

**VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE**  
**Report for the Village Council Meeting**  
**3/8/2016**

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>
Historic Landmark - 5320 Benton Avenue	Stan Popovich, AICP Director of Community Development

**SYNOPSIS**

A Historic Landmark Designation Resolution has been prepared to designate the property at 5320 Benton Avenue a historic landmark.

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT**

The goals for 2015-2017 include *Steward of Financial, Environmental and Neighborhood Sustainability*.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

N/A

**RECOMMENDATION**

Approval on the March 8, 2016 active agenda per the unanimous recommendation of the Architectural Design Review Board. The ADRB found that the proposed landmark meets the landmark designation criteria found in Section 12.302 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

**BACKGROUND**

The petitioners are seeking a Historic Landmark Designation for their property at 5320 Benton Avenue under criteria 12.302.B.3 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance: representation of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style. The two-story Prairie Style American Foursquare house with a basement was most likely constructed in 1924, as evidenced by research performed by the petitioner.

Existing House

The property exemplifies many of the features typical of an American Foursquare, including a central attic dormer, hipped roof with deep eaves, grouped windows with original divided-light panes, a front porch (although it does not span the length of the front façade), stucco exterior, and horizontal banding. The house is built on a rusticated concrete block foundation. A one-story sun room, a unique although likely original addition to the typical style, is located on the southern portion of the building.

Analysis of Significance

The proposal complies with the following criteria for Landmark Designation: Section 12.302.A and 12.302.B.3. The house was constructed ca. 1924 and is thus over 50 years of age as required by Section 12.302.A. The property must meet one of the criteria noted in 12.302.B and does meet criteria

12.302.B.3 as the house represents the distinguishing characteristics of the Prairie Style American Foursquare. The overall cube-shaped massing, hipped roof, grouped windows, and front porch are typical of the American Foursquare, with many additional original architectural features as described above in the project description.

Public Comment

One member of the public spoke in support of the petition at the February 17, 2016 ADRB meeting.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Resolution

Aerial Map

Staff Report with attachments dated February 17, 2016

Minutes of the Architectural Design Review Board Hearing dated February 17, 2016

**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_****A RESOLUTION GRANTING HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR  
5320 BENTON AVENUE**

WHEREAS, the Village of Downers Grove has adopted an Ordinance entitled the "Historic Preservation Ordinance"; and

WHEREAS, Section 12-301 of the Municipal Code sets forth landmark designation procedures for areas, properties, buildings, structures, objects and sites; and

WHEREAS, Amy and David Gassen ("Applicant") are the owners of certain property legally described as follows:

THE SOUTH HALF OF LOT 17 AND THE NORTH HALF OF LOT 18 IN BLOCK 7 IN STRAUBE'S ADDITION TO DOWNERS GROVE, BEING A RESUBDIVISION OF PART OF LOT 4 IN ASSESSOR'S DIVISION OF SECTION 7 AND 8, TOWNSHIP 38 NORTH, RANGE 11, EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED NOVEMBER 27, 1890 AS DOCUMENT 44124, IN DUPAGE COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

Commonly known as 5320 Benton Avenue, Downers Grove (PIN 09-08-408-034)

WHEREAS, there is a two-story Prairie Style American Foursquare structure on the property; and

WHEREAS, on February 17, 2016, the Architectural Design Review Board conducted a public hearing in connection with the aforesaid application, after notice of said hearing was duly given; and

WHEREAS, the Board rendered its decision on the aforesaid application, recommending that the property located at 5320 Benton Avenue, Downers Grove, Illinois, be granted Historic Landmark Designation; and

WHEREAS, certain applicable requirements of Section 12-302, Landmark Designation Criteria, of the Historic Preservation Ordinance relating to the granting of Historic Landmark Designation have been met.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Village Council of the Village of Downers Grove, DuPage County, Illinois, as follows:

Section 1. That the recitals contained in the Preamble hereto are incorporated as part of this Resolution.

