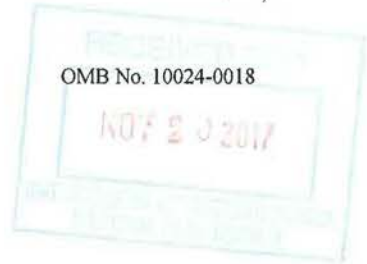


56-1954



NPS Form 10-900  
(Expires 5/31/2012)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)

**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** Gundersen, Dr. Adolf and Helga, Cottage  
**other names/site number** Helgaland

**2. Location**

<b>street &amp; number</b>	1000 US Highway 14/61			N/A	<b>not for publication</b>
<b>city or town</b>	La Crosse			N/A	<b>vicinity</b>
<b>state</b> Wisconsin	<b>code</b> WI	<b>county</b> La Crosse	<b>code</b> 063	<b>zip code</b> 54601	

**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.)

  
Signature of certifying official/Title

11/16/2017  
Date

**State Historic Preservation Office - Wisconsin**  
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

Gundersen, Dr. Adolf and Helga, Cottage

La Crosse

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:)

*John Edson H. Beall*  
Signature of the Keeper

1.4.18  
Date of Action

### 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(check as many boxes as 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
2	0 buildings
0	0 sites
0	0 structures
0	0 objects
2	0 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 previously listed in the National Register**

0

### 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/camp

DOMESTIC/secondary structure

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/secondary structure

### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> & 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls LOG

roof ASPHALT

other STUCCO

### Narrative Description

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

**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 (C)  
 Medicine (B)  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1918 (C)  
 1918-1938 (B)  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

N/A  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Gundersen, Dr. Adolf  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Bentley and Merman  
 Peter Nelson and Son  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

Name of Property

County and State

## 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: University of Wisconsin – La Crosse Archives and Special Collections, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, La Crosse County Register of Deeds

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 61.5 acres

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

1	<u>15N</u>	<u>638809.34</u>	<u>4854049.5</u>	3	<u>15N</u>	<u>638784.37</u>	<u>4853781.75</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>15N</u>	<u>638781.18</u>	<u>4853771.53</u>	4	<u>15N</u>	<u>639193.49</u>	<u>4853142.75</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		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

<b>name/title</b>	Rowan Davidson, Associate AIA & Jennifer Lehrke, AIA, LEED AP, NCARB	<b>date</b>	December 2, 2016
<b>organization</b>	Legacy Architecture, Inc.	<b>telephone</b>	(920) 788-6808
<b>street &amp; number</b>	605 Erie Avenue, Suite 101	<b>zip code</b>	53081
<b>city or town</b>	Sheboygan	<b>state</b>	WI

Name of Property

County and State

**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.

<b>name/title</b>	Sigurd, Jean, and Ann Gundersen	<b>date</b>	December 2, 2016
<b>organization</b>	Gundersen Family Revocable Trust	<b>telephone</b>	(608) 785-2645
<b>street &amp; number</b>	1000 US Highway 14/61	<b>zip code</b>	54601
<b>city or town</b>	La Crosse	<b>state</b>	WI

**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.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 1

Gundersen, Dr. Adolf and Helga, Cottage  
City of La Crosse, La Crosse County, WI

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**Narrative Description**

The Dr. Adolf and Helga Gundersen Cottage (hereafter referred to as the Gundersen Cottage, or simply, the Cottage) is a fine and unique example of a Scandinavian inspired Arts and Crafts summer home constructed in 1918. The Gundersen's referred to this house as the "Cottage"; however, it is certainly not a cottage in the traditional sense. A cottage is defined as a small, modest house, whereas, this house is quite large and impressive. The Gundersen Cottage is linear, one-and-one-half stories, and oriented on an east-west axis. The primary massing is long and broad, with smaller crossing gables near either end. The house features vertical log walls, leaded glass windows, half-timbering, massive stone chimneys, decorative arched openings, wood brackets, rafter ends, and scalloped bargeboards, in addition to an interior with heavy beams, wood carvings, and Nordic designs. A small wood frame shed, or ice house, is also located on the secluded property and is considered a contributing resource. The highly individual design, like vernacular Scandinavian summer cottages, was produced by the notable Prairie Style architects Otto Merman and Percy Bentley of La Crosse. The Cottage design also carries traits of the Arts and Crafts style, and some formal similarities to Prairie style houses, while exhibiting the log construction, open beam interior, and Nordic designs associated with Scandinavian building traditions.

Adolph Gundersen was a prominent Norwegian medical doctor who immigrated to La Crosse in 1891. Gundersen and his family played a large role in the establishment of the Gundersen Clinic, the Lutheran Hospital, and the advancement of modern medical practices and standards in La Crosse in the early-twentieth century. The Cottage was constructed in 1918 at the northern end of Barron Island, in what was then a remote and wetland location surrounded by the Mississippi River while still close to the City of La Crosse. Now within the municipal boundaries of the city of La Crosse, the house, sited opposite the west bank of the river, is set back from adjacent parts of the island occupied by a public park and US Highway 14/61 and a couple of bridges. The Cottage and its surroundings are largely unchanged since its construction.

**Building Description**

The Dr. Adolf and Helga Gundersen Cottage was constructed in 1918 on Barron Island, then in the State of Minnesota. The site, consisting of a landscape of sandbanks and low-lying woods, has shifted and altered since the Cottage's original construction. Originally named *Helgaland* after Helga, Dr. Adolf Gundersen's wife, the building was built on dredged land, leveled at sixteen feet, to raise the site above the floodplain of the surrounding river. The Gundersen summer home is located at the edge of La Crosse facing the main channel of the Mississippi River opposite Minnesota. Adjacent to the property to the east is La Crosse's Pettibone Park, one the largest public parks in the area and a significant wildlife refuge along the river. Constructed on a large sixty-one-acre site of woods and wetland, the house is set back even further from the nearby highway, bridges, and roads at the northern

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Gundersen, Dr. Adolf and Helga, Cottage  
City of La Crosse, La Crosse County, WI

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point of the island. The house is oriented east-west so that its long single-story axis is parallel to, and maximizes, views of the river to the north. The building has two cross-gable wings, one single story and the other two stories, at either end of this long single story. The large ice house is located to the west of the house and is contributing. There had been a matching garage, also located to the west; this garage has been demolished. The expansive property is largely wetlands, and the entire property was used recreationally by the Gundersen family since the summer home was constructed. The Cottage was originally fitted with a septic tank, sub-irrigation system, and pump on the site for water. There was also a design for a monumental gateway along the drive to the Cottage featuring a stone base and small wood-frame tower along with a swinging gate included in the original architectural drawings. It is unknown if this feature was ever constructed. There are no other buildings or structures on the large site besides the Gundersen Cottage and the ice house, though smaller outbuildings and objects such as a pigeon coop, chicken coop, pump house, a small animal shed, a dock, and assorted tree placards once existed, but have since been demolished. This assortment of small buildings was clustered around the southwest corner of the house, near the existing drive on the property.

The south façade of the Gundersen Cottage is primarily a single-story building with raised cross-gabled central block that extend up to one and one-half story. The Cottage rests on a shallow exposed concrete foundation with screened vent openings to the crawl space below. The small stoop in front of the main entry consists of brick steps. The exterior walls of the Cottage are constructed with large vertical pine timbers. This method of building can be found in more rustic building types in the United States and occasionally in the vernacular architecture of Scandinavia. These timbers are caulked, painted, and terminate at approximately eight feet up the façade. The lower vertical logs give way to decorative, dark, wood half-timbering and stucco at the upper levels of the house, especially at the gabled end-wall sections. There are two small wood windows with a leaded diamond pattern centered on the façade to the west of the main entry. Beyond these are two sets of two large wood casement windows with a leaded diamond pattern spaced evenly on the center of the south façade. There is a single wood casement window toward the far west end of the façade. All the windows have wood trim, sills, and a dark wood band wrapping around the Cottage expressing the header above the windows. Except for the large screened openings at the east side porch, all the windows have leaded glass with a diamond pattern and a casement out-swinging mechanism. The main door, set near the larger of the two gable ends to the east end of the south façade, is a wood door with an integrated fixed leaded glass window in a Tudor-arch opening and wrought-iron hardware. All the wood windows and doors are original. There is a large shed dormer that extends from the main exterior wall at the western end of the south façade. This dormer has a set of three smaller windows at the first-floor level, a set of three carved wood panels immediately above, and another set of three small windows at the top above the roof line. The large gable end at the east end of the south façade of the cottage is divided into five typical windows at the first floor with a band of sawn wood boards above and three more windows above the roof line. These fixed windows have angled tops complementing the gable end and serving

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Gundersen, Dr. Adolf and Helga, Cottage  
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as clerestory windows for the interior. There are copper lined flower boxes immediately in front of the first-floor windows.

The roof is of asphalt shingles on a low slope and terminates with deep overhangs and exposed rafter tails. The rafters are carved into intricate curving shapes. Heavy curved brackets extend from the underside of the overhang at the gable ends facing the south. Details at or around the roof line feature alternating spindles and flat posts with decorative scalloped bargeboards at the gable ends. There are also two short, but massive split boulder chimneys with metal flashing at the intersection of the roof plains with the narrow side facing the driveway. The gutters and downspouts are of iron and have dragon-headed forms at either side of the entry.

The other facades of the Cottage share the same material palette as the south façade. The west façade for instance is arranged with the same low concrete foundation wall. However, in this location there is a basement interior space and thus a concrete window well and a small fixed window centered on the façade. The side entry is a pair of simple wood screen doors and a series of concrete steps. The majority of the west façade is also vertical timbers along the first floor and half-timber and stucco above in the gable end. There is a single small window in the center of the façade and a larger one balancing the pair of doors at the south end of the façade. The gable of the first-floor dining room extends to the north and is visible along the west façade. The fenestration along this section of the cottage has large, double-hung windows with the same leaded glass in a diamond pattern. This is the only location on the building with double-hung windows. There is a large set of louvers centered in the top of the gable end, and the roof is like elsewhere with a decorative bargeboard, heavy wood brackets supporting the overhang, exposed rafter ends, and a hip knob finial at the top of the gable along an asphalt shingled roof.

