



Preservation Commission Meeting Agenda
September 25, 2024 - 5:30 PM
Lower Level Conference Room (Basement), City Hall
1528 Third Avenue, Rock Island, IL

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

Commissioners: Jeff Dismer, Addison Kimmel, Deb Kuntzi, Diane Oestreich, Bruce Peterson, Mark Schwiebert, Alan Carmen, Zach Campbell, Estlin Feigley

3. Public Comment

4. Minutes

- a. Approval of the August 28, 2024 Meeting Minutes
Motion: Move to approve the August 28, 2024 Meeting Minutes
VV Voice vote is needed.

5. Public Hearing

- a. Public Hearing 2024-07: Landmark Application for the Smyth-Jackson House at 824 20th Street
Motion: Move to approve the application and designate the Smyth-Jackson House at 824 20th Street a local landmark subject to the Preservation Ordinance.
RC Roll Call vote is needed.

6. Other Business/New Business

- a. Resolution on the Centennial Bridge
Motion: Move to adopt the resolution.
RC Roll Call vote is needed.

- b. Discussion on the Centennial Bridge Project

7. Adjourn

This agenda may be obtained in accessible formats by qualified persons with a disability by making appropriate arrangements from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, by contacting the City Clerk's Office at (309) 732-2010 or visiting in person at: 1528 Third Avenue, Rock Island, IL 61201.

Rock Island Historic Preservation Commission Minutes

Lower Level Conference Room (Basement), City Hall

1528 3rd Avenue

August 28, 2024

5:30 PM



Voting Members Present	Jeff Dimer Addison Kimmel Diane Oestreich Bruce Peterson Alan Carmen Zach Campbell Estlin Fiegley
Voting Members Absent	Deb Kuntzi Mark Schwiebert
Staff Present	Eunice Amissah-Mensah Tanner Osing
Others Present	Ald. Dylan Parker Gregg Johnson, Illinois State Representative Michael Halpin, Illinois State Senator

Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Oestreich called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM and read the roll call.

Public Comment

No general comments were made, so the meeting continued.

Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes

Carmen moved to approve the special meeting minutes for June 20, 2024. Kimmel seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a vote of 6 to 0.

Dimer moved to approve the meeting minutes for July 31, 2024. Carmen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a vote of 6 to 0.

Other Business/ New Business

Discussion on the Centennial Bridge with Illinois State Senator, Michael Halpin and Illinois State Representative, Gregg Johnson

Alderman Dylan Parker thanked Halpin and Johnson for being present at the meeting. He stated the matter of the Centennial Bridge has been brought up by the Commission and that the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is exploring if the bridge needs to be replaced. He called on the Commission to share their position on the Centennial Bridge project.

Chair Oestreich spoke on behalf of the Commission reiterating the resolution made by the Commission to maintain the Centennial Bridge for its economic, iconic and historic

importance. She added that the bridge has also been failed to be maintained by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

Commissioner Carmen added that the lack of maintenance of the Centennial Bridge has necessitated its deterioration. He stated that the bridge is important for both Iowa and Illinois communities. He added that the Commission has taken its stance and would appreciate further insight from the project.

Ald. Parker stated that IDOT will conduct an analysis on the present condition of the bridge and alternatives on whether or not to pursue changes to the bridge. Senator Halpin concurred with Ald. Parker's statement. He added that IDOT understands that the bridge needs repairs and maintenance. He added that IDOT received \$7 million for coating the bridge but in consultation with Iowa DOT, a decision was made to put the money towards a study for what replacement or repair options were available.

Chair Oestreich asked if there is a firm already contracted for the engineering study. Senator Halpin stated it would be given to a consultant to handle the study. Osing stated that its his understanding that a contract is being negotiated with Parsons.

Further discussion was had on the bridge project including its economic impact and different ways for people to get engaged with the issue. It was suggested that the Illinois Department of Transportation, local state elected officials, and Rock Island Downtown Alliance receive the resolution drafted by the Commission regarding their stance on the replacement of the Centennial Bridge. Ald. Parker also suggested that Jack Cullen, Executive Director of Downtown Alliance, be invited to the Commission meeting to have a discussion on the project and its potential effects on businesses in the downtown area.

