April 18, 2017

To the Honorable Mayor and the City Council of the City of Evanston:

COMMISSION’S RECOMMENDATION

The Preservation Commission recommends that the City Council to designate the house at 1726 Hinman Avenue as an Evanston landmark. The nomination meets the City Code, Section 2-8-4 Criteria for Designation (A) 3, (A) 4 and has sufficient integrity in accordance with subsection (B).

BACKGROUND

On December 19, 2016 and subsequently on February 17, 2017, Jim Kollross (the “Applicant”), residing at 1210 Michigan Avenue, Evanston, submitted an application, nominating for landmark designation the house at 1726 Hinman Avenue (“Subject Property”). On December 21, 2017, the Commission notified Ashley Woods, President, of Sigma Chi Foundation, at 1714 Hinman Avenue, Evanston (the “Owner”) of the receipt of the nomination. Subsequently, on January 20, 2017, the Commission notified the Owner of the public hearing scheduled on January 31, 2017.
In accordance to Section 2-8-5 of the Evanston City Code of 2012, as amended (the “City Code”), the Preservation Commission (the “Commission”) conducted a public hearing on January 31, 2017. At the request of both the Applicant and the Owner, the public hearing was continued to March 21, 2017.

At the public hearing on March 21, 2017, Jim Kolross, the Applicant, presented the landmark nomination. Mr. Kolross maintained that the 1921 Colonial Revival house at 1726 Hinman Avenue exhibits quality design and materials, and possesses good integrity. Architect John Augustus Nyden, architect, bought the property and tore down the existing structure, keeping only a portion of the foundation from the 1891 Queen Anne. He then built a three-story Colonial Revival house on the remainder of the old foundation. John A. Nyden was a well-regarded and recognized Chicago area architect. Nyden designed buildings now listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Others are designated local Landmarks in Evanston, Chicago and elsewhere in the United States. For those reasons the house at 1726 Hinman Avenue meets criteria for Landmark designation 2-8-4 (A) 2, 3 and possesses integrity under 2-8-4 (B).

The Owner, represented by Ashley Woods, President, Sigma Chi Foundation; Hal R. Morris, Attorney at Law and Scott Hezner, Architect, argued against the landmark nomination. The Owner stated that 1726 Hinman Avenue is not a good representative of the Colonial Revival style, lacks integrity as described in the Ordinance and that John Nyden’s work and reputation was insufficient to meet the Ordinance standards.

“The Commission also received eighteen (18) written comments from neighbors and interested City residents in support of the nomination, and no written comments in opposition. During the Public Hearing on March 21, two (2) persons testified in favor of the nomination.”

COMMISSION’S REPORT WITH FINDINGS OF FACT

The City Code Section 2-8-5 (E) requires that the Commission’s recommendation include a report with the following information:

1. **Explanation of the significance or lack of significance of the nominated landmark or district as it relates to the criteria for designation;**

On March 21, 2017 the Preservation Commission found that the nominated house for Landmark designation at 1726 Hinman Avenue meets criteria for landmark designation of the City Code, Section 2-8-4 (A) “Criteria for Designation” 3 and 4 as follows:

(A) 3. **Its exemplification of an architectural type, style or design distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or overall quality of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship;**

The house at 1726 Hinman Avenue built in 1921 is classified as Colonial Revival design. This description generally refers to homes built from the 1880s to the mid-
1950s, reflecting renewed interest in the earliest English and Dutch houses from the Colonial era. Distinguishing features of Colonial Revival design include accentuated front doors, often including decorative surrounds, fanlights or sidelights at doors, symmetrical design (although some examples have doors off-center), windows with double-hung sashes, usually with divided lights, and paired windows.

Virginia & Lee McAlester, defined the Colonial Revival style (1880-1955) identifying features as: “Accentuated front door, normally with decorative crown (Pediment) supported by pilasters, or extended forward and supported by slender columns to form entry porch; doors commonly have overhead fanlights or sidelights; façade normally shows a symmetrically balanced windows and center door (Less commonly with door off-center); windows with double-hung sashes, usually with multi-pane glazing in one or both sashes; windows frequently in adjacent pairs.” 1

Several relevant design features of 1726 Hinman Avenue are:

- The front elevation achieves quality of design with the front entrance surround, which includes a pediment and pilasters, a divided light door, and a arched divided light transom.
- The front porch with eight Doric Columns, cornice, and a tile floor.
- Three front roof pediment dormers with arched divided light.