Section 2. That the structure located on the property located at 5320 Benton Avenue is hereby granted Historic Landmark Designation.

Section 3. That the Village Clerk is hereby directed to file a certified copy of this Resolution in the Office of the DuPage County Recorder of Deeds and is further directed to transmit a copy of this Resolution to Downers Grove Historical Society and the Applicant.

Section 4. That all resolutions or parts of resolutions in conflict with the provisions of this Resolution are hereby repealed.

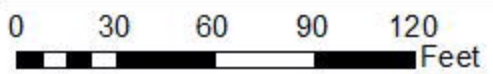
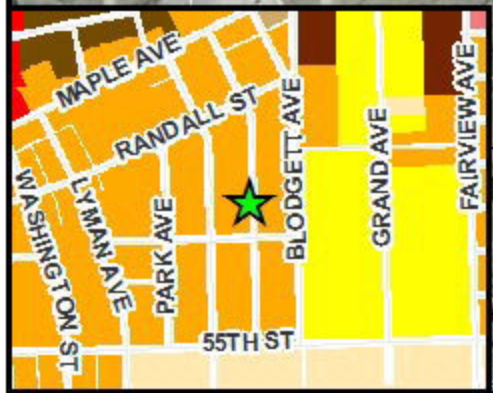
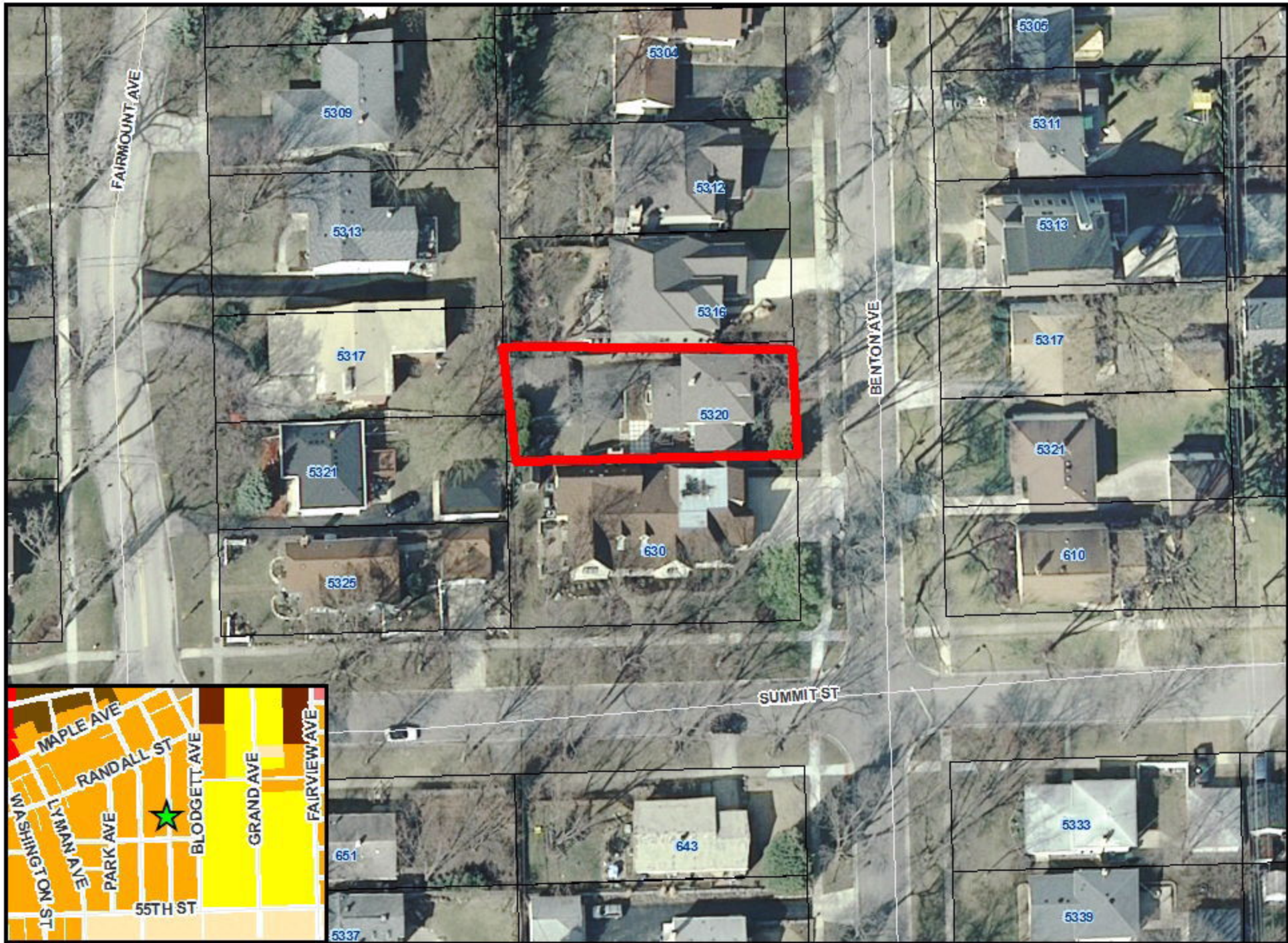
Section 5. That this Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage as provided by law.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