Commissioner agreed to draft a written resolution and discussed other next steps.

Other Business

Osing provided information regarding a CBDG-funded project at the Downtown Library.

Osing also informed the commissioner that staff plan on evaluating the Heritage Resources Plan and discuss next steps for implementation with the Commission.

Adjournment

Chair Oestreich called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Campbell moved to adjourn the meeting. Kimmel seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:36 PM.

Minutes submitted by Eunice Amisah-Mensah.

Memorandum



To: Rock Island Preservation Commission
From: Eunice Amissah-Mensah, Urban Planner, Tanner Osing, Planning & Zoning Manager
Subject: Public Hearing 2024-07: Landmark Application for the Smyth-Jackson House at 824 20th Street
Motion: Move to approve the application and designate the Smyth-Jackson House at 824 20th Street a local landmark subject to the Preservation Ordinance.
RC Roll Call vote is needed.
Date: September 25, 2024

Introduction and Background Information:

An application to designate the Smyth-Jackson House at 824 20th Street was submitted by Diane Oestreich to the Rock Island Historic Preservation Commission. The house is an example of the Italian Villa style with an original tower rather than a later addition. The house is also a high-style Italianate made of frame, rather than the locally common brick. Additional architectural details are explained in the nomination.

The applicant argues that the building should be designated a landmark under criteria 2, 3 and 5 described in the Preservation Ordinance as a structure associated with an important person, a distinguished architectural style, and a unique location and physical characteristics. The application provides more detail on those points.

The Preliminary Determination Subcommittee met on August 15th, 2024 and reviewed the application. They determined that the application is complete and further recommended that the Preservation Commission vote to approve the application, thus designating the Smyth-Jackson House a landmark.

Previous Council Action (if any):

NA

Budget Impact:

NA

Additional Information as applicable (i.e. provide alternative options, community or staff input, staffing impact; resident impact; etc.):

NA

Council Goal (if applicable):

NA

Recommendation:

The Community Development Department recommends that the Preservation Commission approve the landmark application and designate the Smyth-Jackson House at 824 20th Street a locally designated landmark property subject to the Rock Island Preservation Ordinance.

Submitted by: Eunice Amissah-Mensah, Urban Planner

Approved by:



Rock Island Preservation Commission
Rock Island Landmark Application

For office use only:
Case #
Date:
Time:

Address of Nominated Property: 824 20th Street, Rock Island, IL 61201

Name and Address of Property Owner: Jill Potratz, Lowell Schneider

824 20th Street, Rock Island IL 61201

Is Owner Aware of Proposed Designation: XX Yes No

For more information, please refer to Section 8 of the Rock Island Preservation Ordinance (hard copy) or Section 11-111 in the Rock Island Code of Ordinances (www.rigov.org).

Please attach a short report setting forth the reasons for requesting designation. A list of details you should attempt to provide in the report is available at Rock Island City Hall or on the city's web site at www.rigov.org. This web site also contains research resources.

Please circle the criteria under which you are nominating this structure. At least one must be marked, although multiple criteria are encouraged. Supporting documentation for each criterion must be provided in the report.

- 1. Significant value as part of the heritage of the nation, state or community.
X 2. Associated with an important person or event in national, state or local history.
X 3. Representative of an architectural and/or landscape type, which exemplifies a period, style, craftsmanship, method of construction or use of local materials, and retains a high degree of integrity.
4. Notable work of a master builder, designer, architect or artist.
X 5. Identifiable as a familiar visual feature in the community, owing to its unique location or physical characteristics.
6. Its character as a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure such as a barn, gas station, or other commercial structure with a high level of integrity or architectural significance.
7. Area that has yielded or is likely to yield information important to history or prehistory.

Please contact city staff for additional assistance.