The house also exhibits quality materials and construction including:

- Brick façade with double hung windows with six divided lights on the upper sash, limestone keystones in brick flat arch window heads, and limestone window sills.
- Ceramic tiles on the main roof and dormers.
- Copper roofs on a bay window and rear single story breakfast room and porch, and copper gutters and flashing at dormers and chimneys.

The house’s unique architectural features include:

- A double rear dormer with dual roofs, with open pediments and pilasters, arched divided light windows, and clay tile side wall cladding.
- An arched triple window in rear second floor with triple keystones and curved brick pediment

(A) 4. Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer or builder whose individual work is significant in the history or development of the City, the State, the Midwest region or the United States;

John Augustus Nyden (1878-1932) was born in Nybygget, Moheda, Sweden. He immigrated to the United States in 1895. Nyden studied architecture at the Art Institute of Chicago and completed his studies in 1901. Then in 1904 Nyden completed his architectural education at the University of Illinois at Urbana. He became a U.S. citizen in 1918 and joined the Army. While serving in the Army, he built 42 general debarkation hospitals across the U.S. Post-war, he remained in the Army Reserves, rising to the

1 A field Guide to American Houses, Virginia & lee McAlester, 1984
rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in 1923. Nyden became a successful and prominent architect, including serving as State Architect for the State of Illinois in 1926-1927.\(^2\)

John Nyden and his wife Ottilia purchased 1726 Hinman Avenue on May 6, 1921. Nyden tore down the existing structure, retaining a portion of the foundation from the former 1891 Queen Anne building. He then built a three-story Colonial Revival house on the remainder of the old foundation, which featured a brick facade, a tile roof, limestone and copper details, and a matching coach house with a coach house garage at the rear of the property. The Nydens moved into the new house in 1921, and John Nyden lived there until his sudden death in 1932.

John A. Nyden worked as a chief designer and planner for Arthur Heun of Chicago from 1907 to 1909. He also started working on his own. In 1907 he opened an office on LaSalle Street in downtown Chicago and launched his career as an independent architect. In 1919 he moved his practice to North State Street and launched a prosperous and successful period in his career. \(^3\) He designed approximately 300 buildings for varied commercial and residential uses (multi-family, commercial, retail, hospitals, educational and houses). Nyden has at least eight (8) buildings individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, seven (7) designated Evanston landmark buildings, and at least two (2) City of Chicago landmark buildings.

**John A. Nyden’s Evanston Work**

Nyden designed 17 buildings in Southeast Evanston, including vintage apartment buildings listed in the National Register of Historic Places and designated as Evanston landmarks. These buildings include: Westminster, 632-640 Hinman Avenue (1912); Stoneleigh Manor, 904-906 Michigan Avenue (1913); and Fountain Plaza Apartments, 830-856 Hinman Avenue (1922). These landmark structures created the character of this Evanston neighborhood, and nearly 500 Nyden designed housing units are in existence in that area today. Essentially, an estimated one percent of Evanston’s current residents live in a Nyden vintage apartment.

**Other Evanston Landmarks**, representing the range of Nyden’s work, include: Hahn Building, 1618 Orrington and 1609 Sherman Avenues (1927)—a commercial building in downtown Evanston; 2855 Sheridan Place (1911)—a residence; 807-817 Judson (1925) an apartment building; and 822-828 Judson Avenue (1927)—an apartment building.

**Nyden’s Chicago Work**

Nyden’s Chicago works vary in building type, style, and use. Nyden buildings include: First Swedish Baptist Church, 1242 W. Addison St. (1911) now Missio Dei Chicago; and Caroline Hall and the President’s Residence, North Park College (1924-1925), now North Park University. Nyden also designed North Park’s grounds in 1913, and

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\(^2\) John A. Nyden Family Collection, 1850-1989
[https://archon.carli.illinois.edu/?p=collections/findingaid&id=590&templateset=print&disabletheme=1](https://archon.carli.illinois.edu/?p=collections/findingaid&id=590&templateset=print&disabletheme=1)

\(^3\) Achieving The American Dream: The Career of Augustus Nyden, 1895-1932, Bradley Skelcher
designed the initial gymnasium auditorium. Nyden also served as a member of the College’s Board of Trustees.

Given his veteran status, Nyden was commissioned to design the Victory Monument (1927), located at 35th and Martin Luther King Drive, this monument is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Victory Monument honors an African-American regiment that lost 137 lives in World War I.

Other Nyden designs which are City of Chicago Landmarks and also listed in the National Register of Historic Places include: Belmont-Sheffield Trust and Savings Building (1928), originally a neighborhood bank, now apartments and retail; and 257 East Delaware Place (1917); originally an apartment building, now a condominium.