Passed:  
Published:

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Village Clerk





**5320 Benton Avenue Location Map**



VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE  
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
Village Hall – Committee Room  
801 Burlington Avenue

February 17, 2016  
7:00 P.M.

AGENDA

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes from the January 20, 2016 meeting
3. Public Hearing
  - a. **16-ADR-0001:** A petition seeking a Historic Landmark Designation for the property commonly known as 5320 Benton Avenue, Downers Grove, IL (PIN 09-08-408-034). The property is located on the west side of Benton Avenue, approximately 75 feet north of Summit Street. David and Amy Gassen, Petitioner and Owner
4. Old Business
  - a. Update on Implementation Strategies
5. Public Comment
6. Adjournment

THIS TENTATIVE REGULAR AGENDA MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE



**VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE  
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
FEBRUARY 17, 2016 AGENDA**

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>TYPE:</b>	<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>
16-ADR-0001 5320 Benton Ave	Designation of a Historic Landmark	Rebecca Leitschuh AICP Senior Planner

### REQUEST

The petitioners are seeking a Historic Landmark Designation for their home at 5320 Benton Avenue based on the criteria that the property represents the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style.

### NOTICE

The application has been filed in conformance with applicable procedural and public notice requirements.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

---

**OWNER/:** Amy and David Gassen  
**APPLICANT** 5320 Benton Avenue  
Downers Grove, IL 60515

### PROPERTY INFORMATION

---

**ARCHITECTURAL STYLE:** American Foursquare, Prairie Style  
**BUILDING DATE:** 1924  
**HISTORICAL BUILDING USE:** Single Family Residence  
**EXISTING BUILDING USE:** Single Family Residence  
**PROPERTY SIZE:** 6,539 square feet  
**PIN:** 09-08-408-034

### ANALYSIS

---

#### SUBMITTALS

This report is based on the following documents, which are on file with the Department of Community Development:

1. Application/Petition for Public Hearing
2. Project Summary
3. Plat of Survey
4. Owner Consent Form
5. Certificate of Acknowledgement Form
6. Historic Landmark Information Form
7. Photographs
8. Sanborn Map



### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The petitioners are seeking a Historic Landmark Designation for their property at 5320 Benton Avenue under criteria 12.302.B.3 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance: representation of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style. The two-story Prairie Style American Foursquare house with a basement was most likely constructed in 1924, as evidenced by research performed by the petitioner.

The American Foursquare style house is aptly named after its cubic shape and division of living space into quarters and is sometimes called a "Classical Box" or "Prairie Box." Foursquares are typically two and-a-half stories and include a medium pitched pyramid roof, a centrally placed dormer, front porches and wood, stucco and brick walls. In the Village, many Foursquares were designed in the Prairie style which are often noted for their wide eaves.

