

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **AUG 7 1985**
date entered **SEP 5 1985**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic A. H. Allyn House

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 511 E. Walworth Avenue not for publication

city, town Delavan vicinity of

state Wisconsin 53115 code 55 county Walworth code 127

3. Classification

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> educational |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | <input type="checkbox"/> in process | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial |
| | <u>N.A.</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> park |
| | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> religious |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property

name Ron Markwell and Joe Johnson

street & number 511 E. Walworth Avenue

city, town Delavan vicinity of state Wisconsin 53115

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds (County Courthouse)

street & number P. O. Box 1001

city, town Elkhorn state Wisconsin 53121

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1975 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison state WI 53706

7. Description

| | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|------------|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved | date _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | | | |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located on a wide boulevard in what is now a somewhat commercial area of Delavan, the A. H. Allyn House is a massive three-story cream brick residence, with typically asymmetrical Queen Anne massing, projecting polygonal bays as well as projecting and bracketed rectangular bays, five immense stacked bricked chimneys, and a profusion of shingled gables. The house sits on an English basement foundation made of rusticated stone. Fenestration is highly irregular with most bays on the south side composed of large central panes flanked by double hung sashes, all of which are quarter-inch, imported French plate glass;¹ the brick above these large openings is lightly arched as it is in most of the single double hung windows in the main rooms of the first and second floors. Many of the windows have muntins in their upper sashes and several have stone lintels. Two muntined stained glass windows are set over fireplaces between split chimneys; two others serve as arched transoms of the central panes of the bays on the east center section of the house. A horseshoe or Diocletian window tops the opening of the stairwell bay.²

The missing portions of the house for which original architectural drawings are extant, include on the south side a full-length wood veranda and second floor balcony with turned spindles and posts in the Eastlake style and shingle trim; a balcony with an arched opening and a projecting, bracketed, half-timbered and shingled gable are at the third floor level. Soaring high above all of this but set back from the third floor balcony was an elaborate half-timbered, gabled tower with bracketed balconies on three sides. The roof of the tower, as well as two flanking gables, were adorned with cresting and pinnacles. (All of this was removed in 1950)³ A porte cochere of the same elaborate style and design covered the side entrance on the east side. One hundred feet to the north of the main house is a two-story-plus-attic frame carriage barn. It is no longer a part of the property.

Most exterior trim is wood. The original wood window frames, double paneled front doors and single paneled side door entrances are intact. Immense wooden brackets thrusting from limestone corbels on the facade rise to support the projecting rectangular bay on the second floor of the west side (these brackets are missing on the third floor on the east side under a projecting gabled dormer.) Large knobs (pendants) are situated above these brackets and at the corners under the bays. On the east side wooden dentiled moldings run beneath shingling just below the portions of the upper floors that project beyond the brick lower floors as well as above some of the third floor muntined windows. Large bargeboards adorn the projecting edges of the main gables, which are now covered in composition shingles rather than the original patterned slate and partially conceal large single brackets on both sides. Gable ends are either shingled or half-timbered or sometimes both. A split sunburst medallion appears in two limestone panels in the chimney on the east side of the house and in the wood on the front and side doors as well as the brackets beneath the library bay. (This design was repeated in the brackets and gable panel of the porte cochere.) The split chimney on the west side boasts an elongated stylized floral panel made of limestone. Limestone stringcourses appear intermittently between the first and second floors on the east and west sides with straight and arched limestone segmental molding above several of the west side windows.

The integrity of the building's interior remains intact. Floor plans vary only slightly. The main rooms on the first floor front south are broken into a main parlor in the southwest corner, two side parlors on the southeast side (the front parlor of these is said to have been a music room),⁴ the library in the northeast corner, the dining room and butler's pantry in the northwest, and the main or stairhall in the center; a service hall runs from the stairhall to the east of the dining room past a servants' staircase and bathroom (all bathrooms divided and remodeled in 50's) to the kitchen with its subsidiary pantries.

