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ROCK ISLAND PRESERVATION COMMISSION

NOMINATION FOR
LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Case # 89-4 Date _____ Time _____

Common Street Address of Property: 727-19th Street

Name and Address of Property Owner: Paul Fessler & Carol Stream-Fessler
727-19th Street, Rock Island, IL

Please attach a simple statement setting forth the reasons for requesting designation. Please refer to the criteria listed on the reverse side. (These are excerpted from the Rock Island Preservation Ordinance.)

Name(s) and Address(es) of Applicant(s):

Paul Fessler
Carol Stream-Fessler
Signature

Paul Fessler
Carol Stream-Fessler
Name

727-19th Street, Rock Island, IL
Address

home 786-2011
Paul work 322-7363 Carol work 788-6357
Telephone

1. Legal description of property (available from abstract or County Recorder of Deeds office).
2. Map indicating location of property proposed for designation (assistance available from Planning Division).
3. Recent photograph (copies of old photographs or drawings may also be included).
4. Indicate whether or not the owner is aware of the proposed designation.

May 19, 1989

Rock Island Preservation Commission
1528 Third Ave.
Rock Island, IL 61201

Dear Preservation Commission Members,

As the new owners of 727-19th Street (Lot Three(3) in Block One(1) in J.W. Spencer's Third Addition), also referred to as the Cook-Pearce House, we are requesting landmark designation for this property.

Thomas M. Cook who was a conductor for the CB&Q Railroad, built this house in 1894. According to the December 31st Argus of that year, Collins Brothers was the contractor and the cost of the building was \$3,200. In 1897 this home was purchased by Reverend Robert G. Pearce. In the 1940's it was duplexed by Fred Sittig.

We are requesting landmark designation based on the architectural merit of the house. We believe that this house demonstrates the distinguishing characteristics of the Queen Anne Style which is valuable for the study of the Victorian period in Rock Island. This house retains its original architectural appearance with the exception of the porch railings and the addition of a deck in the rear of the house. The original wooden clapboard remains on the exterior. This house has a less common square tower and the original iron finial remains at the top of the tower. This house also displays the detailed spindlework that was evident in many of the Queen Anne houses. The roof is bell-cast (flared edge). The delicate spindlework on the porch frieze and applied ornament on the porch gable have been preserved. The original molding on all windows and the door, with the exception of the front window, are preserved.

Included for your review you will find a map, a photograph, a diagram of the house from the 1898 Sanborn Atlas, a newsclipping from the Argus about Rev. Pearce, and a recent Argus story that featured this house for National Preservation Week.

Sincerely,

Carol Stream-Fessler

Carol Stream-Fessler

Paul Fessler

Paul Fessler



The home of Paul and Carol Fessler, 727 19th St., Rock Island, is an example of Queen Anne style architecture. (Photo by Brian McNeill)

RI couple works to restore Queen Anne style house

Editor's note: This is the last in a series of stories on local architectural styles, offered in conjunction with National Preservation Week.

Paul and Carol Fessler recently purchased a Queen Anne style home at 727 19th St., Rock Island, and they plan to restore the house, built in 1894 by Thomas Cook, to its original grandeur.

The Queen Anne style was named and popularized by a group of 19th century English architects and had little to do with Queen Anne's reign (1702-1714), according to research supplied by Dr. Mary Kirn of Augustana College.

Major stylistic features of Queen Anne houses include an asymmetrical facade with the door to one side and a steeply pitched, irregularly shaped roof. Porches wrap around the house, are partial, or go across the front of the house. Queen Anne houses feature square or round towers of varying heights and have simple sash windows. One of the outstanding features of Queen Anne construction is the spindlework porch decoration or gingerbread wall cladding.

Mrs. Fessler said their house is in good repair for its age and has two parlors, a dining room, kitchen and powder room on the first floor. There are four bedrooms and a bathroom on the second floor.

During the 1940s, the house was turned into a duplex, she said, but the owner was very careful not to ruin any of the original structure. Even though walls were added at the time, he preserved the beautiful staircase which the Fesslers will restore.

"We plan to do mostly cosmetic things to the house — paint, paper, add period furniture and refinish the old wooden floors," Mrs. Fessler said.