The north façade is long with a strong horizontal emphasis like the south façade and is almost its mirror image. The Cottage stretches out along an east-west axis as a one-story building with two gable ends extending out at either end toward the north. The eastern gable end is one-and-one-half stories in height. The siding is vertical pine timber, painted and caulked, along the first floor with dark wood half-timber and stucco above the line of fenestration. The rear entry, which closely resembles the main entry, has a brick stoops and steps, a pair of large wood doors in a Tudor-arch opening, wood brackets, and a deep overhang with iron gutters and downspouts, and is located next to the one and one-half story gabled end section toward the east end of the north façade. There are four pairs of casement windows spread across the center of the façade directly beneath a wood band and the stucco finish above. Like elsewhere, these windows are wood with leaded glass in a diamond pattern. There is a single smaller pair towards the western end of the façade and a pair of screened openings at the porch at the eastern end of the façade. The large gable end at the east end of the façade contains the living room and is identical to the opposite side on the south façade with a series of five windows, sawn



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boards, and pointed fixed windows above with vertical timber siding below and half-timber and stucco above. The gable end of the dining room towards the west end of the façade has a set of three, large wood double-hung windows. Except for the large screened openings at the east side porch, all the windows are leaded glass with a diamond pattern. The gable ends have exposed heavy brackets and decorative bargeboards to compliment the exposed rafters and deep overhang of the side gabled portion of the north façade. The large stone chimneys along the low-sloped asphalt shingle roof are also clearly visible.

The east façade of the Gundersen Cottage is symmetrical with the same materials and massing as found elsewhere on the building. The cottage is constructed with an exposed concrete foundation with occasional vents to the space below. The porch section of the Cottage is most visible along this façade with a series of three, large screened openings spaced equally in the gable end of vertical timber exterior walls and a pattern of half-timber and stucco above. The roof of the porch gable end has exposed wood brackets, detailed bargeboard, and a single hip knob finial. Behind the gable end of the single-story portion of the east façade the side of the one-and-one-half story gable of the living room space is visible. At the first floor, the band of wood casement windows wraps around with a single window visible at each corner on the north and south sides of the cottage. Like elsewhere, the first floor at this location is of vertical pine timber and half-timber and stucco above along the side.

The main first floor is arranged with two poles of the living room and porch at the eastern end and the dining room and kitchen at the western end of the cottage. A large gallery serves as a hall with a maid's room, two bedrooms, two toilets, a bath, a large closet, and the main entry arranged between the two sides. The upper floor consists only of a lofted space, a balcony overlooking the one and one-half story space of the living room, and a large and low attic for storage. The basement is largely unexcavated with shallow concrete foundation walls with a small cellar for storage at the western end of the Cottage under the side entry and maid's quarters. The Scandinavian architectural theme is most noticeable on the interior of the Gundersen Cottage. A Rustic style aesthetic is displayed using natural materials and wood craftsmanship. The unpainted vertical log walls found on the exterior continue on the interior of the outer walls. Other perimeter walls are finished with plaster or wood panels with leaded glass wood windows. Specifically, the living room features a one and one-half story height ceiling supported by large timber trusses and a balcony with an open wooden railing around the massive, tapered stone fireplace and chimney.

The balcony is supported by nine wood beams cantilevered from the wall; each end is carved with a whimsical human face. These carvings were produced by Rudolph Blatter, a Swiss woodcarver working with the Hackner Altar Company of La Crosse, a successful altar and furniture maker. Likewise, the dining room has stenciled friezes and another large stone fireplace with a brick hearth and a wrought iron crane. The kitchen has paneled and glazed doors to various wood drawers and

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cupboards. Throughout the cottage molding and spaces between beams is stenciled with traditional Scandinavian patterns featuring intertwining vines, dragons, gnomes, chains, and geometric shapes. The roof structure of 4 x 8 wood joists is typically exposed and detailed. There are wood doors, often set in Tudor-arch or pointed openings and panels of sawn boards serve as wainscoting on the interior. Some of the furniture, specifically tables and benches, were designed along with the house to further enhance the home's aesthetic.

There is a wood ice house to the west of the cottage. This side gable building was a part of the original construction and is considered a contributing resource in this nomination as its materials and style approximately match the cottage. The ice house building is side gable small building with a large sliding wood door facing the cottage to the east. The small vertical log building sits on a concrete slab and lacks fenestration or details. The gable ends have board and batten siding and the simple pitched roof is asphalt shingles. While the foundation of a garage, constructed in 1918 and designed to match the cottage, remains, the building was destroyed by flooding in 1965.

#### Integrity

The Gundersen Cottage has excellent integrity having been minimally changed from its historic period, with most changes related to weatherization and mechanical upgrades. The house has been occupied by members of the Gundersen family and carefully preserved since its construction and its historic setting has been preserved. Both the historic exterior and interior finishes remain and there have been no significant additions or alterations to the building. This is also true of the small adjacent ice house. Recent work on the cottage, intended to update and weatherize the cottage for use as a year-round residence, has carefully maintained the historic integrity of the building including repairing historic windows and log siding.

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Gundersen, Dr. Adolf and Helga, Cottage  
City of La Crosse, La Crosse County, WI

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**Statement of Significance**

The Dr. Adolf and Helga Gundersen Cottage is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places having local significance under Criterion C for Architecture as a highly artistic and individualized example of a Nordic interpretation of Arts and Crafts design and having local significance under Criterion B for Medicine for its relationship to the life of Dr. Adolf Gundersen, a notable and influential La Crosse physician. The period of significance for Architecture is limited to the date of the cottage's construction in 1918, while the period of significance for Medicine extends from the date of the cottage's construction in 1918 to the death of Dr. Adolf Gundersen in 1938.

The Adolf and Helga Gundersen Cottage is a fine and unique example of a Scandinavian inspired Arts and Crafts summer home constructed in 1918. The linear, one-and-one-half story, east-west cottage is composed of a long and broad house with smaller crossing gables near either end. The cottage features vertical log walls, leaded glass windows, half-timbering, massive stone chimneys, decorative arched openings, wood brackets, rafter ends, and scalloped bargeboards, in addition to an interior with heavy beams, wood carvings, and Nordic designs. A small wood frame ice house is also located on the secluded property and is considered a contributing resource. The highly artistic and individualized design, evoking characteristics of Scandinavian design, was created by the notable Prairie style architects Otto Merman and Percy Bentley of La Crosse. The Cottage design also carries traits of the Arts and Crafts style, and some formal similarities to Prairie style houses, while exhibiting the log construction, open beam interior, and Nordic designs associated with Scandinavian building traditions.

Adolph Gundersen was a prominent Norwegian medical doctor who immigrated to La Crosse in 1891. Gundersen and his family played a large role in the establishment of the Gundersen Clinic, the Lutheran Hospital, and the advancement of modern medical practices and standards in La Crosse in the early-twentieth century. Dr. Gundersen was honored with the knighthood of the Royal Norwegian Order of St. Olaf in 1926, an honorary member of the Medical Society of Oslo, a fellow of the American College of Surgeons, a member of the Scandinavian Surgical Society, an honorary member of the Christiania Surgical Society, a regent of the University of Wisconsin, and was inducted into the Wisconsin Business Hall of Fame in 2013. In 1918, Adolf and Helga Gundersen constructed a summer cottage. The house was constructed at the northern end of Barron Island, in what was then a remote and wetland location surrounded by the Mississippi River while still close to the city of La Crosse. Now within the city of La Crosse, the Cottage, sited opposite the west bank of the river, is set back from adjacent parts of the island occupied by a public park and US Highway 14/61 and a couple of bridges. The Cottage and its surroundings are largely unchanged since its construction with the exception of the removal of a number of small outbuildings previously located near the cottage. These outbuildings, which included a garage, pump house, and chicken coop, were removed due to significant water damage.

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**Continuation Sheet**

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Gundersen, Dr. Adolf and Helga, Cottage  
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**Historic Background**

The area that is now the City of La Crosse was originally a popular location for fur traders along the east bank of the Mississippi River, and a fur trading post was established there in 1840s. In 1841, Nathan Myrick established the first trading post and constructed a non-extant log building on Barron Island. In 1843, the post was moved to the east bank of the river and renamed 'La Crosse.' The site remained a small settlement until the 1850s when it experienced rapid growth. The surrounding prairie proved to be excellent farm land, and the geographical advantage of the high banks of the Mississippi River made the location an excellent dock for river traffic and steamboats and immune to flooding. River trade spurred on economic growth, and the population went from 573 inhabitants in 1853 to 3,860 people in 1860. In 1857, Alzono Barron established "Island City" in Houston County, Minnesota on the opposite bank of the Mississippi River from La Crosse. Various attempts in the late-nineteenth century to subdivide and develop the island failed.<sup>1</sup>

The name La Crosse is derived from the common name of the field sport, which was popular with the native Ho-Chunk tribe that occupied the area as a frequent meeting place and location for trade along the Mississippi River. The area was originally known to settlers by the French 'Prairie La Crosse.'<sup>2</sup>

The 1860s and 1870s saw the establishment of large industries, railway lines, banks, local government, and an economy based on transportation and access to a large river port. The neighboring Village of North La Crosse was annexed in 1871. La Crosse became the second largest city in the state with 7,785 people in 1870 and 14,505 by 1880. The Milwaukee Railroad (the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul) arrived in 1858 and expanded over the following decades as two more railways were introduced in 1876. The railroads slowly displaced steamboats as the main mode of transportation and trade serving a vibrant lumbering industry. The lumber industry eventually declined and moved away. The 1890s saw a decline in growth due to economic recession, and by the 1910s and 1920s, the economy of the city had completely changed, with the lack of both lumber mills and the end of widespread river traffic. Infrastructure such as paved streets, municipal electricity, deep wells and water works, a public health department and hospitals, large public schools, zoning laws, and a park system were all introduced by 1913. The population of La Crosse reached 30,421 people in 1920.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hessel, Susan and Gayda Hollnagel. *A History of La Crosse, Wisconsin in the Twentieth Century*. La Crosse, WI: La Crosse Historical Society, 2007; & Rausch, Joan and Richard Zeitlin. *City of La Crosse, Wisconsin Intensive Architectural/Historical Survey Report*. Prepared for City Planning Department, City of La Crosse. 1984.

<sup>2</sup> Sanford, Albert and H.J. Hirshheimer. *A History of La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1841-1900*. La Crosse, WI: La Crosse County Historical Society, 1951.