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In the northwest corner of the kitchen is a small room once used as a cold room. Above the ceiling of the room is a space for ice with an exterior door so that the ice could be put in from the outside.⁵ A large utility or mudroom containing a root cellar and two outside doors adjoins the kitchen on the north. Although the kitchen has been stripped of any of its original appointments (with the exception of an original work table), the bathrooms remodeled, most of the original shutters removed, and the original lighting fixture in the main parlor sold off, most of the original appointments remain. All of the original walnut woodwork throughout the formal rooms on the first floor is intact, including five, double eight-foot pocket doors, one of which (foyer) contains the original French cut and etched glass panels.⁶ Above these doors are elaborate Eastlake moldings of dentils and carved rosettes. Oak woodwork, including a paneled dado, is used in the dining room. The east wall of the library is dominated by a massive bay window with a seat and two-foot paneled walnut reveals. A large rectangular transom of leaded and beveled glass hangs above the front entrance doors. Fireplaces, nine in all, are of Italian marble.⁷ With the exception of those in the music room and back parlor, all are of different designs, ornamented with gold leaf and various intaglio patterns. Trieste, Sienna, and Carrara marble as well as alabaster (in the delicate columns of the main parlor fireplace) are used in their construction. Carrara marble, as well as blue tile, is also found in the floor and threshold of the foyer. The fireplaces on the second floor are much simpler in design but ornamented with incised patterns. Large walnut-framed, beveled glass mirrors in the Eastlake style rest atop the main and back parlor fireplaces. Inlaid walnut, maple and oak are used in the first and second floor main halls as well as the dining room; the music room and back parlor have intricate parquet floors added later but probably before the turn of the century. All other floors are pine except the kitchen which is birch. The maid's and butler's pantries and the service halls are narrow-cut maple. The kitchen and maid's pantry are wainscoted in fir. All ceilings (thirteen feet high on the first floor) in the main rooms of the first and second floors are coved. The music and dining rooms still boast their original handpainted ceilings. Original stenciling still exists on the walls of the main hall, dining room and main parlor of the first floor and the walls and ceiling of the main and servants' halls on the second floor. (these will be reapplied during restoration). Rising in a gentle slope from the main hall is an immense open staircase which ascends in four stages to the third floor. Constructed of walnut, the staircase is backpaneled and has intricately carved newel posts with turned knobs on the top as well as similar knobs (pendants) hanging beneath the staircase at the landings. These knobs are echoed in the design of the frame of the back parlor fireplace and on the exterior beneath the rectangular bays. The northwest bedroom on the second floor contains an arched muntin-framed stained glass window situated over the fireplace between a split chimney. (This is the room which the wife of the original owner reserved for bishops who were visiting Christ Episcopal Church next door.)⁸ The south bedrooms on the second floor with interconnecting sitting room constitute the master suite. Original lighting fixtures (electrified gasoliers) remain in the first floor main hall (2), the music room, the back parlor, the library, and the dining room. Although the original fixture from the main parlor has been sold off, its retrieval is being negotiated. Door and window frames and molding are simpler in design in secondary bedrooms and servants' quarters. The original cut and etched glass panel, framed by stained glass squares in walnut muntins, remains in the outside door leading to the side stoop (the front doors were originally glazed in this manner). The etched and cut glass panel in the inner side door echoes the design in the pocket doors at the front. Decorative floor and wall registers remain from the original gravity heat. Most of the ornamental brass hinges and hardware are in place, including the trigger handles. All interior corners are still protected by wooden protective spools. A speaking tube in the upstairs hall was used as a means of communicating with the kitchen

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(originally an intercom system allowed communication between house and carriage barn).⁹ An original pulley-powered private elevator located in the northeast corner of the house with entrances at the basement, first, and second floors is still in excellent working condition.¹⁰ Although the third floor rooms are not elaborate, a multitude of wall configurations produced by steep rooflines and various sizes and styles of gables, enliven the interest of these spaces. The basement, containing twelve rooms, all with load-bearing walls, features a walk-in safe with a stone-vaulted ceiling. A vast chamber, now empty, originally contained the built-in furnace which sent gravity heat through a maze of tin-lined wooden ducts.¹¹ Each of the chimneys is said to contain enough bricks to build a modern two-bedroom home.¹²

The only significant interior changes made have been recently rectified. These were the removal (by former furniture store owners) of the east wall of the northwest bedroom and the north wall of the sitting room both on the second floor. Other minor changes have been the addition of two small windows on the first and second floors of the northeast facade for the installation of two ½ baths and the construction of a door at the east window of the southeast bedroom to accommodate a fire escape. (The fire escape will presently be removed and the window replaced.)