The house's tower is in good condition, with the original finial (ironwork) intact. The tower can be entered from the attic. The roof is bell cast and in good shape. The spindlework on the porch now conforms to the Rock Island city building code, and a deck has been added to the back of the home.

The original porch frieze is still preserved, and the decorative moldings on the windows and doors have been retained. The original clapboard is still in place on the house.

The Fesslers enjoy old houses and the restoration process. Their house will be the headquarters for a workshop sponsored annually by the Rock Island Preservation Society.

Rev. Pearce Read Marriage Service for 1500 Couples During 60 Years of Ministry

Fifteen hundred couples have been united in marriage by the words of one man!

Rev. Robert G. Pearce, during his 60 years of ministry, has wedded 3,000 people and as far as he can learn, only one couple has been divorced.

Rev. Pearce's most recent ceremony was performed a week ago when he united his grandson, Robert E. Pearce, and Miss Natalie Ash. On that day Rev. Mr. Pearce celebrated his own 60th wedding anniversary.

Reminiscences of those weddings are so many, Rev. Pearce says, and so full of happy thoughts that they cannot be recounted. Many prominent Rock Island people entered the matrimonial pact by the words of the minister of 1,500 couples. One incident that Rev. Pearce recalled, ran like this:

Kissed Brides.

"Just about two years ago a young couple from Chicago came to me to have their marriage services performed. The vows were taken and at the conclusion, I told the young bride that when I was younger, my eyes sparkling, my hair brown, and my face without a wrinkle, I was permitted to kiss the bride after the ceremony. Then she turned to me and said, 'Mr. Pearce, you wouldn't go back on me, would you?' I didn't."

Mr. Pearce read the services that united his four children in marriage, Robert M. Pearce, Mrs. Mary J. Stapp, Mrs. Esther E. Chandler and Richard C. Pearce. Among the prominent Rock Islanders that the reverend has wedded are Mr. and Mrs. M. E. Sweeney, Mr. and Mrs. William Collins, Dr. and Mrs. Salisbury, Dr. and Mrs. Mofey, Mr. and Mrs. Swain Pearson, Mr. and Mrs. John Miskelly, Mr. and Mrs. Elmore H. Stafford, Mr. and Mrs. John Henderson, Mr. and Mrs. LeRoy Philbrook, Mr. and Mrs. James Farr, Mr. and Mrs. L. W. Gibler, Mr. and Mrs. Frank D. Fuller, Mr. and Mrs. Carl W. Ackerly, Mr. and Mrs. Eben E. Dehler, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel P. Hamaford, and Mr. and Mrs. Arthur H. Cordes.

Presented With Cup.

About one hundred twenty-three couples, who started out married



Rev. Robert G. Pearce.

life under the guidance of Rev. Pearce, presented him with a silver loving cup two years ago at a reception held at the First Methodist church.

Rev. Pearce was born in Edinburgh, England, in 1838. He was educated there, going to sea at 17 years of age. He entered the ministry in 1859 and came to Rock Island in 1883 to accept the pastorate of the First Methodist church. He left here but came back to make his home in Rock Island 22 years ago. He has since been surveyor of custom and more recently deputy collector of customs for the federal government in this city.

Fifteen hundred is quite a record, Rev. Pearce agrees, but at the rate he is going, 25 couples a year, the goal may be beyond the 3,000 mark.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Preservation Commission Members

FROM: Planning and Redevelopment Division
Community and Economic Development Department

DATE: June 22, 1989

SUBJECT: 727 - 19th Street Nomination

BACKGROUND:

The Queen Anne style was brought from England and introduced to America at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876. From there it spread quickly to become one of the most common house styles in the country. The last of the Victorian styles, the Queen Anne was another picturesque design. Irregular in composition, the houses vary widely in size and design. The most common example is the simple wood building in which a variety of shapes and details are displayed.

The Old House Journal described the Queen Anne as "usually a two story house distinguished by asymmetrical massing and a variety of shapes and textures. Vertical surfaces are divided into a series of horizontal bands through the use of varying siding materials such as stone, brick, clapboards, and shingles with differing end cuts. Steep gables, towers, dormers, and balconies further enrich the surface. There is often a gable over the veranda at the entrance. Windows frequently have art glass. Porches frequently display elaborately turned spindle work and there is sawn ornamentation decorating the verge boards and the pediment gables. Multiple roofs make a complex roof line which is further accentuated by chimneys with decorative brickwork."