Please also attach the following:

- 1) Legal description of property (available from abstract or Rock Island County Recorder of Deeds office). Most recently filed deed must be attached.
2) One photograph of each elevation (side) of the property being nominated. Copies of old photographs or drawings may also be included.
3) Sources used to write the report.

Applicant Information:

Name (Please print) Diane Oestreich Signature:

Organization:

Address: 816 22nd Street, Rock Island IL Telephone: 309 788-1845

E-mail: Diane61201@gmail.com

Rock Solid. Rock Island.

Return application to address on this letterhead.



Planning & Redevelopment Division
Community & Economic Development Department
City of Rock Island

1528 3rd Avenue
Rock Island, IL 61201
(309)733-3900 phone / (309)733-3900 fax
planning@rigov.org
www.rigov.org

Nomination Criteria & Significance

The Smyth-Jackson House is worthy of landmark designation based on three criteria in the Rock Island Preservation Ordinance.

Criterion 2: Associated with an important person or event in national, state, or local history.

William Jackson, the second and longest term owner was an attorney and leader in his community of Rock Island. He was called the "Father of Rock Island Parks."

Criterion 3. Representative of an architectural and/or landscape type, which exemplifies a period, style, craftsmanship, method of construction or use of local materials and retains a high degree of integrity.

The Italian Villa Style home is one of only two in Rock Island, and is unique in that the tower is original, rather than a later addition. It is also rare in that it is a high-style Italianate made of frame, rather than the locally more common, for the era, brick.

Criterion 5: Identifiable as an established and familiar visual feature in the community owing to its unique location or physical characteristics.

This house and its 20th Street neighbors are contributing structures in the National Register listing of the Broadway Historic District . Moreover there are several landmarks in the 700-800 blocks of 20th Street as well as several others which would easily qualify for Landmark status. These two blocks are one of the most popular for walking tours as well. It is important both to the integrity of the Historic District and to the city of Rock Island as well.

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Legal Description: (from Rock Island County Assessment website)

THE SOUTH 96 FEET OF OUT LOT 3 EXCEPT THE SOUTH 2.5 FEET OF THE EAST 130 FEET IN J W SPENCERS 3RD ADDITION. SHEET 15

Although the original abstract of property is not available, it is known that, until the Black Hawk Wars, when the previous owners, Indians, were ousted from their lands, it was occupied by the Sauk (village on Rock River) and Mesquakie (Fox; village in what is downtown Rock Island). In 1836, the federal government took over the land and one of the early landowners in this area was John Spencer. He purchased a great deal of land, including much of what is now downtown Rock Island.

Spencer was a pioneer settler and his own log cabin occupied the block that now holds the Rosenfield House and Coventry apartments, just north of 7th Avenue. Over the years, he subdivided lots and sold them. And he donated land, including a square block downtown for churches, which later became Spencer Square and now holds the Federal Building and post office.

The first owner of this subdivided 2-acre lot, in 1867, was Edwin H. Smyth and his wife Anna. The Smyths had come to Rock Island from Oneida, NY in 1854. Mr. Smyth was a clothier and merchant tailor. Although Edwin spelled his last name with a “y”, his parents, grandparents, and siblings were named simply “Smith.” Smyth may have looked better on a clothing label. The name sometimes appears with a terminal “e.”

Mr. Smyth sold off some lots along 8th Avenue, but maintained a large parcel of land for his homestead. In 1868, they built this house. Early in 1873 he sold his business and made plans to move to California because of Anna’s failing health as well as a baby daughter’s death in 1868. (REFs 1,2)

On April 26, 1873, the home was purchased by William Jackson who resided there until his death in 1925. REF 3. Interestingly, on the very same day, Jackson’s law partner, Edward Sweeney purchased an 80 foot lot from E.H. Smyth immediately north of the Smyth home and built a large brick home on that site the following year, 1874. That house is 816 20th Street, a Rock Island Landmark.