The property at 5320 Benton Avenue includes many of these features, including a central attic dormer, hipped roof with deep eaves, grouped windows with original divided-light panes, a front porch (although it does not span the length of the front façade), stucco exterior, and horizontal banding. The house is built on a rusticated concrete block foundation. A one-story sun room, a unique although likely original addition to the typical style, is located on the southern portion of the building. In addition to the external original architectural features, many internal architectural features remain including doors, hardware, trim, and floors. A rear addition constructed in 2009 does not impact the historic integrity of this Prairie Style American Foursquare home.

### COMPLIANCE WITH HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

The petitioner has outlined the request in the attached narrative letter and photographs. The petitioner will further address the proposal and justification to support the requested landmark designation at the public hearing.

Landmark designations require evaluation based on Section 12.302 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, *Landmark Designation Criteria*. Staff finds the request complies with Section 12.302A and Section 12.302.B, *Landmark Designation Criteria #3* as described below.

#### Section 12.302.A.

**The proposed landmark is either over fifty (50) years old; in whole or in part or is under fifty (50) years of age and possesses exceptional importance such as might be recognized immediately for its reflection of an extraordinary political event or architectural innovation; and**

The house was constructed ca. 1924. This standard is met.

#### Section 12.302.B

**That one or more of the following conditions exist:**

- 1. The property has significant value as part of the historic, heritage or cultural characteristics of the community, county, State or Nation;**

This criteria does not apply.

- 2. The property was owned by a person or persons of historic significance to the community, county, State or Nation;**

This criteria does not apply.

- 3. The property represents the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural period, style, type, method of construction or use of indigenous materials;**

Staff finds the property represents the distinguishing characteristics of the Prairie Style American Foursquare. The overall cube-shaped massing, hipped roof, grouped windows, and front porch are



16-ADR-0001, 5320 Benton Avenue  
February 11, 2016

Page 3

typical of the American Foursquare, with many additional original architectural features as described above in the project description. This criteria is met.

4. **The property represents notable work of a master builder, designer, architect or artist whose individual work has influenced the development of the community, county, State or Nation;**  
This criteria does not apply.
5. **An area that has yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.**  
This criteria does not apply.
6. **A source of civic pride or identity for the community.**  
This criteria does not apply.
7. **The property is included in the National Register of Historic Places.**  
This criteria does not apply.

#### **NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENT**

Staff has not received any neighborhood comments regarding the proposal at this time.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

---

Staff finds the petition complies with the criteria in Section 12.302 for Landmark Designation. Based on the findings above, staff recommends the Architectural Design Review Board make a positive recommendation to the Village Council for landmark status of 5320 Benton Avenue.

Staff Report Approved By:



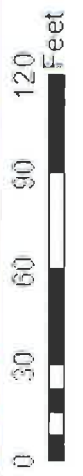
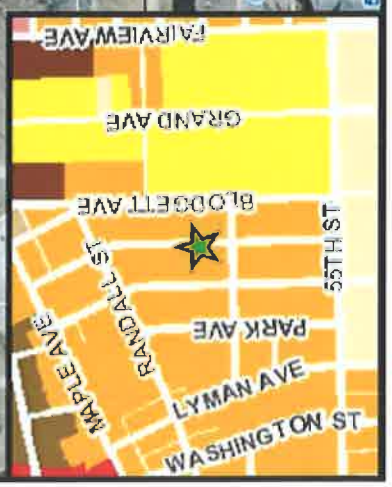
Stan Popovich, AICP  
Director of Community Development

SP:rl  
-att

P:\P&CD\PROJECTS\ADRB\PROJECTS\2016 Petitions\16-ADR-0001 5320 Benton Ave Landmark Designation\Staff Report 16-ADR-0001 5320 Benton.doc



# 5320 Benton Avenue Location Map



January 18, 2016

Dear Architectural Design Review Board,

We are the owners of 5320 Benton Avenue. We would like to respectfully request that our house be designated as a Historic Landmark.