<sup>3</sup> Godden, Laura and Paul Beck. *La Crosse, Postcard History Series*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2015; & Rausch, Joan and Richard Zeitlin. *Historic La Crosse: Architectural and Historic Record: A Summary of an Intensive Survey Report*. Architectural Researches, Inc. and Historical Resources, Inc., 1984.

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Notable La Crosse native, lumber baron, and two term mayor, A.W. Pettibone acquired most of Barron Island in 1901 and deeded the 200-acre property to the Pettibone Park Commission to serve as Public Park for the City of La Crosse. The following year, Pettibone encouraged Barron Island to be deeded to Wisconsin from Minnesota. The park was developed over the following years with a bathhouse designed by architect Otto Merman, small park buildings, and a public swimming area. The northern portion of the island was divided from Pettibone's property and was known as Thompson Island, named after its owner Theodore Thompson. This portion of the island was purchased by Adolf Gundersen in 1916 for \$1.00, and a cottage was constructed in 1918. The land was finally transferred to Wisconsin in 1918 by an act of Congress and annexed by the City of La Crosse one year later.<sup>4</sup>

The growth of La Crosse slowed considerably in the 1920s and 1930s as the Depression further eroded the transportation based economy of the city. The population reach in 39,614 in 1930 and 47,535 people in 1950. Labor trouble in the 1950s was commonplace and further slowed growth of the city in comparison to other cities in Wisconsin.<sup>5</sup>

### **The Gundersen Family and the History of Medicine in La Crosse**

Adolf Gundersen was born in Asnes, Norway in 1865, and Helga Sara Isaksetre was also born in Asnes, Norway in 1867. Adolf attended medical school in Norway and graduated from the Royal University in Oslo in 1890. He immigrated to the United States in 1891 to advance his career, settling in La Crosse, Wisconsin to work with Doctor Christian Christensen, also a Norwegian immigrant. Two years later he returned to Norway, married Helga, and then returned to La Crosse to practice as a physician. The couple had eight children, including Borge born in 1894, Sigurd born in 1895, Gunnar born in 1897, Alf Helge born in 1898, Trygve born in 1902, Sven born in 1905, Thorolf born in 1911, and Helga born in 1913. Six of the children would later become medical physicians like their father.

#### **Helga Gundersen**

Helga, who had been a school teacher in Norway before marrying Adolf, founded the Ibsen Club in La Crosse and served as its president for fifty years. She is also reported to have served as a local leader and moral authority in the Norwegian community of southwest Wisconsin and actively encouraged her family to return home, to Norway, as often as possible.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Marcou, David, Ed. *Spirit of La Crosse: A Grassroots History*. La Crosse, WI: Speranza Publishing and Western Wisconsin Technical College, 2000; & "Prairie Steps," Footsteps of LaCrosse: A Journey through Time and Architecture website. <[www.footstepsoflacrosse.org/tours/prairie-steps](http://www.footstepsoflacrosse.org/tours/prairie-steps)>, accessed November 14, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> La Crosse Historical Society. *La Crosse, Wisconsin, Images of America Series*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> Parlin, Geri. "Opening the door on the Gundersen Cottage," *La Crosse Tribune*. October 1, 2006; & Bergland, Betty and Lori Ann Lahlum, ed., *Norwegian American Women: Migration, Communities, and Identities*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2011.

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Medical Practice in La Crosse

Norwegians were the second largest historical immigrant group to locate in La Crosse and the surrounding region, arriving as early as 1851 and continuing to immigrate into the early-twentieth century. The Norwegian community was prominent in farming, business, and medicine, and two Norwegian language newspapers were published in La Crosse in the late-nineteenth century. Like other immigrant groups, there was some friction with the social elite, and Gundersen specifically disliked the Yankee clients who were hesitant to trust an immigrant doctor. The Gundersen family maintained ties to Norway, actively fostering relations between American and Norwegian medical fields.<sup>7</sup>

The La Crosse Medical Society was established in 1855, and by 1891, when Adolf Gundersen immigrated to the area, the city directory listed thirty-three physicians. While medical practice was sometimes performed by traveling salesmen, quack doctors, clergymen, and barbers during this time, legitimate medical doctors established a foothold in the community. St. Francis Hospital incorporated in 1883, and Lutheran Hospital incorporated in 1890 in La Crosse. Advances in medical technology and microbiology at the turn-of-the-century improved medical conditions considerably, and the La Crosse Board of Health was instituted in 1910.<sup>8</sup>

Adolf Gundersen became a prominent and influential doctor in La Crosse and a local household name by the early-twentieth century. He often conducted house visits, which were common and often safer than hospital visits due to contamination at the turn-of-the-century. Before the Gundersen clinic opened in 1902, doctor's visits and operations were most often conducted in private homes.<sup>9</sup>

When local clergy planned for a new hospital, Dr. Gundersen recognized the opportunity and served as the first director of the hospital. The Gundersen Clinic and Lutheran Hospital have a historically close relationship due to the role of Dr. Adolf Gundersen as the first medical director of the hospital and the manager of the clinic next door. In 1917, Adolf Gundersen went to the hospital board to insist that his clinic have control over medical practice at Lutheran Hospital.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Midelfort, H. Christine. *A Norwegian Immigrant's Accommodation to America: The Early Letters of Dr. Adolf Gundersen*. Peninsula Nordic Study Circle Lecture Series, 2005-2006; & Bergland, Betty A.; Lori Ann Lahlum. *Norwegian American Women: Migration, Communities, and Identities*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society, 2011.

<sup>8</sup> "2013 Laureates. Dr. Adolf Gundersen. Gundersen Health System," *Gundersen Health System*. March 20, 2016; & Hessel, Susan. *Medicine, the Gundersen Experience, 1891-1991*. La Crosse, WI: Gundersen Clinic, 1991.

<sup>9</sup> "Physician is father of family of doctors," *Milwaukee Journal*. May 4, 1930.

<sup>10</sup> "Celebrating our 125th Year of Caring," *Gundersen Health System*. March 20, 2016; & Boudreau, Richard. *National Attention: Local Connection*. La Crosse, WI: 2013

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Dr. Gundersen was honored with the knighthood of the Royal Norwegian Order of St. Olaf in 1926, and was an honorary member of the Medical Society of Oslo, a fellow of the American College of Surgeons and in the Scandinavian Surgical Society, an honorary member of the Christiania Surgical Society, a regent of the University of Wisconsin, and was inducted into the Wisconsin Business Hall of Fame in 2013.<sup>11</sup>

Originally located in a rented second floor space in the extant Solberg Building at 127-129 South 3rd Street in downtown La Crosse, listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing resource to the La Crosse Commercial Historic District, the Gundersen Clinic moved to a new extant 17,000 square-foot building located at 1836 South Avenue adjacent to the La Crosse Lutheran Hospital in 1930. Gundersen established the new Gundersen Clinic in 1930 with four of his sons: Sigurd, Gunnar, Alf, and Thorolf. In 1944, Gundersen's physician sons created the Gundersen Medical Foundation, now known as Gundersen Health System.<sup>12</sup>

Dr. Adolf Gundersen died in Norway in 1938 at the age of 72. After his death, his family established the Gundersen Foundation to encourage continuing education amongst the medical profession. Helga Gundersen died in 1951 at the age of 83. Both Adolph and Helga are buried in Oak Grove Cemetery in La Crosse. The Gundersen cottage was inherited by their son Sigurd and his wife Eleanor Gundersen. In 1979, ownership of the property was passed on common ownership of the Gundersen family, which established a trust in 2006.<sup>13</sup>

While the Gundersen Cottage has a clear association with the lives of Adolf and Helga Gundersen and their children, the extant Gundersen family home, located at 1231 Ferry Street in the City of La Crosse, was their primary residence for Dr. Adolf Gundersen's practice in the early-twentieth century from 1893 to 1914. However, the house along Ferry Street lacks architectural integrity from its Queen Anne design according to Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps and was not the Gundersen's home during the following period of major contributions to local Medicine during the 1920s and 1930s. In 1914, the Gundersen family moved to non-extant house located at 1509 King Street in the City of La Crosse. Therefore, the Gundersen Cottage is the best historic property most closely associated with the life of Dr. Adolf Gundersen, a significant person in La Crosse's medical community and its history.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> '1941-1945, Gundersen Island.' Photographs on record at the Murphy Library Special Collections, UW-La Crosse.

<sup>12</sup> "The Gundersen Brothers and the Growth of the Gundersen Clinic," *Massachusetts General Hospital Surgical Society*. Vol. 6, no. 2, Fall 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Gundersen Cottage National Register Nomination Questionnaire, 1984; Deed record for Lots 2 & 3, Section 12, Township 104 North, Range 4 West in LaCrosse County.

<sup>14</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of La Crosse, 1906, updated 1921 and 1941. On file at the Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, WI.

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Four generations of the Gundersen family have been involved with the Gundersen Clinic, Gundersen Lutheran, and Gundersen Medical Foundation since their establishment. Adolf's son, Gunnar, attended Columbia University School of Medicine and specialized in orthopedic surgery and returned to practice in La Crosse. In 1958, Gunnar Gundersen was elected president of the American Medical Association.<sup>15</sup>

The Gundersen Medical Foundation's presence could attract specialists and encouraged the development of special local services such as the Gundersen Heart Institute, the Gundersen Cancer Center, a renal-dialysis unit, comprehensive rehabilitative medicine services, nurse-midwifery services, bariatric patient surgery, and obstetrical care. In 1995, the Gundersen Clinic officially merged with Lutheran Hospital to form Gundersen Lutheran, later renamed Gundersen Health System. Gundersen and Lutheran served a market larger than La Crosse and needed to expand further. The institution now has clinics in three states and more than 6,000 employees.<sup>16</sup>

In 1918, the Gundersen family constructed a summer home on what was then known as Barron Island in the Mississippi River adjacent to the City of La Crosse. The Gundersen Cottage was intended as a summer-only retreat and escape for the Gundersen family from the hustle of city living only a few miles away in La Crosse. The cottage, and its surrounding natural site, was a place of recreation for the family. The Gundersen Cottage has always been owned and occupied by members of the family. Adolf and Helga Gundersen moved to an extant Queen Anne style house at 1231 Ferry Street in the City of La Crosse in 1895. The family then moved to a home along King Street in La Crosse in 1914 (non-extant).<sup>17</sup> The remainder of Thompson Island, the northern portion of Pettibone's original property, was purchased by the Gundersen family and added to the land occupied by the summer cottage during the 1920s and 1930s.

