

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Isermann, Anthony and Caroline, House
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 6416 Seventh Avenue N/A not for publication
city or town Kenosha N/A vicinity
state Wisconsin code WI county Kenosha code 059 zip code 53143

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Alicia L. Green December 30, 2003
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Isermann, Anthony and Caroline, House

Kenosha

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
 entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain):

Edgar H. Beall

2/25/04

[Signature]

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

private

public-local

public-State

public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

building(s)

district

structure

site

object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

contributing noncontributing

1 1 buildings

 sites

 structures

 objects

1 1 total

Name of related multiple property listing:
(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources is previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

L 19th & E 20th CENTURY AMERICAN

MOVEMENTS/ Prairie School

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation concrete

walls brick

roof asphalt

other wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Section 7 Page 1 Isermann, Anthony and Caroline, House
Kenosha, Kenosha County, WI

Built in 1922, the Anthony and Caroline Isermann House is a two-story, Prairie Style building that sits on a very narrow and deep lot in a dense urban residential neighborhood in Kenosha, a medium-sized community located in the far southeastern corner of Wisconsin. Kenosha is located on the shores of Lake Michigan and is served by several transportation links. Several state highways run through the city along north and south or east and west routes. About 10 miles west of the heart of the city is Interstate Highway 94, which is a heavily traveled highway between Milwaukee and Chicago. The city is also served by a popular Metra commuter train that runs from Milwaukee to Chicago. The ease of transportation to and from the Chicago area has resulted in the considerable expansion of Kenosha's suburban areas during the last decade as more and more commuters have opted to live in Kenosha, rather than the Chicago suburbs.

The historic city of Kenosha radiates north, south, and west of the downtown commercial district, which sits only a few blocks from the Lake Michigan shoreline. Dense historic residential neighborhoods surround the city's downtown and consist of a mix of large, medium, and small houses. As the city expanded during the twentieth century, new residential neighborhoods were developed largely with small houses on small lots. And most of the large lots in the older neighborhoods were subdivided and filled in with similar small houses. This was a result of Kenosha's dominant industrial economy during the late nineteenth and all of the twentieth century, an economy that relied on factory workers who could not afford large houses. This trend continued into the post-World War II era, with large subdivisions of small homes dominating new areas attached primarily to the south and west sides of the city.

The most prominent residential historic neighborhoods in Kenosha were developed just south of the downtown and southeast of the downtown along the lakeshore. Two of these neighborhoods have been included in historic districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places; the Third Avenue Historic District and the Library Park Historic District. These districts contain the largest and most prominent historic residential areas of the city. In the near future, two additional historic districts that lie further south of these areas will be completed. The proposed Lakeside Historic District is an extension of the Third Avenue Historic District, only with slightly smaller homes. The proposed Allendale Historic District sits just west of the proposed Lakeside Historic District and consists of middle-class Period-Revival houses all built primarily in the 1920s and early 1930s.

In between the proposed Allendale Historic District and the Library Park Historic District is another historic residential neighborhood. It contains a combination of small, medium, and large houses built between the mid-nineteenth century and the 1930s. During the nineteenth century, the neighborhood's houses generally sat on medium to large size lots. During the early twentieth century, many of the large lots were subdivided and lots were filled in with Bungalow,

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Craftsman, and Period Revival style houses. The result was that by World War II, this neighborhood had developed into a dense mixture of small to large houses on small to medium-sized lots. The expansion of the Kenosha Hospital has encroached into the northeastern part of the neighborhood, and the change of many of the large houses from single-family dwellings to apartment houses has had an effect on the historic integrity of the neighborhood. Although the neighborhood, as a whole, has not retained enough integrity to be looked at as an historic district, there are many fine historic homes within its boundaries. Among these fine historic homes are two Prairie Style houses along Seventh Avenue. This nomination is concerned with one of these houses, the Anthony and Caroline Isermann House.

The 6000 block of Seventh Avenue, like much of the rest of the neighborhood, is dense. In fact, this house and its Prairie Style neighbor sit very close to each other. This house also sits within a few feet of its neighbor to the north. The narrow appearance of the lots for the two Prairie Style houses belies the fact that they both have very deep lots with relatively spacious back yards. Their lots run across the entire block from Seventh to Eighth Avenue. Each of the lots is long enough for generous backyards with space for large, modern, garages.

