

ROCK ISLAND PRESERVATION COMMISSION

NOMINATION FOR
LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Case # 90-1

Date 6/25/90

Time 1:05 P.M.

Common Street Address of Property: 1250 21st Avenue, Rock Island, IL 61201

Name and Address of Property Owner: Kim and Tim Bolyard, 1250 21st Avenue,
Rock Island, IL 61201

Please attach a simple statement setting forth the reasons for requesting designation. Please refer to the criteria listed on the reverse side. (These are excerpted from the Rock Island Preservation Ordinance.)

Name(s) and Address(es) of Applicant(s):

Jaen Sturgis
Signature

Rock Island Preservation Society
Jaen Sturgis, Landmarks Committee Chair
Name

128 West 14th Street, Davenport, IA
Address 52803

326-7732 (days) 324-6628 (eves.)
Telephone

1. Legal description of property (available from abstract or County Recorder of Deeds office).
2. Map indicating location of property proposed for designation (assistance available from Planning Division).
3. Recent photograph (copies of old photographs or drawings may also be included).
4. Indicate whether or not the owner is aware of the proposed designation. Owners are aware of nomination and are highly in favor of it.

The Rock Island Preservation Society proudly nominates the home at 1250 21st Avenue as worthy of recognition as a local landmark. The criteria used to determine this include the significance of the architectural style -- Italianate, the association of people of importance in the community from its initial to present owners, and its prominent location easily identifiable by native Rock Islanders and Quad Citizens alike.

This hipped-roof Italianate successfully conveys the essence of the most common subtype of Italianate homes. The cornice line displays paired and ornate brackets. There is a line of demarcation directly below the brackets separating the cornice area from the body of the structure. The long, hooded windows feature a keystone, a common Italianate characteristic. The house is 5 bays in width. Originally, a partial length porch -- covering about two-thirds of the facade -- was intact and the present owners are anticipating replication with plans for total replacement within the next few years. The front door was originally rounded glazed glass in each of two arched, adjoining windows. It, too, is on the Bolyard's list of improvements to make this Italianate stand out as one of the most historically accurate in the city.

A long list of prominent citizens have resided in the sumptuous residence at 1250 21st Avenue. The original owner of the house, O. J. Dimick, had it built in 1872 at a cost of \$8,000 -- a substantial sum in the post Civil War years. Dimick was in the horse racing business and invested heavily in real estate. After he left Rock Island in the early to mid-1880's, he owned property in the elegant Gold Coast area of Chicago as well as in the prosperous commercial district of Michigan Avenue; however, his children remained in Rock Island. Particularly his son, Lucius, became quite a notorious character. Leading the life of a roue, his wife caught him with one of Rock Island's most famous Madams, Maude Terry, and upon climbing through the window where they were cavorting shot her husband. to death. O.J. came from Chicago to post the \$5,000 bond to have his daughter-in-law released from jail. In addition, two of O.J.'s children died during a dyptheria epidemic in the late 1870s. Their tombstone is easily located at Chippiannock Cemetery today as the one with the dog. Apparently, the dog went to the cemetery daily to view the children's grave after their death. When the dog died, O.J. had the tombstone erected emulating the dog, the protector of his two stricken children.

About 1885 O. J. Dimick sold the house to Thomas Sharp Silvis. Silvis was the Rock Island County sheriff and died in 1896 when his heirs obtained the home. It is believed that the city of Silvis was named after this Silvis' son, Rick S. Silvis.

While the Silvis heirs held the house, they rented it to the Union Mission, an orphanage now called Bethany Home, for the sum of \$30 a month. Occupying the property from 1903 to 1905, they left because delivery people -- coal, ice, milk, etc. -- could not easily access the house during muddy periods in the spring or

icy times in the winter. Therefore, they felt it best to find a more centralized location. Even at the century's turn, the home was still considered in the country.

In about 1910 an older couple purchased the house: Mr. and Mrs. Christian Fredrick Gaetjer. He was the Superintendent of Parks. In about 1920 they determined the house was too big and they built the house two doors down the street at 1226 21st Avenue. Interestingly, although Gaetjer was of some means, he never drove a car and residents from the period remember him driving a buggy.

From 1920 to 1924, McCabe's manager Henry Sudlow and family resided in the home. Sudlow's Aunt, Phebe Sudlow, earlier had become the first woman superintendent of schools in the United States; the present Sudlow Jr. High School in Davenport, IA is named in her honor. Struggling to maintain the steep mortgage payments on such a large and opulent house, the Sudlow's left the property in 1924.

Due to his position as Master in Chancery, James Murphy was aware that the Sudlow's were in financial hot water and he acquired the home in 1924 for the mortgage balance. Both of Murphy's sons, Hayes and James, became lawyers.

During the 1930's, the house changed hands again and Earl and Ruth Aubrey became its new owner. Mr. Aubrey was manager of the Como Hotel and his wife was State Republican Chairwoman while their son became a professor at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. It was during this era that the home had its pillared porch, recently removed, added when Gone With the Wind was in its hey day.

In the 1950's once again the house was sold and Fred and Norma Patton purchased it. Patton was a lawyer and later a judge and resided in the home about 30 years, far longer than any of its previous occupants.

1987 found Kim Bolyard and daughter Tricia eyeing this sumptuous Italianate. A year later Kim and her husband Tim purchased it. Bolyard, an engineer at the Arsenal, and his wife have definitive and historically accurate restoration/renovation plans for their home including the replication of the original porch and extensive landscaping indigenous to the house's period. Included in this plan is the saving of the huge 200 year old Sycamore tree in their front yard, believed to be the oldest tree of this type in the state. It has been said that Chief Black Hawk loved to come to this area, one full of refreshing springs, to view the mighty river and find tranquility and peace.

Obviously, the O. J. Dimick house is already a landmark in Rock Island history. Its view is breathtaking, particularly from the oculus attic windows where one can view the mighty Mississippi as it bends. Its hillside location provided a sense of peace and tranquility for the Indians of yesterday and makes it a

recognizable location for natives and visitors to Rock Island.

From its architectural greatness as an indigenous example of Italianate vernacular architecture to its quaint and interesting inhabitants over the past 118 years coupled with a distinguishing and breathtaking location, the Rock Island Preservation Society requests official local Landmark designation for the home built for entrepreneur O. J. Dimick and presently owned by Tim and Kim Bolyard.