After obtaining virtually all of the deeds from the DuPage County Recorder's Office and researching the early tax history, we have determined that our house was most likely constructed in 1924. Prior to 1927 our home's street address was 164 Benton Avenue and originally included two parcels of land. According to the deeds, the house was first owned by Herman and Martha Hesse; however we believe that Herman Hesse died the year the house was built and that the Hesse family never actually lived in the home. Instead we believe that the Hesse family rented the home to John J. Ehr, who in 1925 is listed as the individual whose name the property taxes were assessed in. The 1927 Downers Grove City Directory also indicates that the Ehr family lived in the home at that time, and that John J. Ehr worked for the Western Electric Company. A 1929 deed shows that John J. and Regina Ehr ultimately took ownership of the house from Martha Hesse that year; and the 1930 census confirms that John J. Ehr lived in the house with his wife Regina, their five children, and John's mother-in-law. The Ehr family remained owners of the home for approximately 40 years.

In addition to the deeds and the property tax records, we have also obtained the 1933 Sanborn map which shows our house and the surrounding houses that existed at that time. From this map we can see that our house had the small front porch as well as the one-story sun room that still exist today. The map also shows a small back porch that was removed sometime prior to our purchasing the home.

Our house represents the distinguishing characteristics of an American Foursquare in the Prairie Style. American Foursquares were a post-Victorian house type and an architectural reaction against the ornateness and complexity found in Victorian buildings. The cube-shaped massing of American Foursquares was designed to maximize square footage on small lots. Additional common characteristics of American Foursquares include a square floor plan, a central dormer in the attic, a front porch (usually, but not always, spanning across the entire front façade), a hip roof, and wide eaves. Our house possesses all of these characteristics in their original form. One unique aspect of our house is that it also includes a one-story sun room on the south side (left side from the street elevation). As previously noted we believe this space to be original to the structure based on its appearance on the 1933 Sanborn map.

Most of the original architectural features are still present; including windows, doors, and hardware. We are in the process of having those features fully restored; which currently includes repairing and refinishing the window sashes, reglazing the windows, replacing the cotton sash cords with new sash chains, and cleaning the hardware.

A one-story addition was constructed in the rear of the house in 2009. The footprint of that addition was intentionally stepped back from the side walls of the house so that it would not impact the historic integrity of the street facade. The addition included a hip roof with wide eaves to match the roof and eaves of the one-story sun room, a stucco exterior to match the stucco of the existing house, and it used wood windows with a similar divided light configuration as the original windows.

Our house is an excellent example of the American Foursquare type with the majority of its original features still intact. Adding it to the list of local Historic Landmarks will ensure that it will continue to be preserved in the future.