William Jackson died in 1925 at age 91 and the house began a long, slow decline. By 1930, his home was owned by Nettie Dindinger, a widow, who ran a lodging house there. In 1940 and subsequently, City Directories show four apartments with no owner present. Sometime after the 1940s, the tower and porches were removed and the house covered in artificial siding. In 2007, after a long vacancy and subsequent deterioration, it was purchased by next door neighbors, Bryan Pattschull and David Cordes, who began the long slow process of restoration, inside and out.

They sold it in 2022 to the current owners, who soon constructed a long front driveway (there is no alley access) and a new garage, complete with solar panels.

William H. Jackson

(Following is from directly from Jackson's obit, REF 4.) "Born in 1834 in Liverpool, England, Mr. Jackson was educated at an Episcopal school there and later worked as a grocer's apprentice. But at age 17, he had larger dreams and, with his mother, set out in 1853 to make his fortune in America. They arrived in New York City where his sister and her husband had come a year earlier. Soon thereafter, the entire family headed out west to Rock Island County, where they took up residence in Moline.

"William worked at John Deere's plow factory, and began studying law with Moline attorney H. L. Smith. He was admitted to the bar in 1860, just a year after his mother had died and two years after he became an American citizen. His first law practice was in partnership with James Chapman in Moline. In 1862, he moved to Rock Island where he quickly formed a law partnership with Edward Sweeney. Sweeney had come to Rock Island in 1851 as a school principal, but, like Jackson, soon entered the study of law. He, too, was admitted to the bar in 1860.



"Under the name Jackson & Sweeney and later Jackson, Sweeney & Walker, Jackson practiced law until leaving the partnership in 1883, and, from that point, practicing alone. In 1865 the well established young lawyer married teacher Jennie Sammis, who was then 25 years old. They had two daughters. Carrie was born in 1866 and Hattie came four years later.....

"It is considered doubtful if any attorney in western Illinois has taken part in more cases than had Mr. Jackson.

"In his latter years he was in the court frequently and actively as the legal representative of traction corporations such as the Tri-City Railway company and the Rock Island Lines. As a matter of fact, Mr. Jackson had been identified with some of the most famous proceedings in the history of Rock Island county courts, both civil and criminal. Among the more important of these was the long series of injunctions in Whiteside and Henry counties, affecting the removal of the head offices of the Modern Woodmen of America from Fulton to Rock Island. As associate counsel for the order, he was largely responsible for the vindication of the will of the order to transfer its headquarters to this city. To do so, he found it necessary to procure special legislation and to triumph in a series of litigation that taxed some of the country's best legal minds.

"When Mr. Jackson came to Rock Island from Moline in 1862, he opened a law office, and in January, 1864, he formed a partnership with E.D. Sweeney and afterward with Charles L. Walker. In the first instance the firm name was Sweeney & Jackson, afterward Sweeney, Jackson & Walker. This partnership continued until 1883, when it was dissolved, and Mr. Jackson retired on account of illness.

"The two years of 1883 and 1884 constitute the only interval between 1860 and 1925 in which he was not in continual practice as a lawyer at the bar of this county. In 1885 he resumed his practice, and four years later he went into partnership with E.W. Hurst, under the firm name of Jackson & Hurst. This continued until 1903, when the firm was enlarged by the admission of John T. Stafford and Elmore H. Stafford, later being known as Jackson, Hurst & Stafford. That firm is now Stafford, Schoede & Stafford, although for several years Mr. Jackson has been associated with his grandson, William P. Barth, as the firm of Jackson & Barth.

William H. Jackson (continued)

“Held Public Office

An appointment by President Grant in 1872 placed him in the office of postmaster of Rock Island, which office he held until 1876. In February, 1897, he was appointed by Governor John R. Tanner member of the board of managers of the Illinois state reformatory at Pontiac, and he held this office until March, 1901. During his days of activity, Mr. Jackson declined such places of preferment at the hand of his party as the mayoralty, and the state senate, and although frequently discussed in connection with the congressional nomination of the Republican party, he never gave encouragement to the suggestion. He chose to devote his spare time to civic endeavor other than in governmental and legislative posts, and his refusal to accept them left him free to make the remarkable record of achievement that is his in the record of the city's park development. He had always been a Republican in politics, his first presidential vote being for Fremont and Dayton. His religious association had always been with the Methodist church. In England he was in the Wesleyan Methodist body, and in the United States he was identified with the Methodist Episcopal church, being a church member for 75 years.

