

City, Village or Town: Eau Claire		County: Eau Claire	Surveyor: M. Taylor	Date: 11/5/81
Street Address: 907 Porter Avenue		Legal Description: Lots 8-10 Blk 70 Village of Eau Claire		Acreage: Less than one acre
Current Name & Use: Apartment building		Present Owner: Arthur Hotvedt		
Film Roll No. EC 2P	Current Owner's Address: 709 E. MacArthur Ave., Eau Claire		Special Features Not Visible In Photographs: UTM: Zone 15 Easting: 618930 Northing: 4962230 USGS Eau Claire East Quadrangle 1:24,000	
Negative No. 8	Facade Orient. W		Interior visited? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	



Original Name & Use: preferred John S., Owen, House (ECMRA)	Source A	Previous Owners	Dates	Uses	Source
Dates of Construction / Alteration 1923; 1948 (remodeled to five family apt. building)	Source B				
Architect and/or Builder: Unknown (period of historical significance - 1923-1930)	Source				

3 Architectural Significance

Represents work of a master

Possesses high artistic values

Represents a type, period, or method of construction

Is a visual landmark in the area

Other: _____ None

4 Historical Significance

Assoc. with lives of significant persons

Assoc. with significant historical events

Assoc. with development of a locality

Other: _____

None

Architectural Statement:

See continuation sheet.

Historical Statement:

See continuation sheet.

- 5** Sources of Information (Reference to Above)
- A** 1923 Eau Claire city directory
- B** assessor's card - city assessor's office
- C** Fisher, D. 1964. "The John S. Owen Enterprise" Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin
- D** LaLonde, J. 1979. Medford Corporation: A History of an Oregon Logging and Lumber Company, pp. 27-29.
- E** Barland, L. 1960. Sawdust City, p. 133.
- F**

6 Representation in Previous Surveys

HABS NAER WIHP NRHP landmark

other: _____

7 Condition

excellent good fair poor ruins

8 District: _____

pivotal contributing non-contributing

initials: _____ date: _____

9 Opinion of National Register Eligibility

eligible not eligible unknown

national state local initials: **MLT**

Porter Avenue

907

Plat Map #8

2P/8

ARCHITECTURAL STATEMENT:

The Owen residence, although a recognizable Colonial Revival building, is not nominated for its architectural significance as there are better examples of the style within the city. The large, nearly rectangular building is two stories and of brick construction. A medium gable roof covers the main block of the structure which features a symmetrically balanced facade focused on a central entrance. To either side of the entrance are four, six over six sash windows accented by prominent keystones and sills. (Note: There have been some window modifications. These are evident at the southwest corner of the building on both the south and west facades.) Above the entrance which itself is marked by an elliptical fanlight, sidelights, and a gabled portico is an undistinguished paired window opening. Small oval windows flank the opening. A large centrally located dormer is also featured. Covered by a gable roof that is supported by paired pilasters, the dormer contains a Palladian window, a feature common to the Colonial Revival style. Further distinguishing the structure are block modillions identifying the eave line and outlining the pediment that is formed on the south gable end of the building. A Palladian window decorates the pediment.

At the north end of the building is a two story addition set back somewhat from the plane of the main portion of the structure and containing garage space. The three bay section continues the architectural characteristics of the larger block.

In 1948 the private residence was converted to a five family apartment building.

(1981 photo - 25/26)

HISTORICAL STATEMENT:

Associated with the life of a significant person: The John S. Owen house is significant for its association with one of Eau Claire's most recognized lumber barons. John S. Owen, who arrived in Eau Claire in 1873, had diverse lumber holdings, was involved in several commercial and industrial enterprises, and took an active interest in civic affairs. His position within the community reflects the dominance of the lumber industry and the men who controlled it.

Owen's residence (This is the second home he constructed in Eau Claire. The first was demolished.) most closely represents his broad-based business and community commitments. It is also one of the small number of lumber baron homes remaining in the city.

Born in Charleston, Michigan, Owen (1849-1939) married Cora Rust, daughter of Aloney Rust, a Michigan lumberman. In 1873 he and his wife moved to Eau Claire, a city located in an area where the Rust family owned approximately 37,000 acres (C). Initially the Michigan native was employed by Henry C. Putnam, a primary figure in the location of land for Cornell University, as a clerk and probably as a timber scout. With this introduction to the pinelands and his connection to the Rust family, Owen easily launched a career in the lumber industry, which embraced major investments in a number of regional lumber companies: the John S. Owen Company, the Rust Owen Lumber Company, the Westville Lumber Company, the West Eau Claire Lumber Company, and the West Superior Lumber Company.

JOHN S. OWEN HOUSE (907 Porter Avenue)
Intensive Survey Form - Continuation Sheet (2)

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, when the exhaustion of timber resources in western and northern Wisconsin was apparent, Owen, like other lumbermen, began purchasing timber lands in Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana. After the turn of the century, he began investing in land on the west coast, in the states of California and Oregon. The Owen-Oregon Lumber Company, an Oregon-based concern incorporated in 1924, became Owen's last and largest venture (D).

Added to Owen's lumber holdings were several other business interests, including the Chippewa Valley Railway, Light and Power Company, the Union National Bank, and the Eau Claire Park Company (a real estate business). His public service encompassed a position as Eau Claire's park commissioner (1889) and terms on the Wisconsin State Highway Commission (1911-1921) and the Federal Reserve Board of Minneapolis (1915-1923). In 1913-14 Owen donated land along the Chippewa River for a city park, now known as Owen Park (C,E).

John Owen's first residence, a large frame structure, was located directly across the street from this home. A portion of the cedar block driveway that led to the residence is still visible. In 1923 when John Owen moved to this building, his son, Ralph, occupied the older structure. It was demolished in 1939-41.