate four inch layers to a depth sufficient to old be inspected for cultural features (Figure 7). The soil stratigraphy on the southwestern lot line appeared to be natural soils under a thin layer of landscaped soil as consistent with soil type *McHenry Silt Loam, Eroded* found on slopes.(USDA 1978: 43) (Figure 8). The McHenry Loam series has a characteristic profile consisting of a seven inch dark brown silt loam A Soil Horizon , a brown and yellow brown silty clay loam and brown sandy clay loam B Soil Horizon extending to a depth of 18-33 inches, and a light yellow brown C Soil Horizon below that. However, soils in northeastern part of the lot had been truncated and covered by several feet of modern landscaping fill (Figure 9).

Results and Conclusion

No cultural or architectural features were found during the archaeological monitoring of the new house construction on Lot 2 and the house construction proceeded without interruption. The only artifacts encountered were scattered small pieces of brick, window glass and modern nails nearer to the historic Old Spring Tavern, consistent with modern use and maintenance.

Sources Cited

Birmingham, Robert
2022 Archaeological Survey of the Back Lot of the Historic Old Spring Tavern, 3706 Nakoma Rd. Madison, Dane County. Report on file, Wisconsin Historical Society Office of the State Archaeologist, Madison, WI.
.
United States Department of Agriculture
1978 *Soil Survey of Dane County, Wisconsin.* United States Department of Agriculture, Madison, Wisconsin.

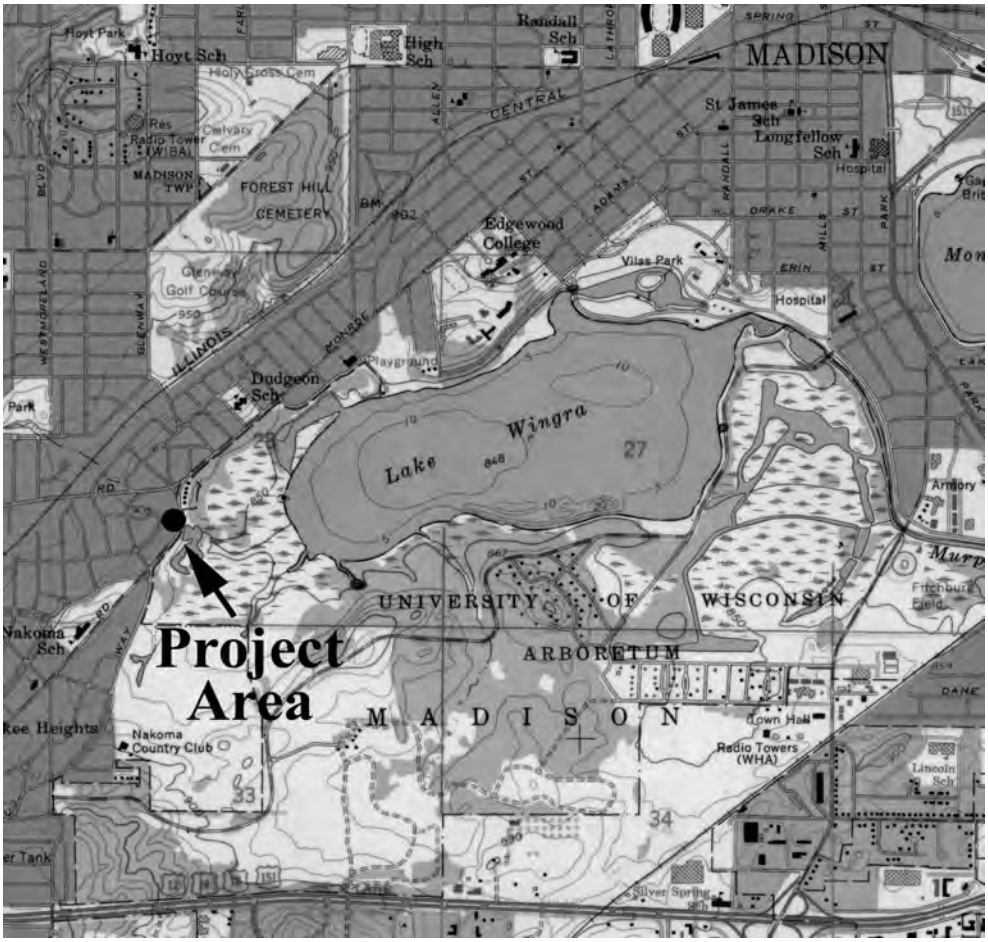


Figure 1. Portion of Madison West USGS quadrangle showing location of the project area.



Figure 2. The historic Old Spring Tavern at 3706 Nakoma Rd.

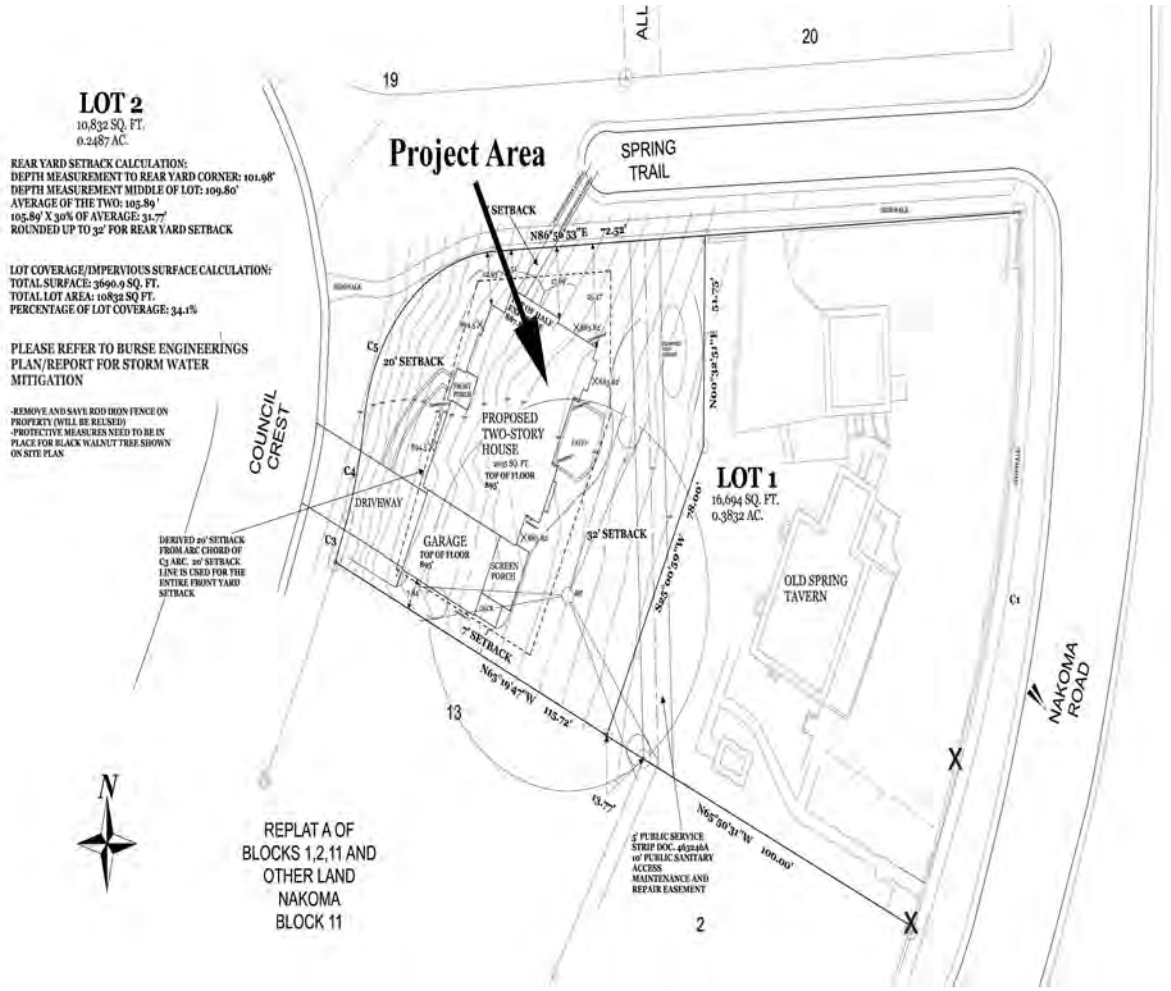


Figure 3: New House construction plans.



Figure 4: Sloping back yard (Lot 2) of the Old Spring Tavern before clearing, looking west.

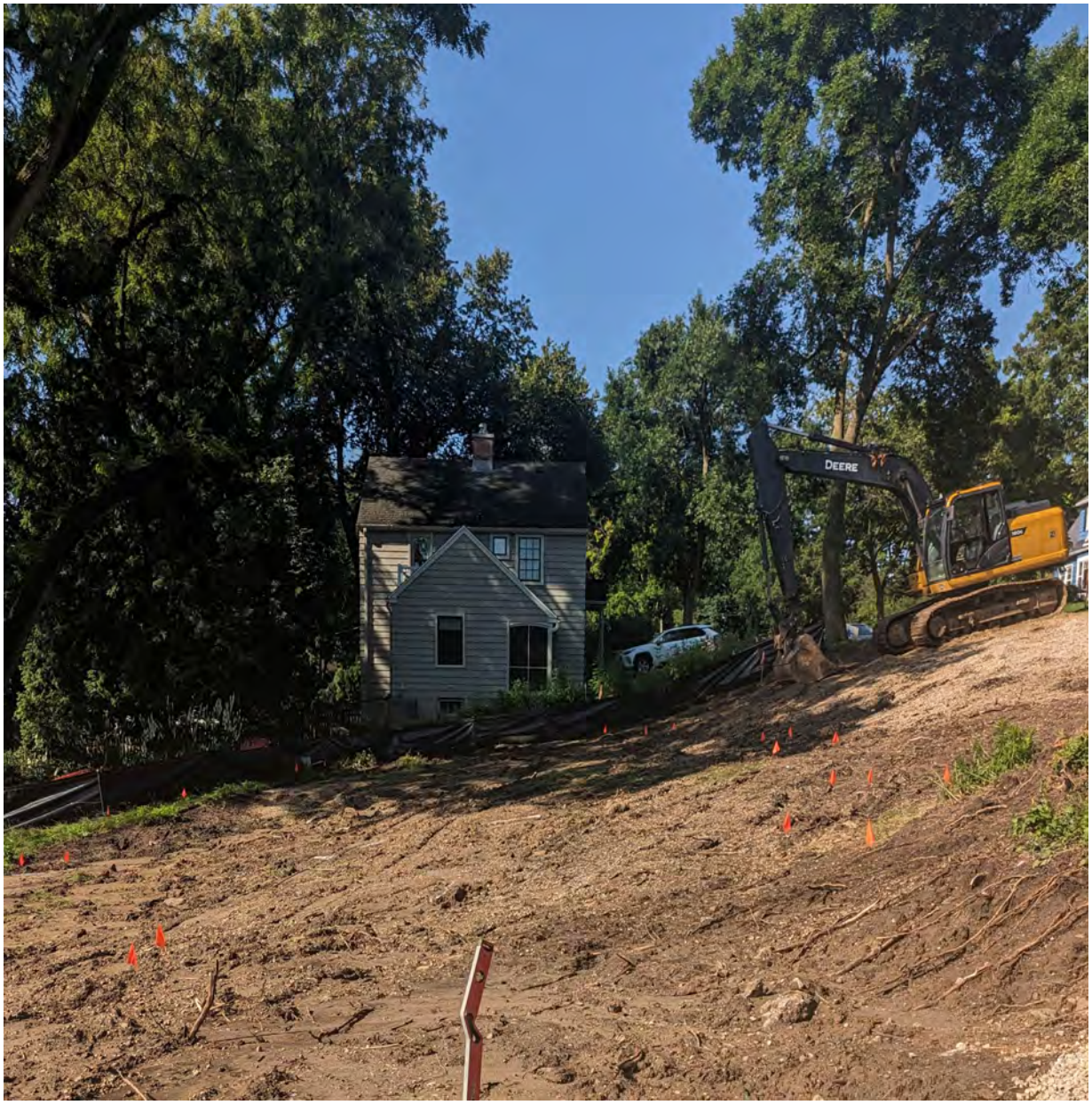


Figure 5 : Bare ground exposed during clearing of lot.



Figure 6: Utilities trench, looking south across Old Spring Rd.



Figure 7: Grading of house construction site.



Figure 8: Soils along the southwest edge of house construction.



Figure 9: Soils at the northwest part of site.

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

I. Name of Building or Site

(1) Common	(2) Historic (if applicable)
William T. Stephens house	Old Spring Tavern

II. Location

(1) Street Address	(2) Ward
3706 Nakoma Road	20th

III. Classification

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

(2) Zoning District	(3) Present Use
R-2	Home

IV. Current Owner of Property

(1) Name(s)
William T. & Florence G. Stephens

(2) Street Address	(3) Telephone Number
3706 Nakoma Road	233-2964

V. Legal Description

(1) Parcel Number	(2) Legal Description
0709-283-2014-5	Plat of replat "A" of 1,2&11 Nakoma

VI. Condition of Property

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

(2) Altered or Unaltered?	(3) Moved or Original Site?
Altered - porch added	) Original

(4) Wall Construction
Three layers of brick - 22" 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 brick for the Old Spring Tavern was made by its builder, Charles Morgan, from clay on the back slope of the property. Morgan had learned brick-making in his native New Haven, Connecticut, and he made the kiln and forms himself. Dr. William Morgan, his son, reported in a letter that the "brick was made from an excellent and durable clay .....it was exceedingly hard, free from potash salts, and were the first to be made in Madison or its near vicinity, all of the brick in town having to be hauled by rail over the old Milwaukee & Prairie du Chien road from Milwaukee." The brick is exceedingly handsome and mellow, ranging in color from pink through light orange, much brick in Madison being made from cream-colored clay. The walls are three layers of brick on the first floor, 22" thick, and two layers on the second floor.

All beams in the house are solid oak, held together with square nails, and the boards in the roof also are oak. Mrs. Stephens speculates that Morgan may have used up the oaks on the property to make the beams for the house, since the property has no oaks at this time, in an area noted for many oaks.

The large house contains no ridgepole in the roof. There is a cyclone door in the attic. Many panes of glass in the windows are the original ones, and much of the hardware. The windows on the west side of the house are not symmetrically placed. The heavy front door is the original, as is the solid walnut newel post & staircase. Built on the side of the hill, the basement has three doors opening onto ground level. The house had no fireplaces when it was built, since it was the period of Franklin stoves.

When Professor Dickson acquired the house, he did the following restoration and remodelling: he installed a complete heating system, plumbing and wiring and built two fireplaces - one in the living room and another in the former tavern area downstairs. The basement fireplace contains bricks from a milkhouse built near the spring. Dickson also replaced the worn pine floors with hardwood, and installed electric lamps resembling the old kerosene lamps once used in the inn. He added a two-story Chippendale porch to the front of the house overlooking the spring. The summer kitchen was converted into a garage, and a stone wall built around the front and sides of the property. The Dicksons furnished the inn with antiques from Monroe and other towns along the old territorial road. A window on the west side was added to the kitchen, and another lengthened to door-size entering the upper deck.

The Stephens family has maintained the earlier restorations and remodelled the kitchen, added period wallpaper and furnished the house with period antiques.

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

VII. Significance

(1) Original Owner	(2) Original Use
Charles C. Morgan	Stagecoach Inn & Tavern
(3) Architect or Builder	(4) Architectural Style
Charles Morgan & James W. Gorham	Greek Revival
(5) Date of Construction	(6) Indigenous Materials Used
1854	Brick from the site

(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. "Some Dane County Taverns", S.W.Wisconsin, Old Crawford Co., 1932
2. Architecture of the Old Northwest Territory, Rexford Newcomb Dean of Architecture, University of Illinois
3. Historical Society of Wisconsin, see pages of form.
4. Letter from Dr. William E. Morgan, son of builder.
5. Recollections of David Philumilee in 1940, who rode the stagecoach as a child with his father.
6. Letter from Mrs. James (Leah) Dickson, December, 1971.
7. Letter from Mrs. Walter Shar, November 1971.
8. Sundry newspaper articles, Wisconsin State Journal & Capital Times, Milwaukee Journal

IX. Form Prepared By:

(1) Name and Title
Jill Marx, Landmark Commission

(2) Organization Represented (if any)
Taychopera Foundation, Inc.

(3) Address	(4) Telephone Number
1212 Gilbert Rd.	271-0108

(5) Date Nomination Form Was Prepared
2/7/72

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	☒ Excellent	☐ Good	☐ Fair	☐ Deteriorated	☐ Ruins	☐ Unexposed
	(Check One)		(Check One)			
	☒ Altered	☐ Unaltered	☐ Moved	☒ Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL *(If known)* PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Old Spring Tavern is a two-story abstracted Greek Revival house built with indigenous reddish-pink brick. The original entry now faces to the rear of the house, and the original door and door framing still is in place. The house is set on the side of a hill, leaving the basement exposed on the southeast side with three openings. In plan the house is a simple rectangle with end chimneys, and the roof is a simple gable with returned eaves in the Greek Revival manner. The original appearance of the house is largely reflected in its current appearance, with the exception of a two-story wood porch which was added in the 1920's. In terms of siting, the old roadway originally passed along the northwest side of the house, now the rear yard area, and the present road to the southeast was built later.

The walls at the first-floor level of the house are twenty-two inches thick, having been built with three layers of brick. Above, the walls were continued in two layers of brick thickness. All posts and beams, and the roof planking, are solid oak. No ridgepole was used in framing the roof.

Substantial interior remodeling was done in the 1920's when two fireplaces were added (there were none originally, only Franklin stoves.) The original pine floors then were replaced with new ones of hardwood. The summer kitchen on the northeast side of the house was converted to a garage, and the aforementioned porch was added.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

☐ Pre-Columbian	☐ 16th Century	☐ 18th Century	☐ 20th Century
☐ 15th Century	☐ 17th Century	☒ 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) *(If Applicable and Known)* 1854

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

Aboriginal	☐ Education	☐ Political	☐ Urban Planning
☐ Prehistoric	☐ Engineering	☐ Religion/Philosophy	☐ Other *(Specify)*
☐ Historic	☐ Industry	☐ Science	
☐ Agriculture	☐ Invention	☐ Sculpture	
☒ Architecture	☐ Landscape Architecture	☐ Social/Humanitarian	
☐ Art	☐ Literature	☐ Theater	
☐ Commerce	☐ Military	☒ Transportation	
☐ Communications	☐ Music		
☐ Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: The Old Spring Tavern is significant both for its history and its architecture. Charles C. Morgan built the house in 1854 with brick made from clay found on a nearby slope. Morgan was a businessman who, in partnership with capitalist James W. Gorham, judged the site to be a perfect stopping place on the old Madison-Monroe stagecoach road which led to southwestern Wisconsin's lead mining area. The site's major asset was a large spring behind the house (in its original siting) which served to water horses and oxen. In 1860 Morgan sold the inn and sixty acres to Gorham for $9,000 in gold, and it became known as "Gorham's Hotel." Soon thereafter, Gorham joined the Union cause in the Civil War and leased the inn. After the war he returned and continued "Gorham's Hotel" until 1895, when he closed the business and used the building as a private residence. Originally, the old stage road passed to the northwest of the house in what is now its rear yard, and the current Nakoma Road was built later between the house and the spring, which is now a duck pond draining into Lake Wingra.

In 1925 the house was sold by the Gorham family to Prof. James G. Dickson, who undertook major interior remodeling and added a two-story Chippendale porch on what is now the front facade of the house. The Dickson family also built a stone wall on the property along Nakoma Road. Mrs. Dickson recently recalled that this wall was designed by and built under the supervision of Frank Lloyd Wright. In 1929 the John Bell Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution placed on the wall a plaque which reads, "Old Spring Tavern. Stage Coach Station On Road To Early Lead Mines. Home of Gorham Family 1860 - 1922. Built 1854."

Architecturally, the house is an excellent local example of the Greek Revival style, examples of which are very rare in the City of Madison. Its pinkish brick also is rare locally, most masonry houses in Madison having been built with buff sandstone or cream-colored brick.

On March 20, 1972, the Old Spring Tavern was designated a landmark by the City of Madison Landmarks Commission.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (4)

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

It is a tribute to the architectural importance of the Old Spring Tavern that it is featured in Rexford Newcomb's book, Architecture of the Old Northwest Territory, as a prime example of a Greek Revival Inn in Wisconsin.

The tavern, or Gorham's Hotel, was built in 1854 by Charles E. Morgan, a prominent businessman. In a partnership venture with James W. Gorham, (who supplied capital for brick-making equipment & contributed meals for overnight guests), Morgan judged the property to be a perfect stopping-place between the lead-mining district of SW Wis, and the growing capitol, Madison. Its supreme asset was a great spring across the road,(now a duck pond) to water horses and oxen. Indians must have thought the spring a place of particular significance, because six prehistoric mounds were found on the property, each containing a skeleton & artifacts, including copper knives. The artifacts went to the State Historical collection in the first capitol building, & perished in its fire. In historic times the Winnebagos had a village on the ridge behind the tavern, and a trail ran through the woods on the slope of the hill.

In 1860 Morgan sold the inn & 60 surrounding acres to Gorham for $9000 in gold. Soon afterward, Gorham leased the inn & left Wisconsin to serve the Union Army in the First Regiment of the Berdan Sharp Shooters. He returned later & maintained "Gorhams Hotel" until 1895, when the services of the inn were discontinued & the Gorham family took up residence in it until 1922. The inn was a rendezvous of mail carriers & stage drivers on the pioneer Madison-Monroe Rd., one of 18 territorial mail routes laid out when Madison was made territorial capitol in 1836. This road passed in what now is the back of the house, that being the original front. Although the tavern register has been lost, it is claimed that at least three presidents stopped there while travelling. Governors & legislators drove out to the inn for oyster suppers, and soldiers from Camp Randall attended dances there. Later university students had parties there. Mrs. Philip La Follette recalled that her husband & Senator Robert La Follette had stopped at the Spring Tavern many times when they hauled loads of wheat from Primrose to Madison to sample "Grandma" Gorham's coffee & pastries.

In 1925 the Old Spring Tavern was purchased from the Gorham family by Professor James G. Dickson, an internationally-known plant pathologist. The Dickson family did major restoration to the interior of the house & on the exterior added the Chippendale porch on the front and the stone wall around the front & sides of the house. In a letter to Mrs. Stephens, Mrs. Dickson stated, "Frank Lloyd Wright & his stone mason built the stone wall around the place, Frank Lloyd as boss, I can still see him with his old brown leather britches, giving his ideas & council, Dr. D. always listened to him too." The wall is certainly recognizeable as Wright's design with its strong horizontal stress & projection of random stones. On completion of the restoration, the John Bell chapter of the DAR marked the house with a plaque placed on the stone wall in 1929.

The Dickson family sold the house to the William T. Stephens family in 1939, & they reside in it today. They have continued restoration, put period wallpapers on the walls, landscaped it tastefully & furnished it with antiques. During World War II Mrs. Stephens maintained a Red Cross workroom in her home, creating more than 2000 garments for soldiers in 7000 hours of work.