The Anthony and Caroline Isermann House has a set back that is similar to the houses along the street, creating small front yard. The house and its front yard are raised from the street, which is improved with concrete curbs, gutters, and sidewalks. A narrow terrace sits between the street and the sidewalk. A large tree grows in the terrace just to the south of the entrance walkway. The front yard is raised and supported by a fieldstone retaining wall. A set of concrete steps leads up to the raised yard from the sidewalk. A gate at the head of the stairs is a recent addition to the landscaping. It is part of a fence that is being erected in front of the house. This fence was designed by the owner with a Prairie Style motif. The retaining wall was probably added at a later date when the street may have been widened.

The remaining part of the front yard of the house is landscaped with a mature lawn. A number of mature shrubs decorate the foundation of the house. A concrete sidewalk runs from the steps near the sidewalk to the main entrance in the projecting ell. A concrete sidewalk also continues around the south elevation of the ell to the back yard. The deep back yard is landscaped with several very large mature deciduous trees and conifers. The yard is divided into lawn space and large planting beds of a semi-formal design. The planting beds features smaller trees, shrubs, and perennials.

A wooden "privacy" style fence encloses the back yard and abuts the modern garage in the southwest corner of the lot. This two-car garage building features a hip roof, wide board siding,

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and a very large garage door that faces Eighth Avenue. A wide concrete driveway leads from the street to the garage. The garage is a non-contributing element of the property.

On the west side of the fence, to the north of the garage, is another formal planting bed featuring a large conifer shrub and other plants. Eighth Avenue is also improved with concrete curbs, gutters, and sidewalks. A wide terrace is located between the street and sidewalk. It is not landscaped along the Isermann house property.

Exterior

The house consists of a long, rectangular, two-story main block with a one story ell projecting from the center of the south wall. The bulk of the walls of the main block and the ell are covered with a veneer of hard-fired brown brick laid in a common bond. On the main block, the upper 25 percent of the wall surfaces are covered with a stucco veneer that is slightly recessed. The brick veneer is decorated with a concrete coping. The main block features a low-pitched hip roof with very wide overhanging eaves. The wide soffits of the eaves are also stucco-covered. The main block of the house sits on a poured concrete foundation and concrete accents are used to decorate the house.

The main elevation of the main block features a centrally located group of windows on the first story that suggests a main entrance. The window group consists of a large, single-pane central window that runs almost to the foundation. This opening is flanked by sidelights with two lights each. Shallow, undecorated, brick pilasters run between the openings. The entire window group is decorated with a flat concrete surround decorated with a plain raised molding along the edges. In front of the window group there is a small concrete planter bed that suggests a concrete step. Sitting under the sidelights next to the concrete planter are two short brick piers with concrete ledges. In the upper part of the wall of the main elevation, there is a central bank of three openings. The openings are filled with single light paired casements.

The north elevation of the house is quite close to the neighboring property. In fact, their roof eaves are only inches apart. This elevation features a tall brick chimney column and a one and one-half story square upper bay. The upper bay is clad with stucco and features narrow openings filled with casements on the end walls and a large opening consisting of a large single pane window flanked by narrower casements along the side wall. There are also some small openings on both the first and second stories of this elevation, primarily small rectangular openings in the upper level of the wall.

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The upper level of the rear or west elevation of the house features a set of three openings at the southwest corner that connect with another set of three openings on the upper level of the south elevation. A single rectangular opening also sits in this level of the rear elevation. On the first story, there is an opening that corresponds to the kitchen of the interior. It is a rectangular opening filled with two small casements. At the southwest corner of the house, there are two openings, one filled with a single pane casement and the other filled with a set of two narrow casements. The foundation on this elevation features two sets of two small openings that light this part of the basement.

The south elevation of the main block is partly obscured by the projecting one-story ell. At the center of the elevation is a group of several narrow brick pilasters running from the foundation to the overhanging eaves of the roof. Between these pilasters on the upper level of the wall are narrow openings filled with casements decorated with concrete sills. Below these openings are similar casements. Several openings punctuate the rest of the south wall that sits behind the ell. There is the previously mentioned set of three openings on the upper level and there are two openings on the first story. One opening features a single pane casement window, while the other is filled with a set of narrower casements. A concrete sill wraps around the southwest corner of the house to decorate a similar window group on the rear elevation.