The Solberg Building, constructed as a commercial block in 1870, lacks integrity as a clinic due to architectural changes on the exterior and interior such as new storefronts, bricked in windows, and more recent masonry work. The Gundersen Clinic at 1836 South Avenue similarly lacks any architectural integrity due to extensive subsequent additions and alterations due to hospital expansions.

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<sup>15</sup> Parlin, Geri. "Opening the door on the Gundersen Cottage."

<sup>16</sup> Gundersen Lutheran Health Plan, January 1, 2009; & 'History,' Gundersen Health System website. <[www.gundersenhealth.org/our-system/history](http://www.gundersenhealth.org/our-system/history)>, accessed November 14, 2016.

<sup>17</sup> Gundersen Cottage National Register Nomination Questionnaire, 1984. On file at the Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI.



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**Architecture**

The Dr. Adolf and Helga Gundersen Cottage is locally significant in the area of Architecture as a highly artistic and individualized example of an Arts and Crafts style home, drawing its design from Nordic inspiration, and having a high level of integrity. The Architectural Study Units of Wisconsin's Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP) does not address this combination, because this house is a unique, architect designed creation, fashioned from borrowing and combining numerous stylistic influences and the homeowners own unique stylistic preferences to create an exceptional work of unique design. While not fitting neatly into a common architectural style of the period, the design of the Gundersen Cottage can be considered a Rustic style cottage in the spirit of the Arts and Crafts movement with which the architects were familiar. The origins of the Arts and Crafts movement, focused on the revival of craftsmanship, medieval tradition, cooperation, and decorative arts as a counter to industrial standardization and stylistic eclecticism and revivals, was reinterpreted in the United States, where it is relatively rare, as a conscious influence on the Prairie and Craftsman styles and their purveyors. The Arts and Crafts movement can also be understood as the first phase of the development of modern architecture in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The architectural emphasis on modernized ornament, 'honesty' in materials, and structural expression inspired further developments including the Prairie style in the United States. The architects of the Gundersen Cottage, Percy Bentley and Otto Merman, applied these concepts to create a design that reflected the identity and values of their client. The case of the Gundersen Cottage can be understood in this stylistic context not as a literal application of the Arts & Crafts style, but rather as a design adaptation that stressed a vernacular Norwegian type as inspiration combined with the methods of modern architecture.<sup>18</sup>

Adolph Gundersen had the cottage constructed for his wife, Helga, and the building was even named *Helgaland* initially. The family still refers to the site as *The Island*. Gundersen consciously wanted to create a 'natural' and secluded retreat for his family near the city of La Crosse, and it is likely that the specifically Norwegian elements can be traced to the owner's influence. The site itself, covering over sixty acres of wetland, was an integral component of how the cottage and its surroundings were used by the Gundersens. While much of the area was not developed, the family used the land for exploring, resting, and boating regularly and constructed outbuildings, a road, and various objects on the grounds and in the woods. The landscape of the site is interconnected to the significance of the property as a purposeful setting, directly influencing the reason the site was chosen and the way in which the home was a retreat and respite from work and other daily pressures. According to contemporary family members, the site was consciously chosen by the Gundersen family for its relative seclusion and natural

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<sup>18</sup> Wyatt, Barbara, Ed. *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin: Volume 2, a Manual for Historic Properties*. Madison, Wisconsin: Historic Preservation Division State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986; & McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses, Second Edition*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013.

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setting away from the City of the La Crosse. It is possible that the site in the Mississippi River valley reminded the Gundersen's of their rural homeland in Asnes Municipality, Norway given the natural landscape of both locations is aesthetically similar. The architecture of the cottage is consciously Nordic. The result is a unique building with few, if any, analogous examples.<sup>19</sup> Very little of the Cottage has changed since its construction, and the building possesses a high degree of integrity.

The original garage, which matched the style of the cottage, was destroyed by flooding in 1965, though the foundation remains. Likewise, an original well structure was also destroyed at the same time; however, the well itself is still present and functional. The only existing outbuilding on the property is a large ice house west of the house, which was constructed at the same time as the cottage.

The Dr. Adolf and Helga Gundersen Cottage was designed by Percy Dwight Bentley and Otto Merman Architects of La Crosse and completed in 1918. The house was constructed by the Peter Nelson and Son Construction Company. The cottage features a combination of Rustic style, Arts and Crafts, and Nordic design elements and is sited on a large sixty-acre lot on a wooded island in the Mississippi River near the City of La Crosse. The cottage itself was one of the most architecturally notable homes constructed in La Crosse County. The Gundersen Cottage reflects the spirit of the Arts and Crafts movement with characteristic elements of Rustic and Prairie style architecture with added Scandinavian elements and iconography.<sup>20</sup>

The design of the cottage consciously referred to the Norwegian heritage of the Gundersen family and particularly to the form of vernacular Scandinavian summer cottages. In this sense, the cottage is a revival of a vernacular building type native to Northern Europe, like other Arts and Crafts style buildings. Characteristics of the Nordic style include vertical or horizontal log walls, gabled roofs, heavy beams, leaded glass windows, massive fireplaces and chimneys, arched openings, wood brackets, decorative rafter ends and bargeboards, half-timbering, and Scandinavian iconography and traditional designs carved and stenciled throughout the interior. It is also possible that the architects, Bentley and Merman, consciously referenced examples of the romantic revival Dragestil, or 'dragon style,' derived from traditional medieval Scandinavian building practices, that was popular in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. This type of building, with exposed timber walls, decorative woodwork, steep roofs, and deep eaves, was displayed prominently at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair in the Norway Pavilion. Norwegian vernacular architecture traditionally featured log construction with notched corners, central stone chimneys, steeply pitched roofs, and simple rectilinear plans. A variant,

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<sup>19</sup> *Summer Residence for Dr. A. Gundersen. Helgaland, in Minnesota.* Bentley and Merman Architects, LaCrosse, WI. February-March, 1918.

<sup>20</sup> Deeds Record, Theodore Thompson to Adolph Gundersen (sp.) October 23, 1916. On record at the Murphy Library Special Collections, UW-La Crosse.

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the summer cottage, which was popularized in the nineteenth century, was typically a smaller square building with wood or log siding and steeply pitched roof located remotely in rural settings.

The building also maintains some elements, such as its linear plan, low-pitched gable roofs, projecting eaves, contrasting exterior finishes, balcony, banding, geometric patterns in the fenestration, casement windows, massive chimneys, the narrow façade featured upon the approach, and some of the building materials, of the popular Prairie style, which the cottage's architects, Bentley and Merman, worked in extensively in La Crosse at the time.<sup>21</sup> Broadly speaking, the Gundersen Cottage demonstrates the combination of two architectural worlds, the modern American and traditional Norwegian.

It is instructive to compare this house with other buildings built in La Crosse at the time and other Rustic, Prairie, and Arts and Crafts style houses in the rest of La Crosse County. A study of the Wisconsin Historical Society's Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) was undertaken to establish a context for the Gundersen Cottage and assess its National Register of Historic Places potential. The only other Rustic style structure in La Crosse County is a small log gun club shelter. There are fifty-seven Prairie style homes designed by Bentley and/or Merman as recorded in the Architecture and History Inventory at the Wisconsin Historical Society, almost all of these in the city of La Crosse. However, these resources exhibit the true stylistic traits of the Prairie style directly rather than the uniquely unusual rusticated version found in the Gundersen Cottage. The Gundersen Cottage remains a unique combination of Arts and Crafts sentiment, the influence of a Norwegian vernacular building type and Scandinavian iconography used in the decorative elements, and the influence of Prairie style proclivities and design.

The legal boundaries of the site are essentially the same as at the time of Adolf's death in 1938 and the property has remained with the Gundersen family. While a few smaller outbuildings and less permanent features, such as property entry marker and small hobby-farm chicken coops, are no longer extant, the presence of the existing wetlands and woods is intact and reflects the historic nature of the site related to the Gundersen Cottage and its initial purpose as a summer family retreat in a natural landscape as a significant resource. During the history of the cottage, and especially during the period of significance from 1918 to 1938, the site was extensively used by the Gundersen family as a place of relaxation and recreation. Children played in the woods, Helga Gundersen made signs marked with the names of Norwegian poets and excerpts from Ibsen plays and hung them from prominent trees, and the family would go boating around the site. The large acreage is a necessary component of the historic nature of the cottage and the Gundersen family's summer site.

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<sup>21</sup> Gundersen Cottage National Register Nomination Questionnaire, 1984; & Blumenson, John J. G. *Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945*. Second Ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981.

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The site, besides the immediate high point at the Cottage building itself, approximately two feet above its surroundings, is a low lying woods and wetlands that divide the cottage at the northern tip of the island, from the rest of the island, the highway, and the rest of the city of La Crosse. These wetlands are densely wooded with hardwood and willow trees and interspersed with shallow lagoons. Frequent flooding occasionally produces nearby islands, sandbars, and water inlets to the lagoons from the surrounding Mississippi River. While the physical features of the wetland are constantly in flux due to shifting waterways, floods, and natural accretion and change the conditions remain the same without significant human interference. In fact, such a large wetland area within city limits is quite rare, even along the upper Mississippi River Valley.

**Architect**

*Bentley and Merman*

Percy Dwight Bentley was born in La Crosse in 1885, the son of the notable local banker E.E. Bentley. He studied at Ohio Wesleyan University from 1904 to 1906, not graduating; he then attended Chicago's Armour Institute for a couple of years, again not graduating. While in Chicago, he visited Louis Sullivan's and Frank Lloyd Wright's offices, which would later inspire his work. Otto Merman was born in La Crosse in 1890 and received his training in the early 1900s working in the architectural office of Parkinson and Dockendorff.<sup>22</sup>

Between 1907 and 1910, Bentley worked in La Crosse for Wells Bennett as a draftsman. In 1910, he formed a brief partnership with William Bajari, hiring Otto Merman as a draftsman in 1912. Both Merman and Bentley left La Crosse in 1914 for St. Paul, Minnesota. The two returned to La Crosse periodically and formally announced their partnership in La Crosse at the end of December 1917.<sup>23</sup> Their offices were located at the Linker Building in downtown La Crosse, and working together or individually, Bentley and Merman are credited with designing the most significant Prairie style residences in the City of La Crosse and the surrounding region during the 1910s. In 1918, the pair designed the Dr. Adolf and Helga Gundersen House.<sup>24</sup>

Examples of their work include the mirror-image, matching houses, the Chase and Wohlueter bungalows, at 221-223 11th Street which date from 1913. They were listed in the National Register of

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<sup>22</sup> Brooks, H. Allen. *The Prairie School: Frank Lloyd Wright and His Midwest Contemporaries*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1972.