“At the first call to arms in the Civil war, Mr. Jackson joined the first military company that was organized in Moline under President Lincoln's first proclamation, in 1861, for 75,000 men. The company was not accepted, the state quota being filled, and he did not enlist again. Through the decades of his residence in Rock Island Mr. Jackson had been tireless in his efforts for the common good through improving in every way the city's park system. That it has come to be as fine a system as that of the parks of any American city of Rock Island's size, while not due entirely to his efforts, is nevertheless in great part attributable to the spirit he had shown and the energy he had expended to make it so.

“Pushed Park Work

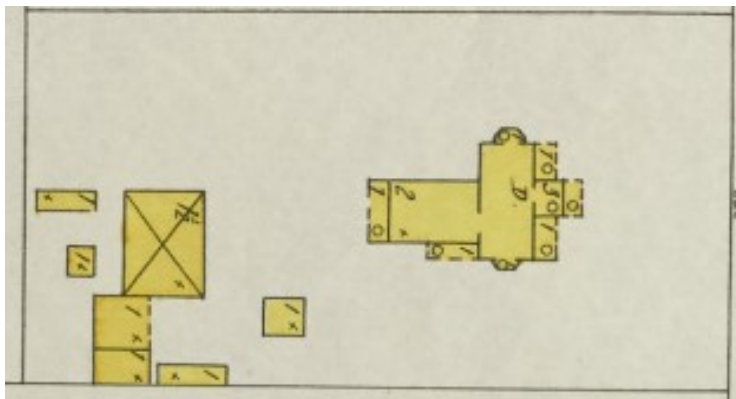
His title, "Father of the Rock Island Park System," refers to the fact that he was the head of the original Citizens' Improvement association. As such he inaugurated the movement for park development. Through the furthering of the plans he proposed, in which project he labored indefatigably, Spencer square and Garnsey square were transformed from bogs, neglected and avoided, into garden spots fitted with handsome accessories and adorned with turf, flowers, shrubs, and trees. He alone raised \$6000 for the improvement of Spencer square, and obtained practically all of the features that distinguish it. He gave the incentive for what was done in a similar way for Garnsey square. As president of the park board, which office he held until his death, and in cooperation with other public spirited citizens, he raised most of the \$16,000 which was contributed for the beautification of Long View park. The improvements were made under his immediate direction, and for all time the name of Jackson will be associated with the park system of Rock Island.”

Architecture

This high styled Italian Villa may have been designed by local architect Isaac Holmes, who is known to have designed several local front gable Italianates. However there is no documentation to prove this speculation. The house first appears on Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps in 1892. Although built much earlier, the 1886 Sanborn maps did not go this far into the edges of the city. This 1892 shows a frame house with a three-story tower in front with one-story open porches surrounding the tower. There were multiple outbuildings, most small, but with a larger two story one denoted as a stable by the "X" on the top.



Fig. 1. 1892 Sanborn

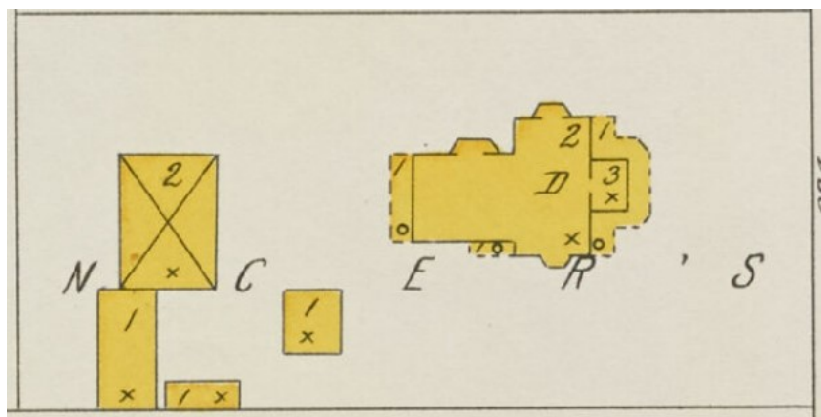


The 1898 Map is identical except for depicting a larger single story porch on the south side.