The projecting one-story ell also has a hip roof with very wide overhanging eaves. The soffits of the eaves are stucco-covered and the walls of the ell are covered with a brick veneer that matches the main block. The ell sits on a raised concrete foundation. The main entrance into the house is in the northeast corner of this ell. It consists of a plain glass and wood door covered with a period wood and vertical glass panel storm door. Very narrow sidelights accent the entrance. A front porch sits in front of the entrance and runs along the south wall of the main block. It has a red tile deck on a concrete base and concrete steps that run perpendicular to the entrance. The east and south sides of the porch are enclosed with thick brick balustrades topped with concrete ledges. The balustrades also sit on concrete foundations.

The front or east elevation of the projecting ell features the main entrance as described above, and a long, shallow bay that fills much of the remainder of the wall. The bay is filled with a large opening that consists of a large single pane "picture" style window flanked by single pane narrow casements. Very narrow openings sit on the sides of the bay. On the side of the bay that faces the main entrance is an original Craftsman-style mail box still extant and in use.

On the south wall of the ell is a group of three openings sitting under the overhanging eaves. These three openings are filled in with single-pane casements. The rear or west elevation of the ell is similar to the east elevation. It features a large opening that consists of a large single pane

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“picture” style window flanked by single pane casements. In this case, though, the opening is shorter than the opening on the east elevation.

Behind the projecting ell is a small original patio. This patio is enclosed on the south by a wooden privacy fence, on the west by several mature shrubs, and abuts the house on the east. The north side of the patio is open to the rest of the back yard. The patio is constructed of large rectangular cement blocks that are accented with inlaid limestone slabs of various sizes. Some of the blocks have one limestone slab, while other have two or more, depending on size.

Interior, first floor

The main entrance into the house is in the projecting ell. It leads into a narrow foyer that runs across the entire width of the ell. Across from the main entrance is a door that leads out to the rear patio. The foyer floor is covered with red clay tiles, a material that also is used in the ell’s main room, the sunroom. Near the main entrance, the foyer is divided from the sunroom by large brick piers that flank a large closet. The closet does not reach the ceiling, so there is an opening at the top between the foyer and sunroom. Across from the closet are brick piers that flank the entrance into the large living room in the main block.

Beyond the brick piers and closet is a large opening to the sunroom. Across from this opening a set of French style doors lead into the dining room. The doors are finished in a medium golden color that appears on all of the wood trim of the first floor. The doors have large single lights and period brass hardware. The sunroom has some features that occur throughout the first floor of the house. For example, the wall surfaces have the original plaster finish and doors and windows are trimmed with plain boards stained a golden color. There are also wide, but plain baseboards trimming the floor. A very narrow decorative wood border spans the entire ceiling. Between the border and the walls, the ceiling has original plaster, but within the border, the ceiling has been given a covering of light-colored wallpaper.

The light fixtures of the sunroom are attached to the wall and are identical to the wall fixtures in other rooms of the first floor of the house. They were designed to match the Prairie Style of the exterior. The fixtures are narrow rectangular box shapes with wood frame construction and opaque cream colored mica panels. Wood tops extend slightly over the mica panels and the upper sections of the side panels are decorated with wood slats. The wood frames of the side panels extend slightly beyond the end of the panels. The front panels are undecorated and extend by about one-third past the side panels.

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Attached to one of the brick piers that flank the entrance into the living room from the foyer is a perpendicular brick divider. Set into the brick divider is a period cast iron radiator. Covering this radiator on both sides are panels made up of narrow wood slats stained in the same golden color as the rest of the wood trim of the first floor. These wood slat panels are used throughout the first floor to cover the period radiators and appear to be original to the house. Their design resembles the wood slat design motif of some "Mission" style furniture.

The dining room can be entered through the double doors from the foyer or through the large opening between the dining room and living room. This large opening gives the impression that the two rooms flow into each other, a design feature of many Prairie Style houses. The wall surfaces and the wood trim around the doors, windows, and baseboards of this room are identical to those in the sunroom. The ceiling has its original plaster, as well, along with the decorative ceiling molding seen in the sunroom. Added to this room, though, is a picture rail and the floor is covered with narrow oak boards. A cast iron radiator sits along the west wall of the dining room. It is enclosed on three sides with panels of wood slats and is topped with a wooden ledge. Along the north wall of the dining room is another architectural feature, a built-in buffet cabinet. The cabinet is simple, with three raised panel doors and three drawers.

This room has several of the wall fixtures described above, as well as a large, but similarly detailed light fixture hanging from the ceiling. This box-shaped fixture hangs from the ceiling by a short and narrow wood post. The bulk of the fixture consists of five mica panels encased in narrow wood frames that creates a box. Topping this mica box is a "roof" or top made up of narrow horizontal wood slats with tiny plain brackets and wood pieces that extend over each edge of the top.