<sup>23</sup> "Bentley Work Recognized: Former City Architect Feted by Roswell, N.M.," *La Crosse Tribune*. January 23, 1957; & "Otto Merman, Prominent as Architect, Dies," *La Crosse Tribune*. June 3, 1935.

<sup>24</sup> Guide to the Bentley, Merman, and Skogstad Architectural Drawings, 1918-1935. LaCrosse Public Library Archives and Local History Department.

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Historic Places in 1983. Their designs also make up a good number of the buildings in “The Cass and King Street Residential Historic District” listed in 1997.<sup>25</sup>

In 1921 Bentley moved to St. Paul permanently, where he partnered with Charles Hausler for nearly a decade. In 1922, Merman associated with Herbert W. Skogstad until Skogstad’s death in 1929. Skogstad was a graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the nature of commissions expanded after this partnership was established to include work for local institutions and businesses as well as residences. Merman continued to design many public buildings as well as some commercial and residential buildings. Otto Merman died at the age of 45 in June 1935. In the mid-1930s Bentley moved to Hood River, Oregon, and later to Eugene, Oregon, where he continued his architectural practice, though in more traditional and revival styles, up until his death in 1968 at the age of 83.<sup>26</sup>

**Builder**

*Peter Nelson and Son*

Peter Nelson and Son was established as a general construction business in 1890 by Peter Nelson of La Crosse. Peter Nelson and Son served as the general contractor for the construction of the Dr. Adolf and Helga Gundersen Cottage.<sup>27</sup> His brother, Bernt Nelson, was the general superintendent of the company and, in the 1930s; Bernt purchased the company and operated it as a partnership with his sons. Peter Nelson and Son was incorporated in 1945. A prolific local builder, many of the churches, schools, hospitals, houses, apartment buildings, banks, and municipal buildings of La Crosse were constructed by Peter Nelson and Son. Successful in introducing modern building technologies such as Armco Building Systems and Loma Stone, the company did not survive the Great Recession of 2007 to 2009 and went out of business.

**Conclusion**

The Adolf and Helga Gundersen Cottage is nominated at the local level under National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a highly artistic and individualized example of an Arts and Crafts style home, drawing its design from Nordic inspiration, and having a high level of integrity. The Cottage was designed by the notable La Crosse architects Percy Dwight Bentley and Otto Merman and was constructed in 1918. The cottage features vertical log walls, massive stone

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<sup>25</sup> “Bentley & Merman New Designers Here: Percy Bentley in Partnership with Local Man,” *La Crosse Tribune*. December 27, 1917; & “Otto Merman, Prominent as Architect, Dies,” *La Crosse Tribune*. June 3, 1935.

<sup>26</sup> “Architect P. D. Bentley Dies at 83,” *La Crosse Tribune*. February 8, 1968; & “Funeral Services of H. W. Skogstad to be on Monday,” *La Crosse Tribune*, September 15, 1929.

<sup>27</sup> Gundersen Cottage National Register Nomination Questionnaire, 1984.

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chimneys, wood brackets and decorative rafter ends, heavy beams, and interior wood carvings and Scandinavian inspired stenciled painting designs. These features have been maintained and preserved during the years since its construction. The Dr. Adolf and Helga Gundersen Cottage is now one of La Crosse County's most architecturally intact and significant residential buildings. The cottage is also nominated at the local level under National Register Criterion B in the area of Medicine for its relationship as the remaining primary residence of Dr. Adolf Gundersen, a prominent and influential La Crosse Physician who established the Gundersen Clinic and La Crosse Lutheran Hospital, later merged as Gundersen Health System. The period of significance in the area of Medicine related to the life of Dr. Adolf Gundersen is from 1918, when the summer house was constructed, to 1938, when Gundersen died.

**Statement of Archeological Potential**

The area of the state along the Mississippi River was home to Native American tribes and was the location of early European settlement. Archeologists have identified significant evidence of a prehistoric culture dating from 1300 to 1550 AD, called Oneota that occupied the area around the present City of La Crosse. Artifacts from this culture have frequently been found along the broad, sandy terraces of the Mississippi River valley. Excavations in La Crosse in 1991 revealed many artifacts that indicate widespread settlement up to the seventeenth century.<sup>28</sup> An archaeological survey was outside of the scope of this nomination and while it is likely that there are archaeological remains here, archaeological potential for the property remains unassessed.

**Preservation Activities**

Thanks to its history of restoration and good maintenance by the Gundersen family, the Dr. Adolf and Helga Gundersen Cottage continues to serve as a well preserved, distinctive home that expresses the Gundersen family's Norwegian heritage. In addition, the current homeowners, descendants of the Gundersen family, have been proactive in protecting this historic resource, and this nomination is a continuation of their efforts. The summer cottage will soon be remodeled with new plumbing, electrical, and heating systems to make the cottage viable for year-round living for the first time in the building's history.

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<sup>28</sup> Arzigian, Constance et al. *The Gundersen Site: An Oneota Village and Cemetery in La Crosse, Wisconsin*. Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center at the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse. Report No. 155, 1993.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 2

Gundersen, Dr. Adolf and Helga, Cottage  
City of La Crosse, La Crosse County, WI

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 1

Gundersen, Dr. Adolf and Helga, Cottage  
City of La Crosse, La Crosse County, WI

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The property that is the subject of this nomination consists of 2 contributing resources, the Gundersen Cottage, and, an adjacent ice house building, sited on a 61.5-acre lot at the northwest end of Barron Island, also known as Pettibone or Thompson Island, in the City of La Crosse in La Crosse County, just opposite from the Minnesota State line. The legal description of the lot is as follows: Lots 2 and 3 of section 12, Government Island Number 104. The boundary for the Dr. Adolf and Helga Gundersen Cottage described above matches the boundaries for the wetland and wooded property exactly and is clearly delineated on the accompanying sketch map.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary encloses the entire 61.5-acre parcel identical to the current legal parcel for the property at 1000 US Highway 14/61 in the City of La Crosse. This property was deeded from Theodore Thompson to Adolf Gundersen in 1916, two years before the Cottage was constructed, while most the island was purchased by A.W. Pettibone earlier for use as a La Crosse city park. The northern and western boundaries of the parcel are the Mississippi River while the eastern boundary adjoins Pettibone Public Park and Nature Area. The southern boundary of the parcel is the right-of-way of US Highway 14/61 as it crosses the river. The terrain of the site is wetland and has shifted since the time when the cottage was constructed, experiencing several floods and nearby civil engineering projects. The entire wetland site was used and enjoyed recreationally by the Gundersen family since the cottage's construction and appreciated for its natural beauty. While the boundary includes a large portion of wetland, it is not considered extraneous because all of the site was integral to the Gundersen family's understanding of the property and served as the purpose of the Gundersen Cottage. Much of the property has been maintained and consciously preserved as woods and wetland, evaluated by the Mississippi Valley Conservancy as holding significant value due to its location within the City of La Crosse and containing unique and varied flora and fauna.

UTM References Continued:

5. 15N 639388.00 Easting, 4853594.00 Northing

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section photos Page 1

Gundersen, Dr. Adolf and Helga, Cottage  
City of La Crosse, La Crosse County, WI

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Name of Property:	Dr. Adolf and Helga Gundersen Cottage
City or Vicinity:	City of La Crosse
County:	La Crosse
State:	Wisconsin
Name of Photographer:	Marcus Zettler, HSR Associates
Date of Photographs:	April 13, 2016, May 13, 2016, May 17, 2017
Location of Original Digital Files:	Wisconsin Historical Society, Division of Historic Preservation, Madison, WI

Photo 1 of 16: (WI\_LaCrosseCounty\_AdolfandHelgaGundersenCottage\_0001)

Exterior, Cottage, view from the southwest

Photo 2 of 16: (WI\_LaCrosseCounty\_AdolfandHelgaGundersenCottage\_0002)

Exterior, Cottage, view from the south

Photo 3 of 16: (WI\_LaCrosseCounty\_AdolfandHelgaGundersenCottage\_0003)

Exterior, Cottage, view from the southeast

Photo 4 of 16: (WI\_LaCrosseCounty\_AdolfandHelgaGundersenCottage\_0004)

Exterior, Cottage, view from the east

Photo 5 of 16: (WI\_LaCrosseCounty\_AdolfandHelgaGundersenCottage\_0005)

Exterior, Cottage, view from the northeast

Photo 6 of 16: (WI\_LaCrosseCounty\_AdolfandHelgaGundersenCottage\_0006)

Exterior, Cottage, view from the north

Photo 7 of 16: (WI\_LaCrosseCounty\_AdolfandHelgaGundersenCottage\_0007)

Exterior, Cottage, view from the northwest

Photo 8 of 16: (WI\_LaCrosseCounty\_AdolfandHelgaGundersenCottage\_0008)

Exterior, Cottage, view from the west

Photo 9 of 16: (WI\_LaCrosseCounty\_AdolfandHelgaGundersenCottage\_0009)

Exterior, Cottage, view from the southwest - closer

Photo 10 of 16: (WI\_LaCrosseCounty\_AdolfandHelgaGundersenCottage\_0010)

Exterior, Cottage, view from the northwest, Living Room detail

Photo 11 of 16: (WI\_LaCrosseCounty\_AdolfandHelgaGundersenCottage\_0011)

Exterior, Cottage, view from the northwest, Dining Room detail

Photo 12 of 16: (WI\_LaCrosseCounty\_AdolfandHelgaGundersenCottage\_0012)

Exterior, Ice House, view from the northeast

Photo 13 of 16: (WI\_LaCrosseCounty\_AdolfandHelgaGundersenCottage\_0013)

Interior, Living Room, fireplace detail, view from the east

Photo 14 of 16: (WI\_LaCrosseCounty\_AdolfandHelgaGundersenCottage\_0014)

Interior, Living Room, balcony detail, view from the southeast

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

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**Continuation Sheet**

Section photos Page 2

Gundersen, Dr. Adolf and Helga, Cottage  
City of La Crosse, La Crosse County, WI

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Photo 15 of 16: (WI\_LaCrosseCounty\_AdolfandHelgaGundersenCottage\_0013)

Interior, Balcony, living room detail, view from the southwest

Photo 16 of 16: (WI\_LaCrosseCounty\_AdolfandHelgaGundersenCottage\_0014)

Interior, Gallery, towards the Dining Room, view from the east

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section figures Page 3

Gundersen, Dr. Adolf and Helga, Cottage  
City of La Crosse, La Crosse County, WI

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section figures Page 4

Gundersen, Dr. Adolf and Helga, Cottage  
City of La Crosse, La Crosse County, WI

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

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**Continuation Sheet**

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Gundersen, Dr. Adolf and Helga, Cottage  
City of La Crosse, La Crosse County, WI

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List of Figures:

Figure 1: Sketch Map

Figure 2: Sketch Map Detail and Photo Key

Figure 3: Sketch Plan and Photo Key

Figure 4: Ground Floor Plan. Bentley and Merman Architects, La Crosse. "Summer Residence for Dr. A. Gundersen. Helgaland, In Minnesota," Architectural Plans. 1918.