Rock Island's best examples of the Queen Anne style of architecture are the Kelly House, 1703 - 20th Street, the Looney House, 1635 - 20th Street, and 1020 - 20th Street. (See attachment #1.)

The Queen Anne style, like the Italianate, Second Empire and Stick styles, was based on classical architectural forms. In Europe and the eastern United States, houses of these styles are found in their pure forms. In the midwestern United States, houses of all styles; Queen Anne, Italianate, and Second Empire were viewed as modern styles, not classical revivals. Builders in Rock Island like builders through out the area were never concerned with constructing pure examples of any particular style. They felt free to take liberties with whatever design they were constructing.

The Cook-Pierce House, 727 - 19th Street, is a good example of the tendency in Rock Island to mix styles. Its most obvious feature, the square, bell cast tower is itself, a combination of styles. The square tower is, according to Illinois Historic Preservation Agency staff, "indicative of the transition between the Queen Anne and the Stick styles" while the bell cast eaves are indicative of the transition between Queen Anne and Italianate or Second Empire styles. (Note the bracketing on the tower's eaves.) This is one of Rock Island's two known houses with a square tower though Rock Island has many houses with towers such as the Kelly House, the Looney House, 1020 - 20th Street, and 1038 - 21st Street. Rock Island's only other house with a square tower is at 720 - 21st Street. (It has lost a great deal of historic integrity due to residing.)

The nominated house's porch, with its spindle work treatment, applied ornamentation in the gablet, and its relatively steeply pitched roof is definitely American Eastlake, a relatively common design but with a distinctly Rock Island twist to it.

Frequently Eastlake porches appear on Queen Anne, Princess Anne, or Victorian houses. However, porches on these types of houses, whether Victorian, Queen Anne, or Eastlake, invariably covered at least the entire front facade and were usually wrap around.

The porch at 727 - 19th Street, common in Rock Island, seems to have been taken from the tri-gabled "L" Homestead house of the American Midwest. The porch is tucked between two gables so that it is not as prominent as in a true Queen Anne house.

The Midwest American Homestead house was a result of the merging of the simple and unadorned 1700's Georgian Colonial style and the equally unadorned 1800's Greek Revival in the fourth quarter of the 19th Century. The result was the two story tri-gabled "L" with the unadorned porch tucked between two of the gables that came to be known as the Homestead house which was a primarily rural structure. (See attachment #2.)

In Rock Island (and presumably elsewhere) this type of porch was brought into the city and adorned with Queen Anne type decoration to make a very small and oddly shaped Queen Anne porch. A number of Rock Island houses have nearly identical porches. Some of these houses are 709 - 19th Street and 918 - 20th Street. (See attachment #3.)

The main mass of the house, (the entire house with the porch and tower removed) with its multiple roof lines, the lack of horizontal division, the lack of multiple surface textures and a general and cleaner profile than the Queen Anne puts the house in the Princess Anne style which the Old House Journal describes as "retaining much of the asymmetrical massing of its parent, but the surface treatment is much simpler. Gone are the multiple bands of shingles and in their place is straight cut clapboard. The horizontal division of surfaces is less pronounced than on the Queen Anne. Like the Queen Anne, the Princess Anne has multiple roofs and gables. Some times there will be a vestigial tower with a finial on top. Surfaces are elaborated with bays, oriels, and verandas and the porch roof frequently retains the Queen Anne gable."

The Significant Structures Subcommittee awarded the house 28 points and an "A" rating. According to the Subcommittee, an "A" rating is for structures that received 26 to 34 points (the highest point totals granted) and have sufficient architectural merit to be considered for landmark status by the Commission should nominations be submitted.

CONCLUSION:

This house is essentially a common and unremarkable Princess Anne house on to which has been added an unusual Queen Anne/Homestead/Eastlake style porch that is worthy of further study and an unusual (at least for Rock Island) square bell cast tower.