An entrance in the northwest corner of the dining room leads into the kitchen, which has a remarkably high number of original features, including original plaster wall and ceiling surfaces. The ceiling has modern track lighting fixtures. Along the west and north walls are built-in cabinets that are original to the kitchen. The cabinets all have plain wooden doors, but a previous owner replaced the original hardware. Above the upper built-in cabinets are additional cabinets that have horizontal, rather than vertical, doors that pull out. All of the cabinets are finished in the golden color of the wood trim of the house.

Another original feature of the kitchen is the tile floor. The current owner removed modern flooring materials to reveal a floor made up of hexagonal ceramic tiles. Next to the entrance into the dining room is also a small original pantry covered with a single raised panel wood door. At the northeast corner of the kitchen is the door leading to the basement staircase. A short hallway runs from the southeast corner of the kitchen toward a second opening into the kitchen. Along

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this hallway is another, larger, pantry. Across from this pantry is a small half bathroom. The bathroom also has a hexagonal tile floor and its original built-in medicine chest. A window opens to the basement staircase, which has a corresponding opening to the outside, providing ventilation to the small bathroom.

Spanning the entire east half of the main block is the living room which is sunken two steps lower than the rest of the first floor. Like the dining room, the living room has plaster walls and ceilings, plain wood trim around doors and windows and a narrow border decorating the ceiling. The living room has a wider picture rail and its floor is also covered with narrow oak flooring. There are two long, built-in benches along the south and north walls. The benches feature central panels obscuring small cast iron radiators. Flanking the central panels are larger panels made of wood slats. A wood slat enclosure covers a larger radiator at the southeast corner of the living room. It is identical to the enclosed radiator in the dining room. Above the bench along the south wall are several casement windows with stained glass inserts. These stained glass inserts were added by a recent owner and placed over the original glazing. The owner made the windows using a Prairie Style-influenced pattern.

The dominant feature of the living room is the massive projecting fireplace constructed of brown brick. The brick rises to the level of the picture rail and extends down to surround the firebox. A shallow, concrete mantel projects from the brick walls of the fireplace that sit on a concrete foundation that extends to form a shelf at the base. The original firebox is enclosed for a cast-iron firebox that could date from the pre-World War II era. The heavy cast-iron doors have old-fashioned iron bar and knob openers and other features appear to be vintage. In front of the firebox, the hearth is covered with the same red clay tiles seen in the foyer and sunroom.

Interior, second floor

A short hallway on the other side of the fireplace wall leads to the second story staircase. The staircase has two partially enclosed runs with a central landing. The landing is housed in the projecting bay of the north wall. It has a large opening consisting of a large single pane window flanked by narrower casements, also with modern stained glass inserts. Two other narrow casements light this landing. A light fixture hangs over the landing. It is another original Craftsman Style fixture that has an elongated box shape. Four mica panels in wood frames enclose the light. Above the mica panels is a rectangular opening covered by small wood slats. The fixture is topped with a plain wood panel and is attached to the ceiling by four wood posts.

Along the open area of the second run of the staircase is a radiator enclosure that takes the place of a balustrade. Featuring the wood ledge and the panels of wood slats, this enclosure is similar

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to those of the dining and living rooms. Attached perpendicular to this enclosure is a tall cabinet that also replaces a balustrade covering the open staircase. This cabinet has a wooden ledge, wood trim along the baseboards, at the corners, and around the doors. On the end is a small door that covers a laundry shaft. Along the side of the cabinet are two doors that cover the interior of the cabinet.

The second floor consists of four bedrooms, a full bathroom, and a central hallway. The floors of the entire second story are covered with narrow oak boards, but the hallway is carpeted. Most of the rooms and the entire hallway feature plaster ceilings and walls; all of the trim is original. The plain trim is similar to that of the first floor and includes a wide picture rail that spans the entire hallway and all of the bedrooms. The rooms and closets of the second story are all covered with single raised panel wood doors with period hardware. Each bedroom also has one or more of the wall light fixtures seen on the first floor.

At the northwest end of the second floor is a small bedroom that has the above features and an exposed wood floor. There is a small closet in this room and two small windows. The bedroom at the southwest corner is larger and well lit by two banks of windows that meet at the southwest corner of the room. This room features a new drywall ceiling due to water damage and walls that are decorated with wallpaper. Between the southwest bedroom and the bedroom that spans the east side of the second floor is a very small bedroom. This room has a small closet and shelf space over the entry door for additional storage.