Figure 5: Elevations. Bentley and Merman Architects, La Crosse. "Summer Residence for Dr. A. Gundersen. Helgaland, In Minnesota," Architectural Plans. 1918

Figure 6: Elevations and Details. Bentley and Merman Architects, La Crosse. "Summer Residence for Dr. A. Gundersen. Helgaland, In Minnesota," Architectural Plans. 1918.

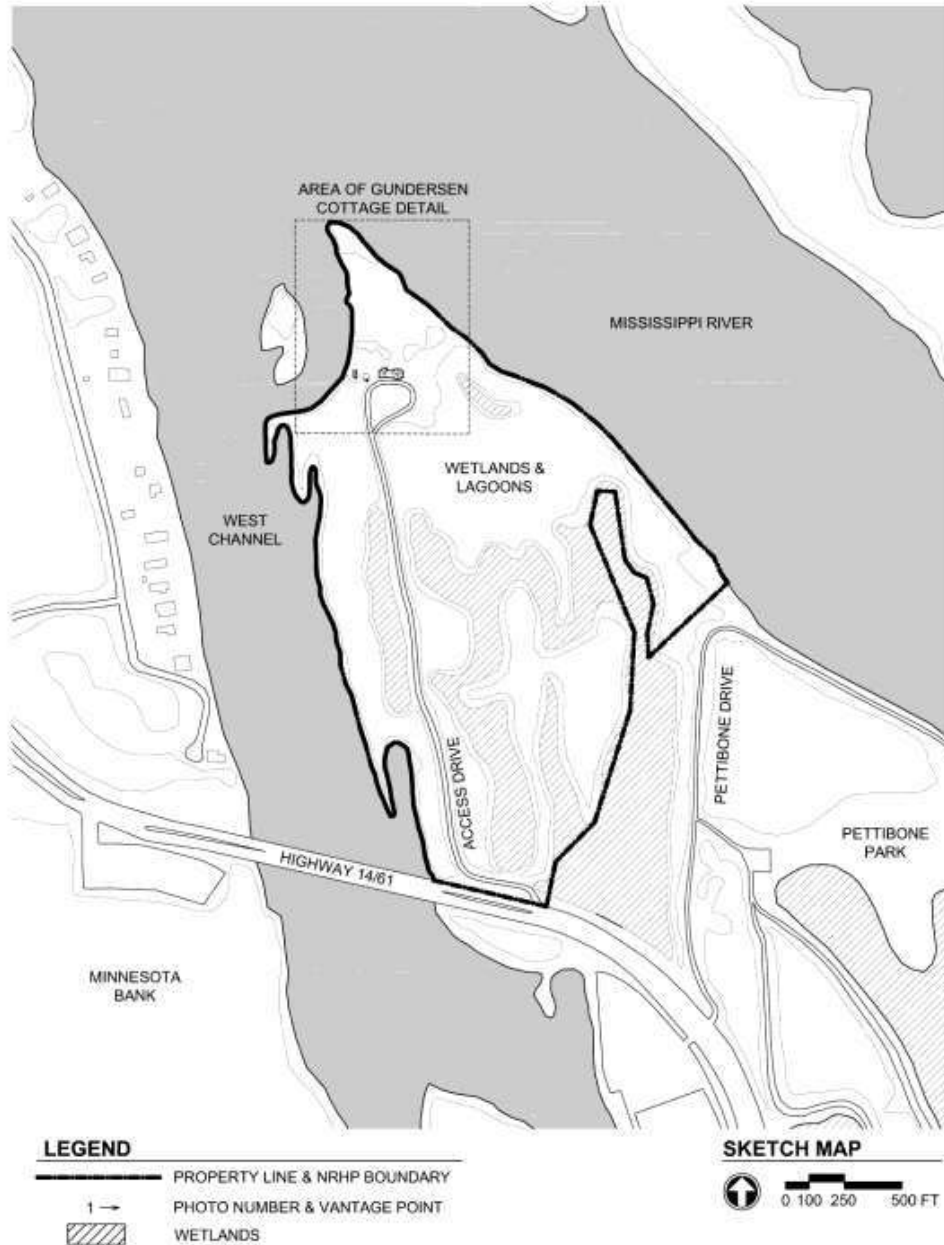
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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Gundersen, Dr. Adolf and Helga, Cottage  
City of La Crosse, La Crosse County, WI

Section figures Page 6

Figure 1: Sketch Map



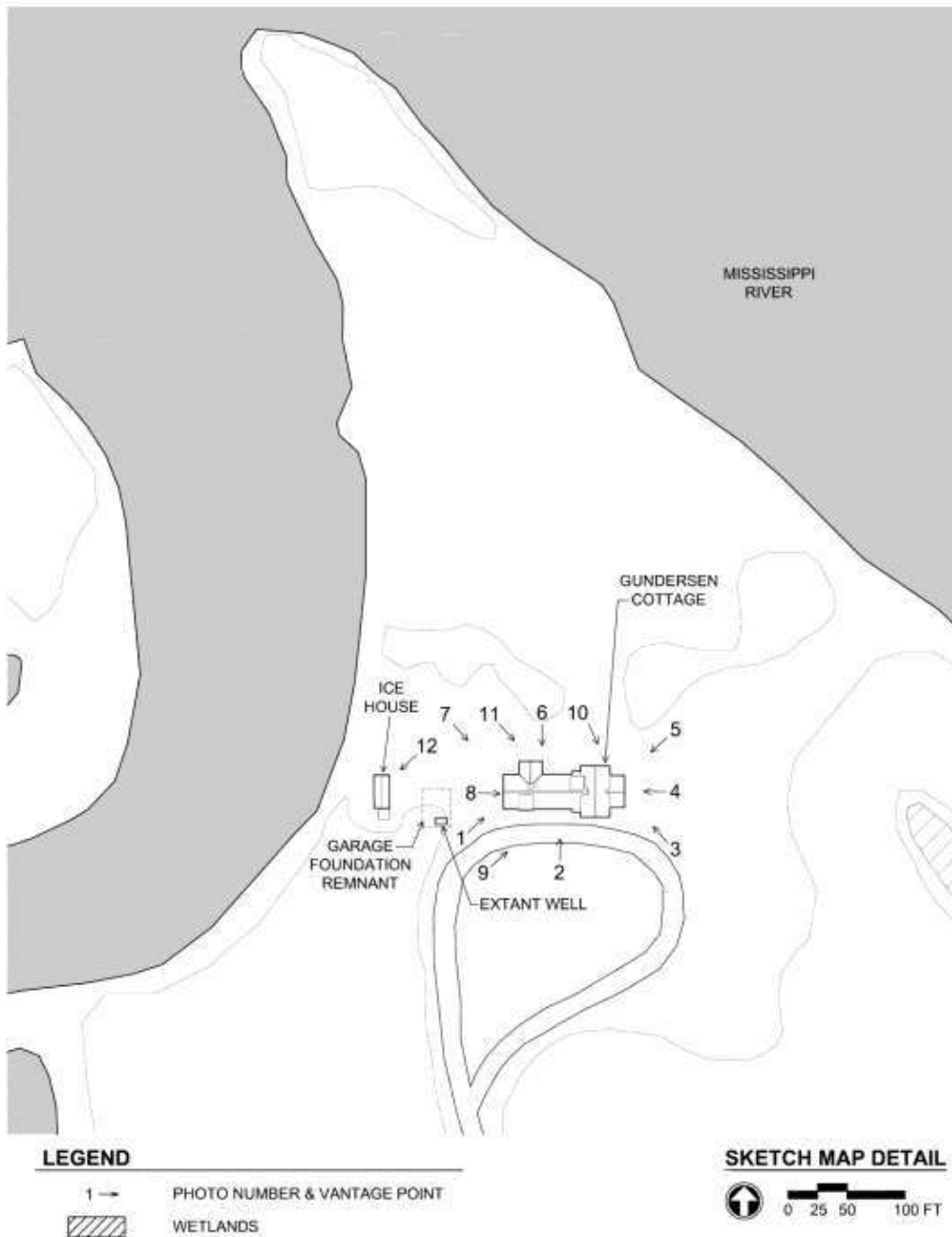
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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Gundersen, Dr. Adolf and Helga, Cottage  
City of La Crosse, La Crosse County, WI

Section figures Page 7

Figure 2: Sketch Map Detail and Photo Key





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National Park Service

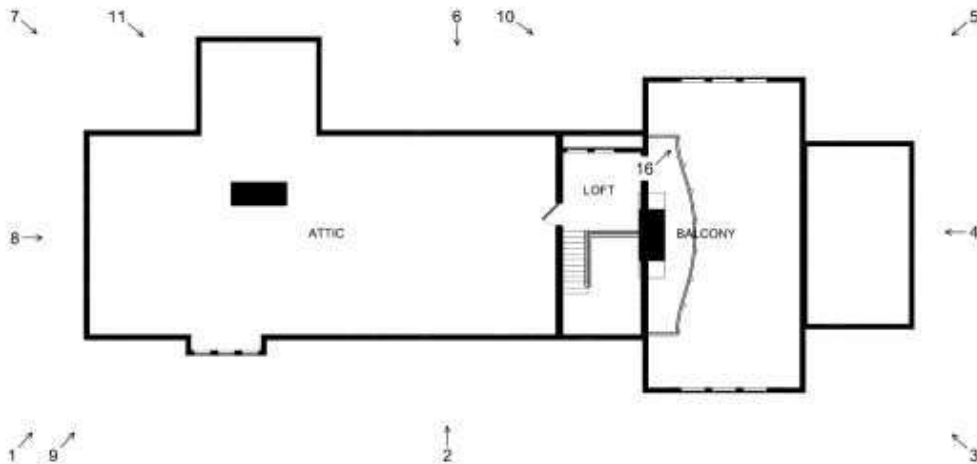
**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Gundersen, Dr. Adolf and Helga, Cottage  
City of La Crosse, La Crosse County, WI