Fig. 2. 1898 Sanborn Map

By 1906, two of the tiny outbuildings had disappeared and the front porch is shown as continuous. Whether this means there was a change in the porch or just a correction in the drawing is not known.

Fig.3. 1906 Sanborn Map



Architecture (continued)

Sometime—probably during the 1950s or 1960s—the house was mutilated by removing the upper portion of the front tower and the front porches. The remaining outbuildings were also removed. It was then covered in vinyl siding. Finally, after it was vacant and nothing was happening to it except continuing deterioration, neighbors Patschull and Cordes decided to purchase it for restoration.

Since it was unknown what lay under the new siding, a first project was a Great Unveiling. Enlisting Broadway neighbors in 2008, the house was Unveiled. That was the easy part. After Unveiling, the true scope of exterior work was revealed. And that's not considering the effort needed to restore the abused interior.



Fig. 4. Above, Before Unveiling



Fig. 5, Right, During Unveiling



Fig.6, Left, After Unveiling

Architecture (continued)

Since the original tower was a defining feature of this Italian Villa House, Cordes and Patschull decided to recreate it. But what did it look like? At the time they began their restoration/renovation, there were no photos of the house with a tower, only a line drawing from an 1888 book, *Rock Island Illustrated*.

After the tower was rebuilt, an undated photo taken by John Hauberg in 1940s was discovered when it was donated to Augustana College by his descendants. It shows the tower had already been modified by window shortening and the porch had indeed been enlarged slightly and wrapped around the tower.

The first story bay window on the south had been extended to the second story.

Finials atop the gable peaks were missing as well. It is extremely rare that such finials or any rooftop ornamentations survive a reroofing.



Fig. 7. 1888 Illustration



Fig. 8. 1940s Photo by John H. Hauberg

The tower was rebuilt on the ground to precise measurements, then lifted to its truncated base with a large crane. The process can be seen on YouTube. [youtube.com/watch?v=xFEy8w0pQJ4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFEy8w0pQJ4)

Architecture (Continued)

The central tower defines the style as Italian Villa. The tower is more commonly tucked into the corner of an L-shaped building. REF 5 There is only one other Italian Villa in Rock Island, the Landmarked Philemon Libby and Catherine Mitchell House at 1131 2nd Avenue. However that tower is documented as being added onto the original simple shallow-hipped roof Italianate. The tower on the Smyth-Jackson House is clearly original. It contains the home's main staircase—a walnut spiral.

The front façade of the house is symmetrical. A single front door with a sidelight may not be original, but it is very old. The glazing in both the door and sidelight have an exceptionally wide bevel at the edge. The front entry is topped by a large semi-circular transom. Front windows are paired with the first story having a double height lower sash surmounted by a shorter upper sash. The windows are within inches of being floor to ceiling in height. The second story windows are shorter with sashes of equal size. The tower has paired double-hung on the second story with a single Gothic window on the third story. With the exception of the Gothic framing around the tower, window frames are simple and unornamented.

Although the house itself has a shallow, side-gabled roof, intersected by a similar one at the back, the tower has a Mansard roof with exaggerated gables on each side. Throughout, there are massive single brackets beneath the eaves. The tower, however, has paired brackets.