The largest bedroom is the long room that spans the east part of the second floor. This room is well lit by the bank of windows along the east wall. The room has a slightly larger closet and a small alcove along the south wall. Two large cast-iron radiators heat this room, and similar radiators heat the other bedrooms of the floor. Just outside of this room in the main hallway is a large closet. Two large wooden doors cover the closet.

Also on the second floor is the full bathroom. The bathroom has some original details, but also many details from subsequent remodeling. The walls of the room are covered with pale green ceramic tiles from the post-World War II era. The floor is also covered with ceramic tiles laid in a diagonal pattern. Along one side of the bathroom is the bathtub and shower, which is enclosed with a metal and glass shower door. The bathtub dates from the mid-twentieth century. More modern is the large vanity, probably less than 20 years old. It has a wood base with a composite counter top and sink. The fixtures are modern. The original details include a cast iron radiator and an opening decorated with a stained glass insert.

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Basement

The basement of this house is partially finished. The stairs lead into a finished hallway with modern drywall on the walls and ceiling accented with modern moldings. Off of the hallway is a small laundry room with closet, a large finished storage room, and a large unfinished storage room. The finished rooms have either carpeted floors or a covering of vinyl tiles. The unfinished room has poured cement walls and a cement floor.

Integrity

While the house has had some alterations, they are minimal. Overall, the house retains very good integrity and reflects its period of construction.

Isermann, Anthony and Caroline, House
Name of Property

Kenosha
County and State

Wisconsin

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1922

Significant Dates

1922

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Williamson, Russell Barr

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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The Anthony and Caroline Isermann House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C, architecture, because it is locally significant as a fine example of the Prairie Style of architecture. The house is one of two side-by-side examples of the Prairie Style, both being the best examples of the style in the city. The significance of the house is also derived from its architect, Russell Barr Williamson, an important Wisconsin designer during the early and mid-twentieth century. Williamson worked briefly with Frank Lloyd Wright and Wright's architectural influence would remain with Williamson throughout his career. This house and its neighbor, also designed by Williamson, are the work of a master architect who practiced primarily in a progressive style throughout his career.

AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE: ARCHITECTURE¹

The Isermann Clothing Store was a long-time and prominent commercial business in downtown Kenosha during the twentieth century. When Anthony and Caroline Isermann decided to build a new house, they chose a progressive architect, Russell Barr Williamson, to design a home that would be distinctive in the neighborhood and in the community. Their Prairie Style home was completed in 1922, and in the next year, Williamson completed a larger Prairie Style home next door for brother and sister-in-law, Frank and Jane Isermann. The houses stood out in the neighborhood of Italianate, Queen Anne, and Period Revival houses for their unusual style, fine construction materials and methods, and modern appearance.

The Prairie Style was an architectural style that grew out of the Midwest. A group of progressive architects led by Frank Lloyd Wright, George Grant Elmslie, and George W. Maher developed the Prairie School of architecture in early twentieth century Chicago. Trained by earlier progressive architects Louis Sullivan and Joseph Silsbee, these and other architects developed an architectural style that emphasized horizontal lines by the use of low pitched hip or gable roofs with wide overhanging eaves, banded windows, emphatic belt courses, and the use of natural materials. Like the Craftsman Style, simplicity, minimal architectural details, and respect for materials are common elements of the Prairie Style. The style was popular in Wisconsin between 1900 and 1925 and although Frank Lloyd Wright was the most famous and important architect of the style, several Wisconsin architects added to its development.²

¹ The source for the date of construction of this house and its architect was from historic survey and landmark nomination information on file in the Office of City Development, Municipal Building, City of Kenosha, Wisconsin. The period of significance for this property includes the date of construction of the house.

² Barbara Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Vol. II*, Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986, Architecture, p. 2-21.

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The Isermann house is a fine example of one of the variations of the Prairie Style, featuring a symmetrical form and massing, a hip roof, and an entrance located to the side of the building. This variation of the style has a generally rectangular form and balanced features, as opposed to other Prairie Style variations, which emphasize asymmetry, multiple levels, and gable or hip roofs. The rectangular plan of the main block of the Isermann house is symmetrical, even though it features a projecting ell on only one elevation. The size and placement of the ell, though, does not emphasize asymmetry. The main entrance is in the ell, at the side of the house, as is typical of this variation. An unusual detail is the set of windows on the first floor of the main elevation of the main block, an opening that suggests a front entrance. Even the planter in front of this opening gives the impression of a front porch and step.