Sincerely,



David Gassen



Amy Gassen





Photo #1: Front (East) Elevation - September 3, 2015



Photo #2: Restored Front door – June, 28, 2015



Photo #3: Restored Sunroom French doors– June 28, 2015



Photo #4: Restored window with new sash chain – June 28, 2015



Photo #5: Original door hardware – December 30, 2015



Photo #6: Rusticated concrete block foundation wall – January 10, 2016



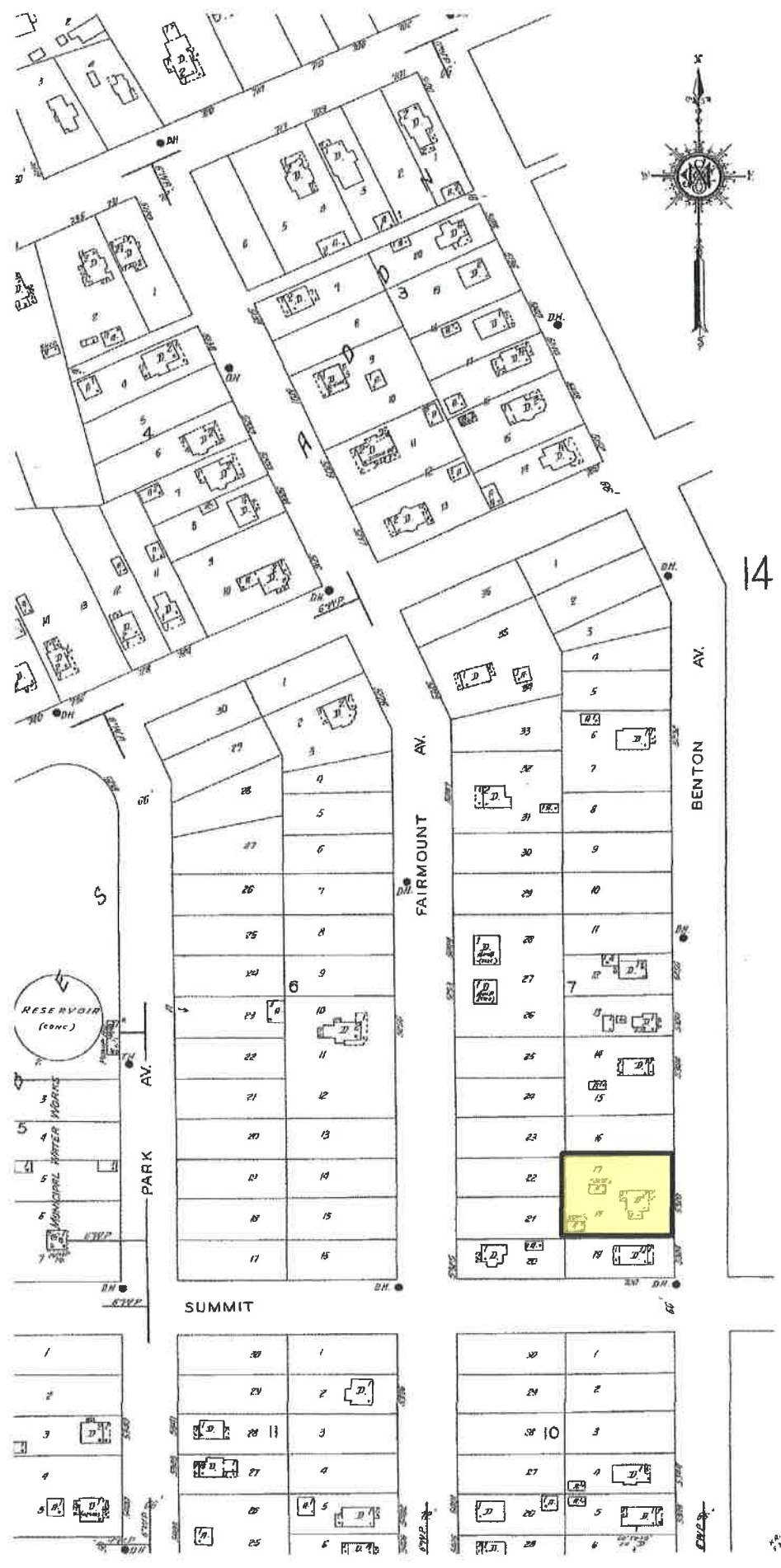


Photo #7: 1933 Sanborn Map





# Historic Landmark Information Form

**Property Address** 5320 Benton Ave. Downers Grove, IL 60515

**Date of Construction** 1924

**Architectural Style** Prairie Style American Foursquare

**Architect (if known)** Unknown

**Number of Stories** 2 **Basement (Y/N)** Y

**Foundation Materials (Concrete, Concrete Block, Wood, Stone, Brick, N/A)**

Rusticated concrete block

**Exterior Wall Materials (Concrete, Wood, Stone, Brick, Vinyl, Other, N/A)**

Stucco

**Roof Type (Gabled, Cross-Gabled, Hipped, Hipped-Gable, Shed, Gambrel, Flat, Other, N/A)**

Hipped

**Roof Materials (Metal, Wood Shingle, Wood Shake, Composition, Slate, Tile, Other, N/A)**

Asphalt shingles

**Window Type (Double-Hung, Awning, Casement, Hopper, Other, N/A)**

Double-hung

**Window Materials (Wood, Aluminum, Vinyl, Other, N/A)**

Wood

**Door Type (Panel, Flush, Transom, N/A) and Materials (Wood, Metal, Glass, N/A)**

Wood with glass lights

**Other significant exterior architectural features (Accessory Structures, Arches, Porches, Towers, Brick Course, etc.)**

Central attic dormer, wide eaves, cube-shaped massing, front porch, one-story sun room

DRAFT

VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE  
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
VILLAGE HALL - COMMITTEE ROOM  
801 BURLINGTON AVENUE

FEBRUARY 17, 2016, 7:00 P.M.

Chairman Pro tem Davenport called the February 17, 2016 meeting of the Architectural Design Review Board to order at 7:10 p.m. and asked for a roll call:

**PRESENT:** Chairman Pro tem Davenport; Mr. Casey, Mrs. Englander, Mr. Riemer

**ABSENT:** Chairman Matthies, Mrs. Acks, Mr. Larson

**STAFF:** Senior Planner Rebecca Leitschuh

**VISITORS:** John Wilbraham, 5313 Benton Ave., Downers Grove; Paul Bertram, 5304 Benton Ave., Downers Grove; Jim and Joan McDermott, 5316 Benton Ave., Downers Grove; Elizabeth Berger, 5305 Washington, Downers Grove; Rich Kulovany for Friends of the Edwards House, 6825 Camden, Downers Grove; Mark Bragen, 1232 Gilbert Ave., Downers Grove; Ken Lerner for Pierce Downer Heritage Alliance, 4933 Whiffen Pl., Downers Grove

#### **APPROVAL OF JANUARY 20, 2016 MINUTES**

Staff noted that an address correction needed to be made.