The grounds of the Allyn House have been somewhat altered over the years as a result of the selling off of parts of the original plot. Although the original cement-brick drive still curves gently past the former carriage porch to the back of the house where it makes a complete circle in front of the entrance of the carriage barn, the circle is now intersected by a long wooden fence erected by the owners of the carriage barn, who converted the building into a private residence in 1966.¹³ The land to the east of the house, which was originally open lawn, now contains a low-rise red brick structure housing doctors' offices. The landscaping in the side yard to the east between the house and Christ Episcopal Church remains essentially the same, but originally contained an elaborate fountain and gazebo, the latter done in the Eastlake style. A planter containing evergreens and a statue now occupy the site of the gazebo.¹⁴ After the original owner relinquished it in 1950, the Allyn House became a nursing home. It became a furniture store in 1969 after having sat vacant for three years, and as of 1984 is in the hands of the present owners who are currently operating an antique shop in the music room and back parlor while simultaneously restoring the house and maintaining it as a private residence. They intend to open a bed and breakfast establishment in the house in the near future.

¹Beloit News, Nov. 20, 1950.

²The Old House Journal, Vol. X (April, 1984),
p. 74.

³Beloit News.

⁴Delavan News Graphic, Sept. 6, 1966.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Beloit News.

(continued)

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⁷Janesville Gazette. June 4, 1977.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰News Graphic.

¹¹Janesville Gazette.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴News Graphic.

8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400-1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500-1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | ___ education | ___ military | ___ social/ |
| ___ 1700-1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ humanitarian |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration/settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ theater |
| ___ 1900- | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics/government | ___ transportation |
| | | ___ invention | | ___ other (specify) |

1884 (construction),¹ 1950 (alteration)²

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Edward Townsend Mix³

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The former A. H. Allyn House is significant both as a locally important example of a distinctive architectural style and the work of a regionally important architect. It is the best example in Delavan of Queen Anne design with Eastlake decoration. Edward Townsend Mix, who ". . . perhaps more than anyone else, contributed to the architectural development of Milwaukee,"⁴ and held the office of state architect from 1864 to 1867 and again from 1874 until 1887,⁵ was the designer and builder of the house.⁶

Architecture

It was in 1883 that A. H. Allyn purchased the land on which the residence is constructed.⁷ Construction on the house began the following year (1884) and was completed in 1885.⁸ The house attained its present appearance in 1950 when the granddaughter of the original owner made changes in the exterior.⁹ Various descriptions as ". . . one of Delavan's most palatial homes"¹⁰ and ". . . one of the most desirable residences in the county,"¹¹ the A. H. Allyn House is "an architectural masterpiece,"¹² which represents "perfection in building."¹³ It is easily the largest and most elaborate house in Delavan and has long been a "showplace"¹⁴ in the community. In referring to the "handsome homes"¹⁵ of the town, an early Delavan newspaper stated that "many [homes] . . . represent the most approved of the Renaissance styles."¹⁶ Massing, plan, and materials (brick, shingling, and half-timbering) definitely place the Allyn House in the mainstream of the Queen Anne Revival style. The formal and important spaces and appointments of the interior contribute to the significance of the house and provide an effective illustration of the architectural and social tastes of the day. "The three-storied structure is symbolic of a gracious and royal type of living which has almost entirely vanished from the American way of life."¹⁷ Although there are several other Queen Anne residences in Delavan, only one other begins to approximate the massing and size of the Allyn House. It is the residence at 133 Sixth Street which is also constructed of cream brick. Because the residence retains its Eastlake spindles, balusters, and posts on the porches (which echo the front and side porches originally on the Allyn House), the residence keeps its exterior integrity. Its interior spaces have been completely altered. The residence across the street at 134 Sixth Street provides an interesting counterpoint in that it is Queen Anne style in massing and plan but is constructed solely of wood and is much smaller and simpler in design than the Allyn House and shares a rectangular orientation.