Nyden designed large scale residence hotels in Chicago. The following structures are included in the inventory for the National Register of Historic Places: The ten-story Fairfax Apartment Hotel, 1369 E. Hyde Park Blvd. (1925); the twelve-story Commonwealth Hotel, 2757 N. Pine Grove Avenue (1923); and the six-story Eastwood Beach Apartment Hotel, 811 W. Eastwood Avenue (1912).

Nyden’s work in Illinois and elsewhere in the United States:

Nyden also designed buildings in downstate Illinois and elsewhere in the United States. Among these designs now listed on the National Register of Historic Places are: the Grandstand at the Illinois State Fairgrounds, Springfield, IL (1927); Goddard Chapel, Rose Hill Cemetery, Marion, IL (1918); and the American Swedish Historical Museum, Philadelphia (1926), the oldest Swedish historical museum in the U.S.

2. Explanation of the integrity or lack of integrity of a nominated landmark or district;

(B) Integrity of Landmarks and Districts. Any area, property, structure, site or object that meets any one or more of the criteria in Subsection 2-8-4(A) shall also have sufficient integrity of location, design, materials and workmanship to make it worthy of preservation or restoration.

On March 21, 2017, the Preservation Commission found that the nominated house for Landmark designation at 1726 Hinman Avenue possesses integrity under the City Code, Section 2-8-4 (B) as follows:

Based on the original plans, there are no significant changes to the exterior of the house. The house was extremely well built with quality materials.

At a Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) hearing on November 18, 1975, the ZBA granted a special use at 1726 Hinman Avenue as a rooming house with the condition that there will be a maximum of seven residents who are scholarship counselors at Sigma Chi. In part some of the questions at the hearing were to preserve the appearance of the building as a single-family dwelling. Mr. Bingham, then Executive Director of Sigma Chi
Foundation, testified that the Sigma Chi Foundation will ‘preserve the exterior appearance of the house as a single family residence’ and ‘maintain it in a fine condition of upkeep and repair.’

Also, As a result of the ZBA Hearing, a Covenant dated February 26, 1976 between Sigma Chi Foundation and the City of Evanston states “2. No changes shall be made that will not preserve the appearance of a single family dwelling.

Although the house currently needs maintenance and repairs typical for a building of its age, it still retains its historic integrity.

3. Identification of critical features of the nominated landmark or areas, properties, sites and objects in a nominated district to provide guidance for review of alteration, construction, demolition or relocation;

The house at 1726 Hinman Avenue has good integrity, despite current need for repairs. Examples of the building’s original plans are the basis for future guidance for review of alteration, construction, demolition, or relocation under Evanston’s ordinance. Among the critical features to be retained, by façade and for the coach house, are:

East front elevation

- Brick facade featuring window openings with limestone keystones in brick flat arch heads and limestone sills
- Gable roof running parallel to the street covered with ceramic tiles and finished with stone chimney caps, with a bracketed cornice at the eave
- Front porch with eight Doric columns, trellises, cornice trim, and tile floor
- Entrance with pediment and pilaster surround, a divided light door, and an arched divided light transom
- Three front dormers that feature trim in the form of pediments with pilasters, arched divided light windows, and clay tile side wall cladding
• An arched triple window in rear second floor with triple keystones and curved brick pediment
• Rear single story breakfast room and porch with copper roof
• A double rear dormer with dual roofs, trim in the form of pediments with pilasters, arched divided light windows, and clay tile side wall cladding

North side elevation

• A bay window on the first floor with a copper roof
• Brick masonry chimney.
- Quarter-circle divided light attic windows
- South side elevation

- Double-hung windows with divided lights on the upper sash
- Windows in groups of two and three
- Windows with keystone, brick pediment and limestone sills
- Copper gutters and copper flashing at dormers and chimneys
- Soffit with dentil molding and cornice returns at gable ends
• A matching coach house also with a brick facade, windows and doors with keystones and brick flat arch heads, limestone window sills, a brick masonry chimney with a stone cap, copper gutters and flashing, plus garage doors on both east and west sides.

4. **Proposed design guidelines, if any, for review of alteration, construction, demolition or relocation;**

As a designated Evanston landmark, the house and coach house would be subject to review for exterior work requiring a permit and when visible from the public way under the City Code Section 2-8-9 Standards for Review of Alteration, Construction, Relocation and Demolition.

5. **A map showing the location of the nominated landmark or the boundaries of the nominated district.**

[map here]