Fig. 9 . Front (East) Facade



Fig. 10, Front Door Detail



Fig. 11, South Tower Detail

Architecture (continued)



Fig. 12. Tower Stairway Detail

Fig. 13. Tower Stairway Detail 2

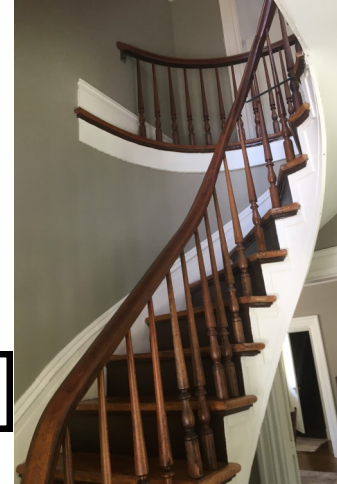


Fig. 14. South Side

The south façade has a two-story bay in the front, with the long, narrow, uneven sashes in the lower bay and standard double hung above. The windows in the rear all have small paned sashes. The only window in the tower is at the attic level. Additional windows would not accommodate the spiral staircase.

Behind that, and slightly recessed under a side gabled roof of the rear portion, is a two-story open porch.



Fig.15. West (back) Side

At the back of the house, there is a large open porch, with a vintage door leading into the house. A single window above is asymmetrically placed and there is a small centered attic window as well.



The two story rear of the north façade holds a one-story bay at the first level, with an additional side window and three symmetrically placed windows above.

Fig. 16. North Façade, rear

Fig. 17. North Side (front part)

The front part of the north façade is similar to that on the south, except the bay with long narrow windows is only a single story.

Because there is no alley access, owners constructed a driveway and garage at the SW corner of the property in 2023. It has a steep gable roof with metal roofing and is covered with Hardi clapboard. Recently solar panels, nearly invisible from the street, have been added to the south gable. They are seen on one photo.



Fig.18. Garage, Front East Side (below)



Fig.19 Garage, North Side (above)

References and Sources

Newspaper and City Directory references which are incorporated into the text are not repeated here.

REF 1 City Directories, also the following from Janet Pease' index of newspapers at RICHS

RI & Moline Daily Union, 2 April 1868
E. H. Smyth is building a residence on the south end of Madison Street

RI & Moline Daily Union, 25 Oct 1869
Anna Dudley Smythe, infant daughter of Edwin H. & Anna C. Smythe died Oct 24, age 2 months, 12 days. Funeral today from the residence on Madison Street.

RI Evening Argus 13 Apr 1870
E. H. Smyth has sold 2 lots on Guyer (8th Ave) between Cherry & Madison to Mrs. Ames and to Robert F. Reed.

Daily Argus, 22 April 1873
Mr. and Mrs. Smyth are going to California because of her ill health

Daily Union Feb 9, 1873
Smyth came from Albany NY on Feb 6 1854. Opened readymade clothing shop with John J. Knox in a rented bldg adjoining RI National Bank on the 22nd of May that year. Stayed here two years, then moved to corner store where now located. In 1856, Herman A. Smyth joined the firm; name changed to Smythe Bros. & Co. Began doing merchant tailoring in 1860. In 1861, E.H. bought out Knox and in 1862 bought out Herman. By close of war was doing \$50k in annual business. Business expanded about a year ago into former H. C. Blackburn's bookstore. Sold business on Feb 1 to Dodge & Walker.

1870 Census
Edwin Smyth, clothier age 41, Wife Anna, keeping house, age 40, both born in NY; children Emma age 12, Newton (?) age 9, and Charlotte or Charlotta age 2, all children b. in Illinois. Herman not listed.

REF 2. Findagrave.com

REF 3. RI Daily Union, 26 April 1873
Wm. Jackson has bought the house of E. H. Smyth on Madison Street

REF 4. Rock Island Argus, September 16, 1925

REF 5. McAlester, Virginia & Lee, "A Field Guide to American Houses," Alfred A. Knopf; 1996