Edward Townsend Mix, designer and builder of the Allyn House,¹⁸ declined a co-partnership with Major Stone, one of New England's leading 19th century architects, and came to Chicago in 1855 where he became co-partner in the firm of Boyington and Mix. Opening an office for the firm in Milwaukee in 1856, he decided to stay, dissolving his partnership with Boyington (designer of Chicago's famous Old Water Tower) in 1857 and opening his own firm in the Ludington Block at the corner of E. Water and Wisconsin.¹⁹ Although the city of Milwaukee was a Yankee city before Mr. Mix arrived, he came at the height of its Yankee social and economic supremacy and thus took advantage of being a Yankee architect in a city of Yankee businessmen who were willing to give him commissions that were to reshape the city. The Yankee architectural images with which Mix was so intertwined aptly suited his clients who still maintained their Eastern social and business roots.²⁰

(continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Beckwith's History of Walworth County, Vol. I, Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen & Co., 1912.
 1881 History of Milwaukee County. Chicago: Western Historical Co.
 Burrows, John R., "The Work of E. Townsend Mix from 1856-1890," Unpublished Master's thesis, School of Architecture, University of Virginia, Dec., 1980.
 (see continuation sheet for complete bibliography)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than an acre

Quadrangle name Delavan

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification The A. H. Allya House is bordered on the south by Walworth Ave. (old Highway 15), on the east by Christ Episcopal Church, on the north by the John and Lorraine Burns property (the former Allya House carriage barn), and on the east by the John and Joanne Martin property. (see enclosed site maps A & B.)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ron Markwell, co-owner of the Allya House

organization

date May 15, 1985

street & number 2647 Poplar Avenue

telephone 864-8796 (312)

city or town Evanston

state Illinois 60201

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Jeff Dean*

title DIRECTOR OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

date JULY 19, 1985

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 9/5/85

Delores Byer
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Because the major events in the lives of both Mr. Mix and Mr. Allyn share so many striking parallels, it is a temptation to suggest that they knew each other: Mr. Mix was born in New Haven, Conn. in 1831 and came to Chicago in 1855, moving to Milwaukee in 1856;²¹ Mr. Allyn was born in Hartford, Conn. in 1835 and came to Chicago in 1852, moving to Milwaukee in 1854 and to Walworth County in 1859 (twice returning to the East for marriage partners).²² It is perhaps easier to conjecture that Mr. Allyn was familiar with the work of Mr. Mix and when he decided to build on a grand scale knew exactly whom to commission.

None of Mr. Mix's office records or papers are known to survive,²³ and his reluctance to use the press to advertise his work made identification and authentication of his work even more difficult.²⁴ Had it not been for the dozens of drawings on which Mix's name appears (retained in the basement safe), Mix would never have been identified as the builder and designer of the Allyn House.

Reaching its full maturity during the 1870's with design successes ranging from the Italianate to High Victorian Gothic, Mr. Mix's work drew closer to the quality of design on the East Coast. He became Milwaukee's most popular and prominent architect during this time.²⁵ Most of his work in the 1880's exhibited a broad range of expressions in the Queen Anne style,²⁶ the style of the Allyn House. Two of his most prominent essays in this style to which the Allyn House may be compared are the Milwaukee Club (1883) and Meadowmere (1884), the residence of John Landrum Mitchell. The turned Eastlake balusters and the newel posts (closely related to English work) with its carved sunburst as well as the sunburst pattern found in the detail of the iron exterior balcony of the Milwaukee Club (corner of Wisconsin and Jefferson) are quite similar to those found in the Allyn House.²⁷ Meadowmere's (5301 W. Lincoln) highly animated surface texture, bracketed bays, and porches exhibiting fanciful Eastlake ornament are also significant design elements repeated in the Allyn House.²⁸ Two other Mix designs in the Queen Anne style which bear mention here in terms of their similarity to the Allyn House are the Elizabeth Plankinton House (1887 - now demolished) and the Grand Avenue Congregational Church (1887). In addition to the surface, which vibrates with a proliferation of windows, bays, chimneys, and other ornamental features,²⁹ the Elizabeth Plankinton House shares another major architectural feature of the Allyn House: a horseshoe or Diocletian window.³⁰ Although the Grand Avenue Congregational Church seems an unlikely choice, it does share certain design features which are common to the Allyn House, namely the huge horseshoe window on the north facade and the treatment of the newel posts and balusters on the interior which retains much of its integrity.³¹

¹"A. H. Allyn," Beckwith's History of Walworth County, p. 1048.

