

STREET: N. 17th Street

NUMBER: 853

SHSW INTENSIVE SURVEY FORM

LOCATION

10 County Milwaukee

20 City or Village Milwaukee

30 Civil Town _____

35 Unincorporated Community _____

40 Location 853 N. 17th St.

50 Town-Range-Section _____

55 Quarter Sections _____

60 Verbal Boundary Description Well's Addition in southeast
quarter section 19 and northeast quarter section
30-7-22 block 23, east 67 feet (lots 1-2).

PROGRAM REVIEW

250 Tax Case Number _____

260 Compliance Case Number _____

270 A or D Grant Yes No

275 Covenant/Easement Dates _____

320 Ownership

private (P)

local-public (L)

state-public (S)

federal-public (F)

mixed, private-public (M)

330 Lead Agency (code) _____

SURVEY

90 Photo Codes MI 92-22, 23, 24

100 Survey Map 390

110 Map Code 92-22

120 Reconnaissance Survey Date 1979

130 Reconnaissance Surveyor Wenger/Hunton/Jensen

140 Intensive Survey Name (code) Westside

150 Intensive Surveyor Wenger/Hatala

155 Intensive Survey FY 1983

235 Survey Evaluation

eligible (E) not eligible (N)

237 Survey District Classification

pivotal (P) non-contributing (NC)

contributing (C)

240 Survey Level of Significance

national (NA) local (LO)

state (ST)

243 Survey Evaluation Criteria

event (A) architectural/engineering (C)

person (B) information potential (D)

245 Proposed District _____

280 NHL Date _____

290 HABS No. _____ 300 HAER No. _____

310 Local Landmark (code) _____

315 Associated Archeological Site(s) _____

Street**Address** 853 North 17th Street**ARCHITECTURE**

450 Date of Construction (source)

1875 (Milwaukee Sentinel 12/31/1875)(B)

460 Dates of Alterations/Additions (source)

480 Bulder (source)

490 and 500 Designer Type and Name (source)

 architect: Edward Townsend Mix (MS 12/31/1875)(B)

___ artist: _____

___ engineer: _____

___ interior designer: _____

___ landscape architect: _____

___ other: _____

510 Style or Form (code)

High Victorian Italiante^a

520 Building, Structure, Object or Site Type (code)

House530 Building Materials (code) Asbestos Shingles (roof)Brick _____ Stone (foundation)_____ Wood (trim)540 Interior Visited ___ Yes No

550 Structural System (code) _____

560 Plan Configuration (code) Rectangular

570 Number of Stories

2

580 Roof Shape (code)

Hip

590 Additional Description

620 Condition

___ excellent good ___ fair ___ poor ___ ruins

650 Related Buildings (code)

HISTORY

430 Common/Current Name

440 Historic Names (source)

660 Associated Individual(s) (dates) (source)

670 Associated Event (source)

680 Commercial/Industrial Historic Uses (source)

Description

The Thomas Cook House is a Victorian Gothic style residence. It is two stories with an attic level and sits on a high foundation of rock-faced, coursed ashlar limestone. Originally built as a double-house and now subdivided into six apartments, the plan centers on a rectangular block with a broadly sloping chalet style roof and center gabled pavilion on the main facade.

The Cook House is of frame construction encased with Milwaukee cream brick laid in common bond and trimmed with limestone in the banding, sills and lintels. The architectural character of this structure is derived from its picturesque but rustic decoration and detailing. The chalet style roof, a most unusual feature in Milwaukee, is supported by wood scroll-sawn brackets and a saw tooth frieze board. On the main facade in the gable end are two distinctive carved wooden dragons. Below this, the main entry is double-leaf paneled doors with overhead transoms inset in a segmental opening. Flanking the main entry are segmental, one-story bays on raised foundations with incised moldings. On the south facade is a segmental two-story bay of the same design. The windows in general are pointed-arched openings with either brick or incised stone lintels. Another distinctive feature is the lancet window contained within the chimney on the south facade. All of the elements combine to produce a highly picturesque residence that is emblematic of the Romantic period of American architecture.