RESOLUTION 2024-01

ROCK ISLAND PRESERVATION COMMISSION

- WHEREAS,** the Centennial Bridge (also known as the Master Sergeant Stanley W. Talbot Memorial Bridge) is the first four-lane bridge across the Mississippi River; and
- WHEREAS,** the Centennial Bridge is the first tied-arch span bridge across the Mississippi River; and
- WHEREAS,** the Centennial Bridge is a “splendid example” of the uncommon tied-arch method of construction; and
- WHEREAS,** the Centennial Bridge was designed by the internationally recognized engineering firm of Ash Howard Needles & Tammen (now known as HNTB) and built by the American Bridge Company, McCarthy Improvement Company, and Priester Construction Company; and
- WHEREAS,** the Centennial Bridge is one of the few major bridges built within the last 80 years without federal aid and financed by revenue bonds that were paid by tolls, and not a local taxpayer obligation; and
- WHEREAS,** the Centennial Bridge was a dream of Rock Island Mayor Robert P. Galbraith and was to be named in his honor, but, as he declined, it was named to commemorate Rock Island’s 1940 Centennial; and
- WHEREAS,** the Centennial Bridge construction started in 1938 and opened on July 12, 1940 with marching bands, a parade and great fanfare; and
- WHEREAS,** the Centennial Bridge is comprised of five arches representing the major cities in the Quad Cities – Rock Island, Moline and East Moline, Illinois and Davenport and Bettendorf, Iowa; and
- WHEREAS,** the Centennial Bridge incorporates elements of the Art Moderne / Art Deco style of architecture; and
- WHEREAS,** the Centennial Bridge Office Building is also an Art Moderne structure and a designated local landmark; and
- WHEREAS,** the Centennial Bridge and Office Building were listed on the National Register of Historic Places on March 13, 2020 as part of Rock Island’s Downtown Historic District; and

WHEREAS, the Centennial Bridge was further improved and enhanced by River Action Inc.'s Lights! River! Action! arch lighting initiative that was completed on September 4, 1988; and

WHEREAS, the Centennial Bridge ownership and maintenance responsibilities were transferred from the City of Rock Island to the Illinois and Iowa Departments of Transportation (IL & IA DOT) in 2005 following the City's \$11.0 million investment and two years of improvements modifying the bridge's approaches to accommodate increased traffic and make many other repairs deemed necessary by IL & IA DOT; and

WHEREAS, the Centennial Bridge's ground level toll booth was removed during the City's final improvements project, but the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency mandated that the arch over the previous toll booth location was to remain in perpetuity; and

WHEREAS, the Centennial Bridge is an important and iconic visual element recognized throughout the Quad City area and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the Centennial Bridge is strategically located between the Cities of Rock Island, Illinois and Davenport, Iowa; and

WHEREAS, the Centennial Bridge provides safe, easy, and critical vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle access to Rock Island and Davenport's downtown businesses, housing, offices, public services, historic neighborhoods, government offices, Modern Woodmen (baseball) Park and other nearby activity centers; and

WHEREAS, the Centennial Bridge serves as the route for the only bi-state St. Patrick's Day parade in the nation, other celebratory and athletic events including the Quad Cities Marathon; and

WHEREAS, ILDOT budgeted \$6.0 Million to paint the Centennial Bridge but postponed this project allowing the bridge to further deteriorate; and

WHEREAS, ILDOT's deferred maintenance places the Centennial Bridge at risk of further deterioration, weight restrictions and becoming unsightly; and

WHEREAS, the Centennial Bridge is deserving of continuing public investment to retain this iconic and essential transportation link across the Mississippi River

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Rock Island Preservation Commission that the Illinois and Iowa Departments of Transportation (IL & IA DOT) hear the Commission's strong concerns that any studies, reports and analyses associated with the Centennial Bridge's replacement or removal is strongly opposed from the standpoint of the Bridge's history, engineering significance, iconic place in the Quad Cities geography, and the potential for severe negative economic impacts to both downtowns of Rock Island and Davenport as well as to the Quad Cities region; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the IL & IA DOT should act diligently to take reasonable measures to preserve, maintain and enhance the structure including painting (which has been long deferred and is accelerating the Bridge's deterioration) and other improvements that extend the Bridge's longevity, usefulness and reinforce its critical place in the Quad Cities.

APPROVED BY THE ROCK ISLAND PRESERVATION COMMISSION ON SEPTEMBER 25, 2024 BY A VOTE OF X – X.

Diane Oestreich, Chairwoman