Other details of this house are typical of the Prairie Style. The low-pitched hip roof with wide overhanging eaves gives the house a horizontal emphasis, as does the change on the upper quarter of the main block from a brick veneer to a stucco covering. This detail emphasizes the horizontality of the architecture and the openings on this level, which are grouped in several areas to create the window bands typical of the style. The south elevation's pilasters with the narrow casements set in between is a detail seen in many Prairie Style houses, as well.

The Isermann house was built one year before its neighbor to the south, a larger Prairie Style house built for Frank and Jane Isermann; the houses share some distinct similarities. These include a projecting sunroom on the south wall, a brick exterior, a low-pitched hip roof, and the use of brick pilasters with narrow casements. The Anthony and Caroline Isermann House's implied entrance on the main elevation of the main block is a variation of the Frank and Jane Isermann House's main block, which has long windows on the first story that suggest an entrance behind a terrace accented with a brick wall that suggests a balustrade. The similarities between the two houses extends to their interiors. The first floor plans of both houses are nearly identical. The Frank and Jane Isermann House's interior is larger, but has the same open dining room-living room plan, with the same location of the kitchen, staircase, and sun room. The second floor interiors are also similar, with the larger house featuring larger bedrooms.

The interior of this house is equally important as an element of the Prairie Style. Interiors of Prairie Style homes were meant to flow together, with one room leading gracefully into the next in the public areas of the house. This is achieved in this house, despite its small size. The foyer is not totally enclosed; rather, the spaces between the foyer, sun room, living room, and dining room are defined with dividers, brick piers, and other techniques that give each room its individual space, yet maintain the feel of an open plan. For example, the sunroom is divided from the foyer not with a wall, but two brick piers and a large closet. While the piers run from ceiling to floor, the closet does not. The resulting "wall" separates the sunroom from the foyer, yet maintains a feeling of openness that a standard wall would not achieve. Likewise, the brick

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divider that defines the living room from the dining room and foyer creates a separation of these areas without losing the feeling of an open plan. The use of the "French" style doors between the foyer, sunroom, and dining room, is another way the architect defined the dining room space while maintaining the feeling of an open plan.

The architectural details of the interior also add to its fine interpretation of the Prairie Style. The simple wood trim, used elaborately throughout, along with details like light fixtures, add to the overall Prairie Style of the building. In particular, the plain pictures rails and the decorative ceiling moldings give the main rooms of the first floor a horizontal emphasis. The long built-in benches of the living room add to this effect, as well. The massive brick fireplace in the living room is another typical and high-quality detail that suggests the Prairie Style. The simple brick walls and concrete mantel are common to fireplaces in Prairie Style houses, and it is an architectural highlight of the room without being overwhelming.

That the Isermann house is a fine example of the Prairie Style can be attributed to its architect, Russell Barr Williamson. Williamson was influenced by the style as an architecture student during the late 1910s, and this influence reached its peak during Williamson's three-year employment with the master of the style, Frank Lloyd Wright. Many of the design elements Williamson used during the 1920s reflect elements of buildings he worked on with Wright during the late 1910s. This house, and its neighbor, the Frank and Jane Isermann House, were Williamson designs during his peak work in the Prairie Style. They have many of the features of his other Prairie Style houses, yet are not carbon copies of any particular building.

Russell Barr Williamson was, like Wright, a product of the Midwest. He was born in 1893 in Indiana and was raised on a farm near Princeton, Kansas. In 1909, Williamson entered Kansas State University with an initial interest in working for the forest service. He took sculpture classes at the university and changed his interest to art and, eventually, architecture. During the summer of 1913, Williamson went to Chicago and studied at the Art Institute. During this time, he undoubtedly became familiar with the work of the progressive Chicago architects. Before he received his degree in 1914, he wrote both Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright seeking employment. Wright hired him to work in his Chicago office and, by 1915, Williamson had progressed to the role of supervising architect for some of Wright's projects in Milwaukee.³

After Williamson's marriage to Nola Mae Hawthorne in 1916, the couple moved to one of the houses on Wright's estate at Taliesin. In 1916 and 1917, Williamson was Wright's chief assistant for the Imperial Hotel project in Japan and was the supervising architect on all of

³ Russell Barr Williamson, Jr., *Russell Barr Williamson—Architect*, Hot Springs, North Carolina: The Barr Brand, 2000, pp. 1-3.