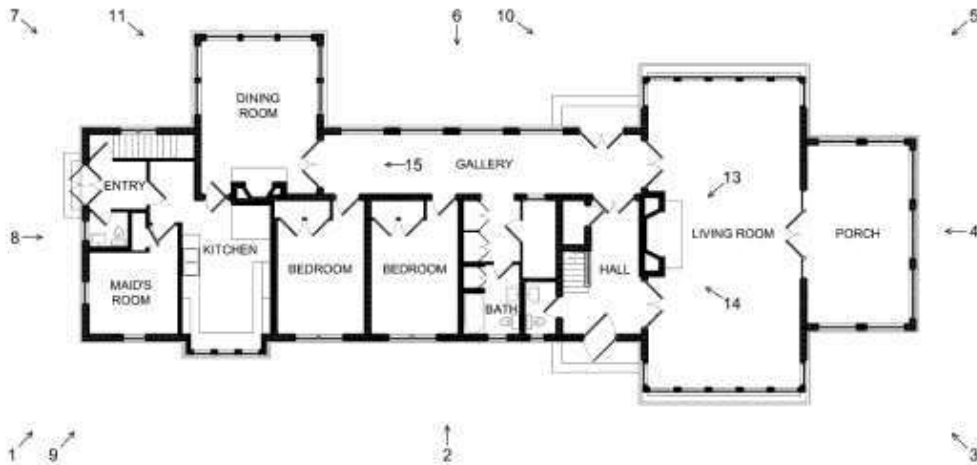
Section **figures** Page **8**

Figure 3: Sketch Plan and Photo Key

**SECOND FLOOR**



**FIRST FLOOR**



**LEGEND**

1 → PHOTO NUMBER & VANTAGE POINT

**SKETCH PLAN**





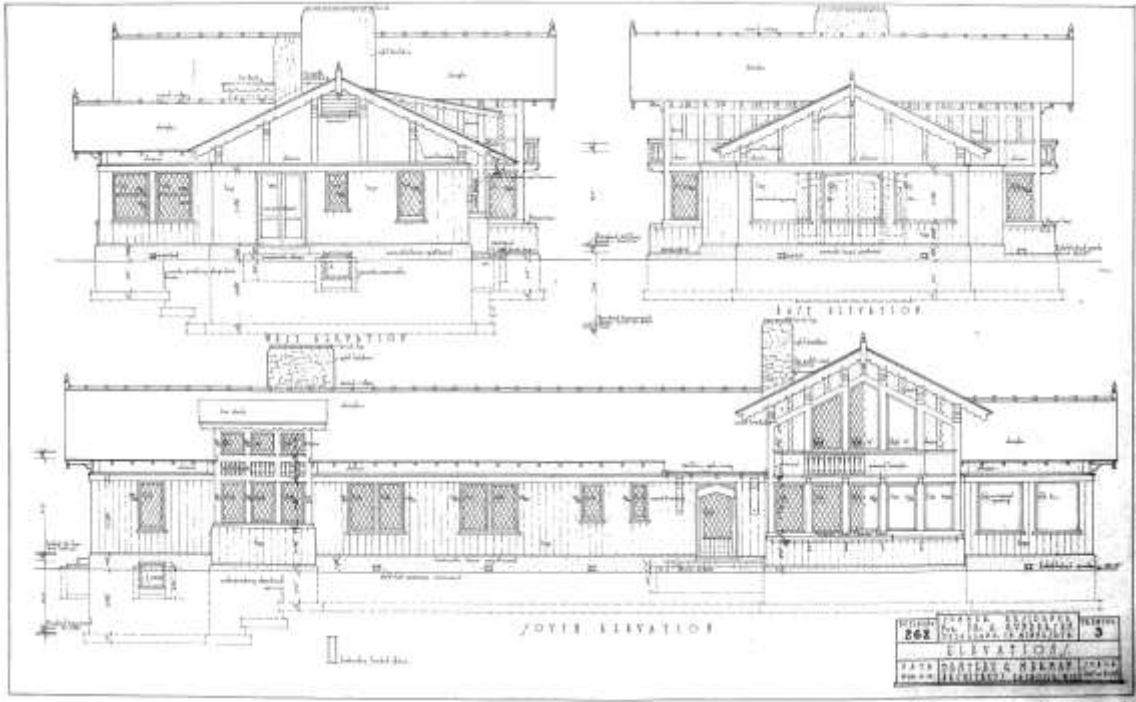
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**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Gundersen, Dr. Adolf and Helga, Cottage  
City of La Crosse, La Crosse County, WI

Section figures Page 10

Figure 5: *Elevations*. Bentley and Merman Architects, La Crosse. "Summer Residence for Dr. A. Gundersen. Helgaland, In Minnesota," Architectural Plans. 1918



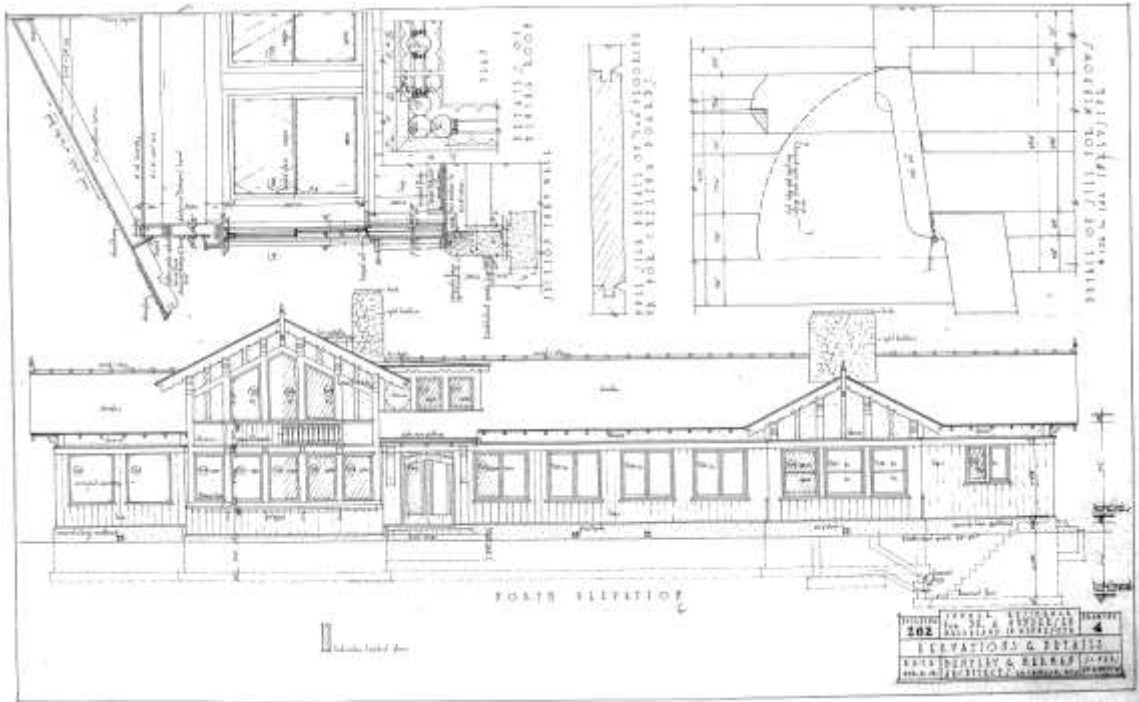
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Gundersen, Dr. Adolf and Helga, Cottage  
City of La Crosse, La Crosse County, WI

Figure 6: *Elevations and Details*. Bentley and Merman Architects, La Crosse. "Summer Residence for Dr. A. Gundersen. Helgaland, In Minnesota," Architectural Plans. 1918.