**MOTION BY MRS. ENGLANDER, SECONDED BY MR. RIEMER TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 20, 2016 MINUTES, AS AMENDED. MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE OF 4-0.**

#### **PUBLIC HEARING**

Ms. Leitschuh announced this application was the first landmark designation application since the ordinance was revised. She stated that two sets of slides were before the commissioners for their review and discussion (one prepared by Staff, and one by the applicant).

**A. 16-ADR-0001: A petition seeking a Historic Landmark Designation for the property commonly known as 5320 Benton Avenue, Downers Grove, IL (PIN 09-08-408-034). The property is located on the west side of Benton Avenue, approximately 75 feet north of Summit Street. David and Amy Gassen, Petitioner and Owner.** Case file documents, public notices, maps and photographs for this case were reviewed by Ms. Leitschuh. Turning to a slide depicting the four-square home, Ms. Leitschuh called attention to the fact that the board was only to consider the façade they could see from the street right-of-way. Features of the four-square were referenced in greater detail (including deep eaves, central attic dormer, front porch – although only partial, grouped windows, horizontal banding, etc.), as were the two specific Standards for Approval for consideration: Section 12.302.A (whether the structure is

over 50 years of age) and whether the structure meets one or more of the seven (7) criteria for landmark designation. In this case, staff stated it met criteria #3 (representative of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style). Staff recommended approval of the landmark designation.

Applicants, David and Amy Gassen, were present. Ms. Gassen thanked staff for their assistance in the landmark application process and briefly walked through her own background on historic preservation and its importance not only to her own neighborhood but to the Village of Downers Grove.