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Wright's Milwaukee work, most importantly Wright's Bogk House, a seminal work that would influence Williamson for many years to come. The unstable financial and working conditions of Wright and his unconventional lifestyle caused Williamson and his wife to leave Taliesen in 1917. The Williamsons returned to Kansas, where Russell Barr established a solo practice in Kansas City.⁴

Williamson did not thrive in Kansas City due to the onset of World War I, but he did win fourth prize and some note for a Prairie Style vacation home design submitted to the White Pine architectural contest in 1918. He also received a commission to design a roundhouse building for the Pennsylvania Railroad in Logansport, Indiana. In 1919, Williamson decided that his prospects were better in Wisconsin, particularly in Milwaukee, where he was known from working on Wright's projects in that city. The family moved to Milwaukee in that year, beginning a productive period for the architect that would last throughout the 1920s.⁵

In Milwaukee, Williamson worked with Arthur L. Richards, president of the short-lived American Systems Built Homes, to design small and medium-sized houses. But, his most prolific work was individual designs for residences in the Milwaukee area, most of which were Prairie Style houses or Prairie-influenced houses. He also worked in the Period Revival styles, particularly the Mediterranean Revival style, where he could use some of his Prairie Style elements with Mediterranean motifs. His work on Wright's Bogk House influenced many of his Prairie Style designs during the 1920s. He used variations of the Bogk House form and massing and its details in many of the houses he designed, including the two Prairie Style houses in Kenosha. But, a comprehensive review of his work during this decade shows that while he was influenced by the Bogk House design, he did not slavishly repeat its elements in all of this work. He used other popular Prairie Style details and motifs to create distinctive and creative buildings.⁶

Architectural historians who have studied Williamson's work in Milwaukee during this period have noted some common forms in his designs. Williamson worked extensively with square plans, but often added asymmetrical wings. He used window bands in his Prairie houses and they were often accented with piers, sometimes with concrete caps or twisted columns in his Mediterranean Revival houses. He commonly used entrances in the side of houses and almost always used hip roofs in both his Prairie and Mediterranean Revival designs. His choice of

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Chapter 4, "The Years of the Prairie Homes," pp. 19-50.

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materials and colors were similar to Wright's, and he seemed to prefer to use brick veneers and concrete details.⁷

The Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II almost ruined Williamson's practice when he had few commissions. One notable work came at the end of the 1930s, the Prospect Avenue Apartment Building in Milwaukee. He designed temporary housing during World War II, in particular the housing units at the Army munitions plant near Baraboo, Wisconsin. He designed similar housing in Fargo, North Dakota. In the late 1940s, Williamson was involved in efforts to provide quick, economical post-war housing in the United States and in Europe, but these efforts were generally failures. During the 1950s, though, Williamson's practice was revived and he built a series of distinctive contemporary homes in Wisconsin that had similarities to the type of work that Frank Lloyd Wright was doing during this period. These fine contemporary homes capped off Williamson's career and he died in 1964.⁸

The Anthony and Caroline Isermann house is typical of the work that Williamson was designing during the 1920s. It uses common Prairie Style motifs that appear in many of Williamson's other work during this period. It is a well proportioned and distinctive home, uses a high quality of materials and workmanship, and most importantly, has a high quality of design. Russell Barr Williamson's work during the twentieth century places him in the category of master architect in Wisconsin. His broad range of work in the Prairie and Mediterranean Revival styles during the 1920s, and his post-World War II contemporary works show that he was a progressive architect who expanded the boundaries of traditional architecture. His works add to the works of other progressive architects in twentieth century Wisconsin to create an important body of work that makes the state architecturally distinctive.

The Isermann house is architecturally significant because it is a fine, locally significant example of the Prairie Style designed by a master architect. It is one of two important Prairie Style houses in Kenosha, sitting side-by-side along Seventh Avenue. Its architect, Russell Barr Williamson, was a master of the Prairie Style during the 1920s and his Milwaukee work is considered the best Prairie style work in that city. The Isermann house is among the best of Williamson's 1920s Prairie houses, with distinctive architectural features. Its historic integrity is very high, with most of its details intact, including some interior details that are not usually extant in 80-year-old houses. Because of its unusual historic design, its high quality of materials and workmanship and its high integrity, the Isermann house is an important architectural landmark in the city of Kenosha.

⁷ Gordon R. Birr, "Russell Barr Williamson A List of His Works 1919-1945," unpublished Master's thesis, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 1999, pp. v-vi.

⁸ Williamson, pp. 51-118.

Isermann, Anthony and Caroline, House
Name of Property

Kenosha
County and State

Wisconsin

9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 432800 4713820
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Carol Lohry Cartwright, Consultant	date	12/8/02
organization	prepared for the City of Kenosha	telephone	262-473-6820
street & number	W7646 Hackett Rd.	zip code	53190
city or town	Whitewater	state	WI

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Birr, Gordon R. "Russell Barr Williamson A List of His Works 1919-1945." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 1999.

City of Kenosha Landmark Nomination Form for the Anthony and Caroline Isermann House, June, 1996; on file in the Office of City Development, Municipal Building, Kenosha, Wisconsin.

Williamson, Russell Barr Jr. *Russell Barr Williamson—Architect*. Hot Springs, North Carolina: The Barr Brand, 2000.

Wyatt, Barbara, ed. *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Vol. II*. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Anthony and Caroline Isermann House sits on a rectangular parcel with the dimensions of 161.06 feet by 50 feet. The boundary description is the same as the legal description of the property: Commencing 60 rods south of the southeast corner of Lot 16, Lyman's Subdivision, then west to 8th Avenue, then south 50 feet, then east to 7th Avenue, then north to the place of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This boundary is the legal description of the property and it has been the historic enclosure of the Isermann house since its construction date.

Isermann, Anthony and Caroline, House
Name of Property

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County and State

Wisconsin

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title	Ronnie Roscioli-Greco	date	12/8/02
organization		telephone	262-657-7456
street&number	6416 Seventh Avenue	city or town	Kenosha
state	WI	zip code	53143

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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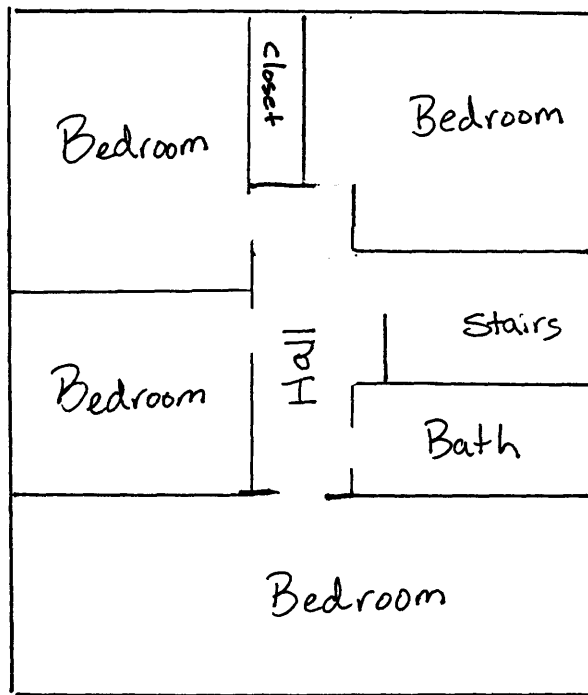
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ISERMANN, ANTHONY AND CAROLINE, HOUSE Kenosha, Kenosha County, WI.
Photos by C. Cartwright, September, 2002. Negatives on file in the Historic Preservation
Division of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin. Views:

- 1 of 15: Site view, from the east.
- 2 of 15: South ell, view from the southeast.
- 3 of 15: Rear elevation, view from the west.
- 4 of 15: Interior, first floor, sun room.
- 5 of 15: Interior, first floor, view of wall light fixture found throughout the house.
- 6 of 15: Interior, first floor, French style doors looking from sun room into dining room.
- 7 of 15: Interior, first floor, dining room.
- 8 of 15: Interior, first floor, dining room built-in cabinet.
- 9 of 15: Interior, first floor, living room.
- 10 of 15: Interior, first floor, living room showing fireplace.
- 11 of 15: Interior, first floor, kitchen.
- 12 of 15: Interior, first floor, kitchen floor showing original tiles.
- 13 of 15: Interior, second floor, hallway looking toward northwest corner bedroom.
- 14 of 15: Interior, second floor, hallway looking toward east bedroom.
- 15 of 15: Interior, second floor, inside southwest bedroom.

ISERMANN, ANTHONY AND CAROLINE, HOUSE
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Second Floor Plan



N →

First Floor Plan