The Cook House is located in what was once a fashionable neighborhood of upper-income mid-19th century housing. The house is sited to the front of its small lot with minimal a yard. There is no formal landscaping.

Changes to the Cook House have been minimal. The exterior is virtually intact and the only obvious alteration was the removal of the porch hood from the main entry.

Interiors were not visited.

Architectural/Engineering Statement of Significance

The Thomas Cook House is locally significant as a unique example of Victorian Gothic style residential architecture designed by master architect Edward Townsend Mix. Emblematic of the picturesque period in American house design as popularized in Andrew Jackson Downing's books of "Gothic" cottages, "Italian" villas and "Swiss" chalets, the Cook House with its combination of Gothic details and chalet style roof is a rarity in Milwaukee. In the context of similar residences from this period, the Cook House has remained as one of the best examples of the style and is known as the only one of its kind in the city. (See Historical Background for more information on the architect.)

690 Bibliographic References (Sources)

- (A) Milwaukee City Directories (1878-1881)
- (B) Milwaukee Sentinel, 12/31/1875
- (C) Old Settlers Club Obituary File Book #1, Milwaukee County Historical Society: unpublished scrapbook of randomly collected newspaper clippings, p. 47.
- (D) Milwaukee of Today: Cream City of the Lakes, Milwaukee: n.p., 1892. p. 128.
- (E) Flowers, Frank. History of Milwaukee. Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1881. pp. 1499-1500.
- (F) Whitney, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (deceased). Los Angeles: New Age Pub., 1956. pp. 423-24.

700 Study Units (code)

350 Demolished**360 Date Demolished**

— yes — no

Historical Background

Thomas Cook was a pioneer stone merchant who owned and operated extensive limestone quarries in Waukesha County. He began his business in 1853 and joined with Edwin Hyde in 1860 to form Cook and Hyde Stone Co. The firm was quite prolific supplying building stone to many of the city's major residential and commercial buildings of the nineteenth century. These included the Chamber of Commerce (Mackie Building), Plankinton House Hotel (razed), John Plankinton House (razed), St. Paul's Episcopal Church, T.A. Chapman Department Store (razed), Milwaukee Club and the Chicago, Milwaukee, & St. Paul Railroad Station (razed); and the Milwaukee Central Library, Forest Home Cemetery Chapel and the Blatz Brewery Company office building. The first seven sites on this impressive list of buildings were designed by Edward Townsend Mix. This illustrates the close business relationship that existed between Cook and Mix which resulted in Mix receiving the commission for Cook's double house. Built primarily as an investment rental property, Cook resided here from 1878 to 1881. He lived most of his life in Waukesha where he died in 1900. (A,C,D)

Edward Townsend Mix (b. 1831-d.1890) was born and educated at New Haven, CT. Mix moved to Milwaukee in 1856 to supervise the construction of a residence, and on its completion decided to remain in the City. A number of his early works were built in Chicago, planned in association with W.W. Boyington. While in Milwaukee during the 1880s he practiced jointly with W.A. Holbrook. Among the more important commissions were the Chamber of Commerce Building (Mackie Building) and the Mitchell Building; All Saints Episcopal Cathedral; St. Paul's Episcopal Church; Immanuel Presbyterian Church (all listed in the National Register). He designed many important residences including the Robert P. Fitzgerlad House, 1119 North Marshall Street (Historic American Buildings Survey) and the Judge Jason Downer House, 1201 North Prospect Avenue (Historic American Buildings Survey.) The Cook House is Mix's only surviving picturesque Victorian Gothic style house in Milwaukee. Shortly before his death in 1890, Mix moved to Minneapolis where he executed a number of large and important commissions. (E,F)

Historical Statement of Significance