Mr. David Gassen discussed the reasoning behind the purchase of their Four-Square home and the historic research they did on their 1924 home. A bit of historic village demographics during this time period, were referenced, as were the familiar architectural structures constructed around the village. Ms. Gassen described the historical characteristics of the American Four-square, which, as turns out, was a post-Victorian style that was an architectural reaction against the ornate Victorian style. The Four-Square was boasted for its simplicity, maximization of square footage on small lots, and its versatility to apply various styles to its shape, i.e., Craftsman style, Colonial Revival style, etc. Various examples of Four-Square homes within the village followed, noting the Gassen's home followed the Prairie style.

After viewing a photo of her home Ms. Gassen pointed out how the above architectural characteristics of the American Four-Square applied to her own home. She shared that some of the home's original features still existed in the home and she and her husband were in the process of renovating those features. Photos of the home's interior followed. In discussing the addition again, Mr. Gassen explained the addition was added with the intention of keeping the original structure intact while setting the addition back from the corners of the home and paying respect to the original aesthetics of the home. Original doors, windows, and hardware were either reused within the home or saved and stored in the garage for future use. Facades of the home were also featured.

Lastly, Ms. Gassen explained that the reason she and her husband were seeking landmark designation was not only because they liked the Four-Square style but also to continue to maintain the history and character that continues to exist in their neighborhood and throughout the village. Landmarking was also a "nice way to honor an old home that has lasted for so long" and seeing so many Four-Squares was a testament to the effectiveness of their solid construction and efficient design. She hoped others would follow.

Commissioner Casey stated he was surprised when he drove down Benton Avenue to see the amount of teardowns occurring and their massive size as compared to the owner's home. He believed many could learn from what the owners went through; Mr. Davenport concurred.

For the record, Planner Leitschuh interjected and stated that landmarking a home did not restrict an owner from altering the interior of his or her home.

Chairman Pro tem Davenport proceeded to invite the public to speak.

Joan McDermott, 5316 Benton Ave., a next-door neighbor, stated she was proud to be living next-door to a potentially landmarked home. She and her husband also previously renovated old homes and understood the restoration work that went into such homes.

Hearing no further comment, the public hearing was closed by the chairman pro tem.

**MR. CASEY MADE A MOTION THAT THE ADRB APPROVE THE LANDMARK DESIGNATION BASED ON THE TWO CRITERIA THAT IT MEETS, BASED ON THE APPLICATION.**

**MR. REIMER SECONDED THE MOTION. ROLL CALL:**

**AYE: MR. CASEY, MR. REIMER, MS. ENGLANDER, MR. DAVENPORT**

**NAY: NONE**

**MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 4-0**

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Update on Implementation Strategies.** Ms. Leitschuh described a draft, interactive web-site that was being worked on by I.T. staff which incorporates various historical survey maps and parcels of the village. The information will eventually be a web tool accessible by the public once the draft web site is reviewed. Much information will be available when looking at an individual parcel. Examples followed. Leitschuh also provided additional updates which included new FAQs on the website, information about the COA application, and historic district paperwork. Mailings of available resources were also mailed to those significant properties identified in the board's recent survey. On March 14th, the Home Town Times will include an article about the Drew House and, at the board's upcoming April meeting there will be another landmark designation discussion.

As a last comment, Ms. Leitschuh announced that the application deadline for the Certified Local Government grant is February 29, 2016 and staff will be focusing on public outreach with four types of brochures/pamphlets pertaining to: 1) recognition of Sears Catalog homes; 2) a downtown walking tour; 3) general architectural styles in Downers Grove; and 4) a general brochure. Ms. Leitschuh said this new information will be made available to the public via the village's web site, newspapers articles, etc.

Chairman Pro tem Davenport commended the mayor, council, the Ad hoc Committee and staff for accomplishing so much in such a short amount of time. He thanked everyone for their support. Board members concurred.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Ken Lerner, 4933 Whiffen Place, thanked Stan Popovich for reaching out to the Pierce Downers Heritage Alliance for their support regarding the grant application. The Alliance did send a letter supporting the grant application for the brochures and looked forward to assisting staff with anything they needed. He asked when the website features would be available since he wanted to highlight it on the Alliance's website so that the public could link to it.