²"Delavan Allyn Mansion Stands Aloof as Its Fate Is Pondered," Beloit News, Nov. 20, 1950.

³His name is on dozens of drawings found in the safe in the basement of the house.

⁴Herbert W. Rice, "Architect of Milwaukee," Historical Messenger of the Milwaukee County Historical Society, June, 1950.

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- ⁵Ibid., p. 11.
- ⁶See footnote #3.
- ⁷Beckwith's History of Walworth County, p. 1048.
- ⁸Ibid.
- ⁹Beloit News.
- ¹⁰Ibid.
- ¹¹Beckwith's History of Walworth County, p. 1048.
- ¹²Carol Wilcox, "Castle a Grand Place," Janesville Gazette, June 4, 1977.
- ¹³Beloit News.
- ¹⁴Delavan News Graphic, Sept. 6, 1966.
- ¹⁵Wilbur Weeks, "Beautiful Delavan," The Delavan Republican, June 6, 1895.
- ¹⁶Ibid.
- ¹⁷Beloit News.
- ¹⁸See footnote #3.
- ¹⁹1881 History of Milwaukee County, pp. 1499-1500.
- ²⁰John Burrows, "The Work of E. Townsend Mix from 1856-1890," unpublished Master's thesis done at the University of Virginia, Dec., 1980, pp. 1-2.
- ²¹1881 History of Milwaukee County, pp. 1499-1500.
- ²²Beckwith's History of Walworth County, p. 1048.
- ²³John Burrows, pp. 2-3.
- ²⁴Ibid.
- ²⁵Ibid., p. 28.
- ²⁶Ibid., p. 44.
- ²⁷Ibid., pp. 45-46.
- ²⁸Ibid.

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²⁹Ibid., p. 49.

³⁰Ibid., Appendix, Illustration I-34b.

³¹Ibid., Appendix, Illustration II-12a, II-12c, II-12d.

(The building's interior spaces are among the most elaborate
and well preserved late 19th century examples in the Delavan area.)

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Periodicals

"Delavan Allyn Mansion Stands Aloof as Its Fate Is Pondered," Beloit News, (Nov. 20, 1950).

Delavan News Graphic, (Sept. 6, 1966)

Old House Journal, Vol. X, No. 4 (April, 1984), p. 74.

Rice, Herbert W., "Architecture of Milwaukee," Historical Messenger of the Milwaukee County Historical Society, (June, 1950).

Weeks, Wilbur, "Beautiful Delavan," The Delavan Republican, (June 6, 1895).

Wilcox, Carol, "Castle a Grand Place," Janesville Gazette, (June 4, 1977).

Unpublished Material

Burrows, John R., "The Work of E. Townsend Mix from 1856-1890," Unpublished Master's thesis, School of Architecture, University of Virginia, Dec., 1980.

Other Sources

Architectural drawings from the firm of E. Townsend Mix in the archives of the Allyn House.



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| 181.1 | 71 | 132 |
| 58 | 4 | 1 |
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RONALD + SYLVIA
GREENFIELD

CEMETERY
FRANK + MABEL CLARK
MUCKLER

PLAT 2
WATTS
PETERMANN

STATE - HWY - 11 - 15 - WALWORTH AVE.

LATHROP ST.

6TH ST.

PARISH ST.

THROP ST.

ADD 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

McDowell ST.

5TH ST.

4TH ST.

3RD ST.

2TH ST.

1TH ST.

7TH ST.

8TH ST.

9TH ST.

10TH ST.

11TH ST.

12TH ST.

13TH ST.

14TH ST.

15TH ST.

16TH ST.

17TH ST.

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19TH ST.

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66TH ST.