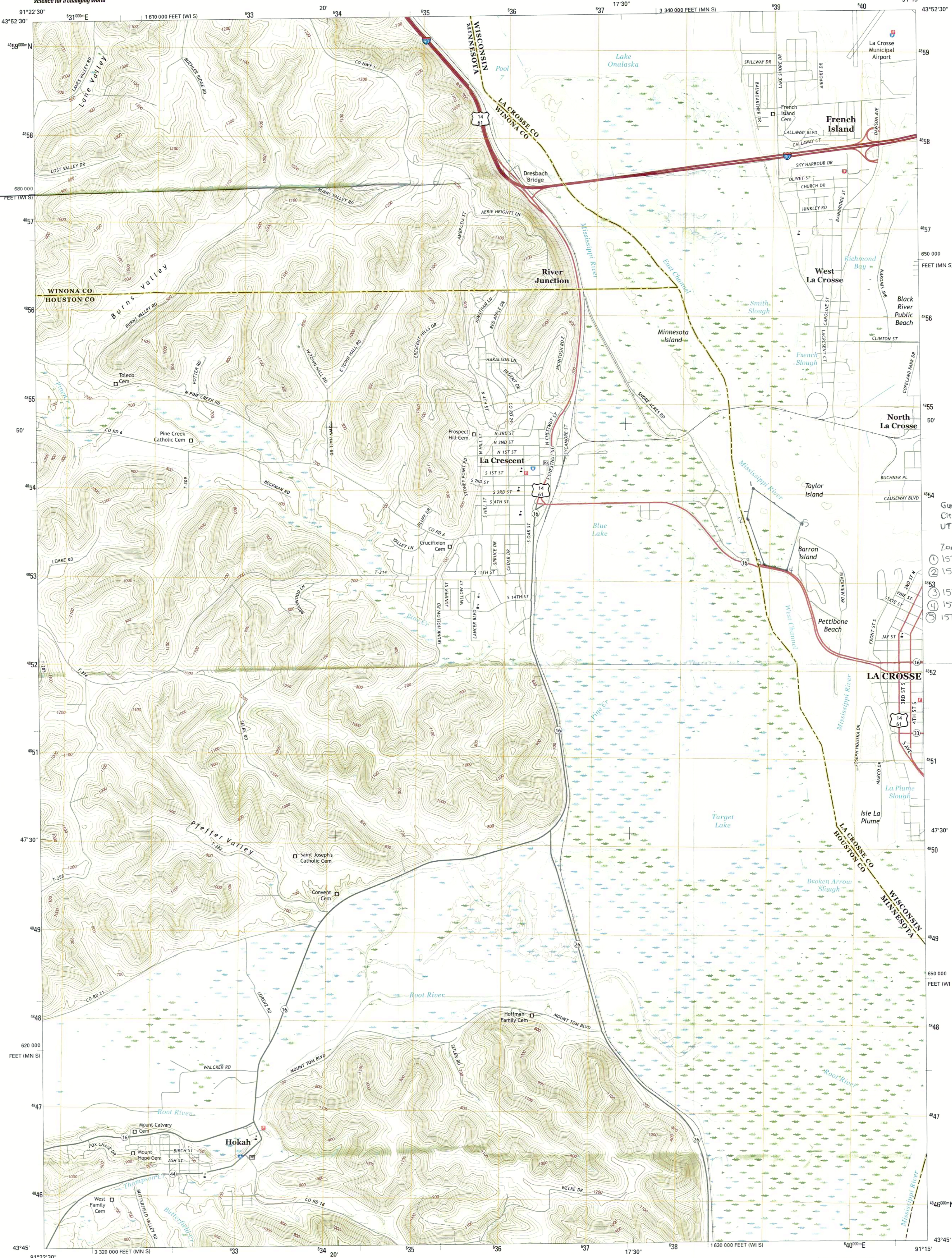




U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



LA CRESCENT QUADRANGLE  
MINNESOTA-WISCONSIN  
7.5-MINUTE SERIES



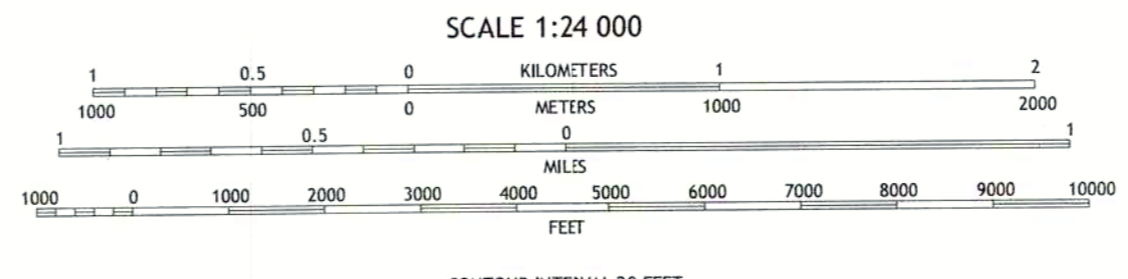
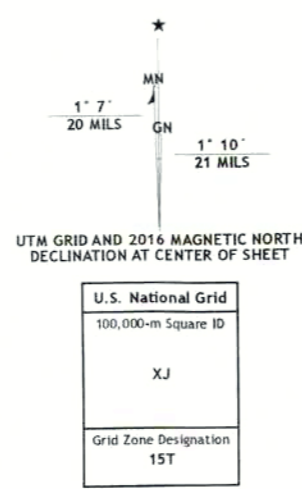
Gundersen Dr. Adolph and Helga, Cottage  
City of La Crosse, La Crosse County, WI  
UTM Reference:

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② 15T	638781.18	485374.63
③ 15T	638784.37	4853781.75
④ 15T	639193.49	4853142.75
⑤ 15T	639388.00	4853594.00

Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)  
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84). Projection and  
1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 15T  
1 000-foot ticks: Minnesota Coordinate System of 1983 (south  
zone), Wisconsin Coordinate System of 1983 (south zone)

This map is not a legal document. Boundaries may be  
generalized for this map scale. Private lands within government  
reservations may not be shown. Obtain permission before  
entering private lands.

Imagery:.....N.A.P., July 2013  
Roads:.....U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 - 2016  
Names:.....GNIS, 2016  
Hydrography:.....National Hydrography Dataset, 2013  
Contours:.....National Elevation Dataset, 2013  
Boundaries:.....Multiple sources; see metadata file 1972 - 2016  
Public Land Survey System:.....BLM, 2014  
Wetlands:.....FWS National Wetlands Inventory 1977 - 2014



ADJOINING QUADRANGLES

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

1 Pickwick  
2 Holmen  
3 Onalaska  
4 Mound Prairie  
5 La Crosse  
6 Caledonia  
7 Brownsville  
8 Stoddard



LA CRESCENT, MN-WI  
2016































































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 11/20/2017      Date of Pending List: 12/15/2017      Date of 16th Day: 1/2/2018      Date of 45th Day: 1/4/2018      Date of Weekly List: 1/5/2018

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept       Return       Reject      1/4/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

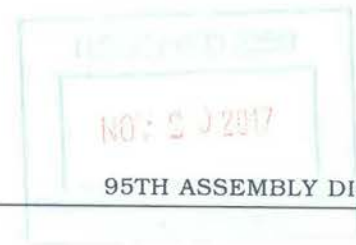
Reviewer Edson Beall      Discipline Historian

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.





**JILL BILLINGS**  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

AUG 08 2017

August 3, 2017

Wisconsin Historic Preservation Review Board  
c/o Peggy Veregin  
Wisconsin Historical Society  
816 State Street  
Madison, WI 53706

Dear Wisconsin Historic Preservation Review Board,

Please accept this letter of support for the Dr. Adolf and Helga Gundersen Cottage to be added to the State Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places.

This cottage, designed in 1918, is a wonderful relic of a time gone-by, and is representative of the Prairie Style architecture of the period. Designed by Percy Dwight Bentley and Otto Merman, the building features all of its original doors and windows, as well as ornate woodwork and trim that add to its aesthetic significance. For four generations, the cottage has served as a restful getaway for the Gundersen family, as well as a space to admire the natural wonders of the Coulee region.

The building's structural integrity and style make the Gundersen Cottage an ideal candidate for the historic places registers. Moreover, the Gundersen family has had a major influence on the growth and development to La Crosse and the area. With Gundersen Health System now being one of the major health providers and employers in the region, designating historic status to the cottage would be a great opportunity to pay homage to the Gundersen family.

As a ranking member on the Assembly Committee on Tourism, I understand the economic and cultural benefits of preserving our state's historic places for visitors and residents alike to enjoy. It is imperative that La Crosse's historic buildings and spaces be preserved so they can continue to inspire and educate future generations. La Crosse has a longstanding tradition of valuing and preserving historic places and La Crosse County is proud to be home to 60 sites designated as important historic places by the historic places registers. I hope you will consider making the Gundersen Cottage the sixty-first addition to that list.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the Gundersen Cottage as a historic place of interest. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jill Billings  
State Representative  
95th Assembly District

**RON KIND**  
THIRD DISTRICT, WISCONSIN  
SENIOR WHIP  
WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

LA CROSSE OFFICE  
205 5TH AVENUE SOUTH, SUITE 400  
LA CROSSE, WI 54601  
(608) 782-2558 FAX: (608) 782-4588  
TTY: (608) 782-1173  
WEBSITE: kind.house.gov

August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Wisconsin Historic Preservation Review Board  
c/o Peggy Veregin  
Wisconsin Historical Society  
816 State Street  
Madison, WI 53706



BY: .....

Dear Ms. Veregin:

I am pleased to support the nomination of the Gundersen Cottage in La Crosse, Wisconsin for the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places.

The Gundersen Cottage was built in 1918 as a Nordic influenced Arts and Crafts style cottage by Prairie Style architects Percy Dwight Bentley and Otto Merman to reflect the homeland of the original owners, Dr. Adolf and Helga Gundersen who immigrated from Norway in the 1890's. Dr. Gundersen was a respected surgeon and went on to establish what is now Gundersen Health System. It was built as a summer cottage on the main channel of the Mississippi River and has been in the family for four generations.

As the U.S. Representative for Wisconsin's 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District, I have an interest in supporting projects that preserve the architectural as well as cultural history of the area. Given its merit and potential benefits, I encourage the Review Board to give full consideration to this nomination. Please don't hesitate to contact my office if I can provide further assistance with this request.

Sincerely,

Ron Kind  
Member of Congress

EAU CLAIRE OFFICE  
131 SOUTH BARSLOW STREET, SUITE 305  
EAU CLAIRE, WI 54701  
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August 15, 2017



Peggy Veregin  
Wisconsin Historical Society  
Division of Historic Preservation  
816 State Street  
Madison, WI 53706

RE: National Register nomination  
Dr. Adolf and Helga Gundersen Cottage  
1000 US Highway 14/61, La Crosse, WI 54601

Dear Wisconsin Historic Preservation Review Board Members,

The nomination for the Dr. Adolf and Helga Gundersen Cottage was reviewed by the City of La Crosse's Heritage Preservation Commission at their July 20, 2017 meeting. At their meeting the Heritage Preservation Commission unanimously voted to support the listing of this building to the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places and to request that the owner consider nominating their building to La Crosse's Local Register of Historic Places.

If you have any questions please contact me at (608) 789-7391.

Sincerely,



Timothy Acklin, AICP  
Senior Planner

---

Council Member Jessica Olson – Chair  
Charles Clemence- Vice Chair  
Terence Collins David Riel  
Ariel Beaujot, Chris Kahlow, Dan Manke



WISCONSIN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY



TO: Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Peggy Veregin  
National Register Coordinator

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination

The following materials are submitted on this Sixteenth day of November 2017, for the nomination of the (Farnsworth Public Library) to the National Register of Historic Places:

<u>1</u>	Original National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form
<u>1</u>	CD with NRHP Nomination form PDF
	Multiple Property Nomination form
<u>16</u>	Photograph(s)
<u>1</u>	CD with image files
<u>1</u>	Map(s)
<u>6</u>	Sketch map(s)/figures(s)/exhibit(s)
<u>3</u>	Piece(s) of correspondence
<u>        </u>	Other:

COMMENTS:

<u>        </u>	Please ensure that this nomination is reviewed
<u>        </u>	This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
<u>        </u>	The enclosed owner objection(s) do or do not constitute a majority of property owners
<u>        </u>	Other: