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

I. Name of Building or Site

(1) Common
Wayne Ramsay house

(2) Historic (if applicable)
James Bowen house

II. Location

(1) Street Address
302 South Mills St.

(2) Ward

III. Classification

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

(2) Zoning District

(3) Present Use
Rooming house

IV. Current Owner of Property

(1) Name(s)
James Korb

(2) Street Address
1244 Sherman Ave.

(3) Telephone Number
255-3020

V. Legal Description

(1) Parcel Number
0709-224-3206-1

(2) Legal Description
Bowens Addition, Lot 5 and the North 10 feet of Lot 6, Block 13.

VI. Condition of Property

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

(2) Altered or Unaltered?
Slightly altered

(3) Moved or Original Site?
Original Site

(4) Wall Construction
Sandstone on main building, sandstone & frame on brick foundation on back wing.

(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 Bowen home is built of buff sandstone quarried from a site located near the present location of Madison General Hospital. Cut large and dressed and squared on all sides, the stones were coursed in a regular ashlar pattern, alternating with the course above and below it. The stone work can be favorably compared to the best of its kind in Wisconsin.

The original house was a superb example of a wellproportioned square stone farmhouse in abstracted Greek Revival style. It has a hipped roof, stone lintels over the windows, and simple classic ornamentation on both the exterior and interior, including Ionic columns supporting the front porch. The rear wing of the house combines stone and frame construction on a brick foundation, and carried forth the classic detail, including dentils and fireplaces with Greek Revival ornamentation.

The Bowen house was built in 1846, and remodelled in 1895 by Wayne Ramsay, its owner at the time. The earliest photo we have of the house was taken after this remodelling was accomplished, and we can only assume that the Victorian cupola was added at that time. This photo also shows an intricate fretworked ornamental railing on the porch, which at that time extended to the south side of the house and may also have been wrapped around the north side of the house. We also see an excellently designed stable to the rear and south side of the house, with a hipped roof, cupola and entablature under the eaves which duplicate the lines of the house.

In 1923, the house was purchased bya Lutheran organization with the idea of making it the nucleus of a hospital, and some remodelling was done. We can assume that the side porch was taken off at that time and the stable razed, althoughthe plans to convert the house to hospital quarters did not materialize. Not until the house was sold in 1970 was it converted into apartments. A modern front door now replacesthe original, and the stairways, and halls have been altered. Kitchenettes have been installed in the apartments.

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

VII. Significance

(1) Original Owner	(2) Original Use
Seth Bergin	Farmhouse
(3) Architect or Builder	(4) Architectural Style
Not known	Greek Revival
(5) Date of Construction	(6) Indigenous Materials Used
1846	Buff 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. Article Capital Times, May 25, 1947, Alexius Bass
2. Wisconsin Necrology, v.33, p. 105
3. Article State Journal, August 27, 1881
4. History of Dane Co., p. 957-958
5. Letter from Wayne Ramsay to Jill Marx, January 20, 1972
6. Wisconsin Necrology, V. 3, p. 461.
7. Historic Wisconsin Buildings, Richard W. Perrin
8. The Architecture of Wisconsin, Richard W. Perrin

IX. Form Prepared By:

(1) Name and Title
Jill Marx, Member of Madison 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
March 14, 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 James Bowen house was built by Seth Bergin in 1846, one of the earliest dates we have for a stone house in Madison, the majority dating back to the 1850's. Originally the house stood alone ona sixty-acre tract of land. Another large farm stood to the west. Some of the land was ideal for pasture and was rented out for that purpose.

Dr. James Bowen, who had come to Madison from Connecticut in 1854, bought the house and land from Bergin in 1859. James Barton Bowen was Madison's first homeopathic physician, and had an enormous following in Madison and other parts of the state. He was considered one of our most prominent citizens, and was the model of the self-made man. Bowen started working sixteen hours a day in a cotton mill at age eleven. At 19 he rented his own mill in Stafford, Connecticut. He then bought several mills, made a fortune, and through the failure of mercantile agents in New York lost it all. He started medical school at Auburn, bought another mill, made thirty thousand dollars, and continued medical school. He then lost this fortune, and finally graduated from Central College as an M.D. He practiced four years in Providence, Rhode Island, and then moved to Madison. He was a charter member of Madison's Masonic Hiram Lodge #50, and in 1871 became mayor of Madison on the Republican ticket, which at the time was not the leading political party. When Bowen died in 1881, his son-in-law, Wayne Ramway, inherited the house. Ramsay was a cashier of the First National Bank, and died in 1914, willing the house to his son, J.B. Ramsay. The fourth owner was another Wayne Ramsay, grandson of the first Wayne Ramsay, and president of the Hankscraft Corp. in Reedsburg, Wisconsin. In recent years the house was owned by the Fischer family and then sold to James Korb in 1870. During the years when the house was owned by the first Wayne Ramsay, the house was a showplace and through the reminiscences of the granddaughter of Ramsay's coachman, we learn that the family had marital ties with Italian nobility, and that there was a great flurry of comings and goings and lavish entertaining. This first Ramsay remodelled the house in 1895 to have it in readiness for a Thanksgiving family reunion in 1896.

The architectural significance of the house lies in the fact that it is a prime example of some of the most perfect stonework to be found in the United States, and is one of a vanishing number of such stone houses in Madison.