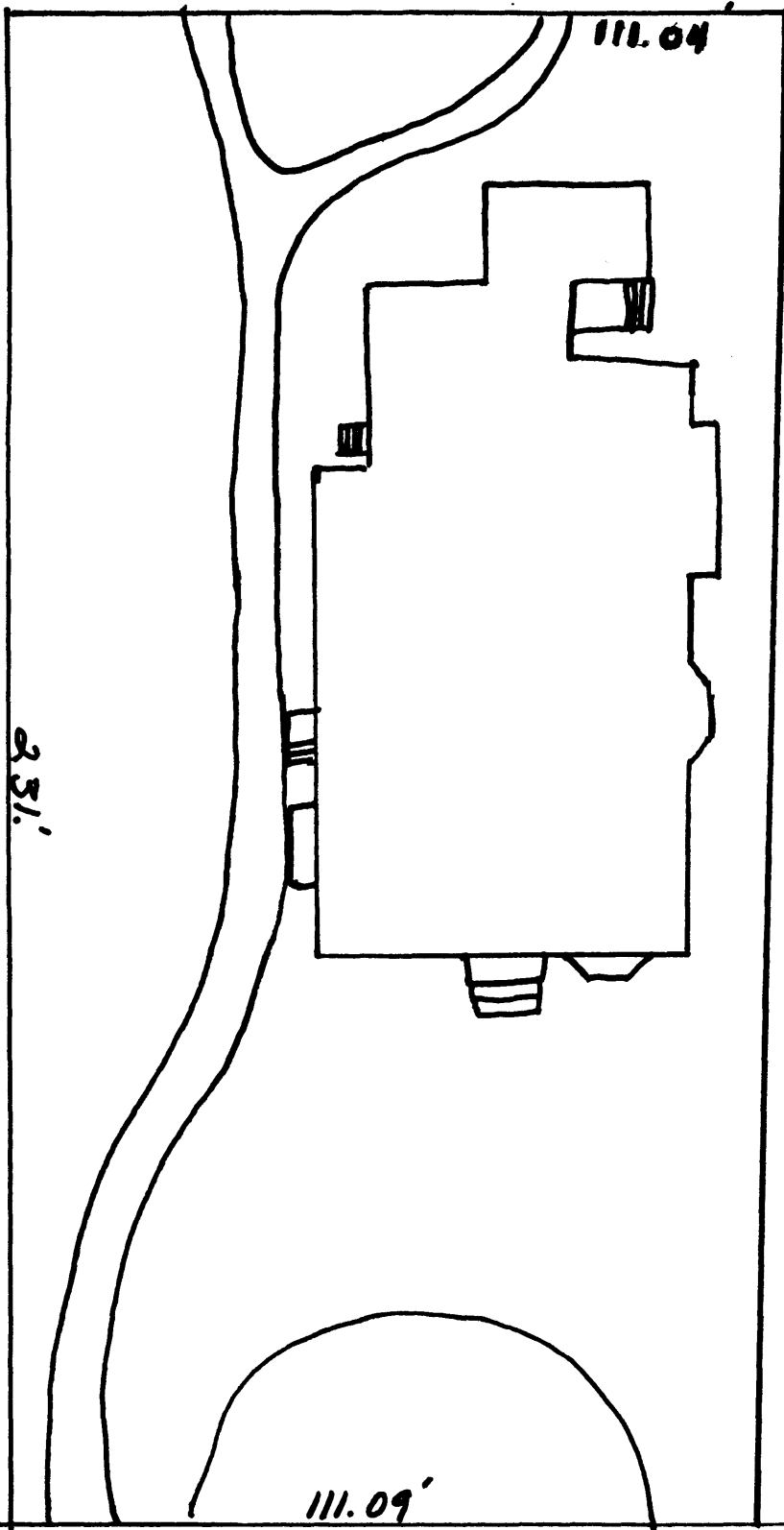
67TH ST.

A. H. ALLYN HOUSE

DELAVAN, WALWORTH COUNTY, WI

PLAT MAP

MAP A



STATE HIGHWAY "11" WALWORTH AVE.

SITE PLAN

MAP B

A.H. Allyn House, Delavan, Walworth County

Not to scale