

HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION APPLICATION

1. Name

Historic: Crain / Claflin House

and/or Common:

2. Location

Street & number 1773 North Cambridge Avenue

Aldersperson: Nik Kovac

District(s): 3rd

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Present Use			
☒ building(s)	☐ public	☐ agricultural	☐ park	☐ government	☐ transportation
☐ structure	☒ private	☐ commercial	☐ cemetery	☐ industrial	☐ other
☐ object	☐ both	☐ educational	☐ religious	☐ military	
☐ site		☐ entertainment	☒ private-residence	☐ museum	

4. Owner of Property

Name: Cambridge 1773 LLC , Registered Agent SK Management LLC

Street & number: 3723 South 1st Street

City: Milwaukee

State WI

Zip 53207

5. Representation Existing Surveys

Inventory: City-wide Reconnaissance Survey 1979; Lower East Side Survey 1986

Date: ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☒ local

Depository for survey records:

Organization Wisconsin State Historical Society; City of Milwaukee

Street & number 200 East Wells Street Room B-4

City Milwaukee

State WI

Zip 53202

Previous historic designation:

☐
☐
☐

National Register

City of Milwaukee Landmark

Other

Name of Program

Date

Date

Name

Name

Date designated

6. DESCRIPTION

Condition:

Check one:

- ☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair
☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins

- ☒ original site
☐ moved date
☐ altered
☐ unaltered

Building form:

Number of stories 2-1/2

Foundation:

- ☐ stone ☒ brick ☐ concrete block ☐ concrete
☐ other

Roof:

- gable (☐ flank ☐ end ☐ cross)
gambrel (☐ flank ☐ end ☐ cross)
☒ hip ☐ mansard ☐ flat
☐ other

Walls:

- ☒ clapboard ☐ brick ☐ stucco ☐ stone ☐ wood shingle ☐ slate ☐ terra cotta
☐ asphalt siding ☐ asbestos tile ☐ aluminum siding ☐ artificial stone ☐ other

Written description: (Continue on a separate sheet, if necessary)

This house is located on the city's Lower East Side approximately two blocks from Prospect Avenue. Its main facade faces east and the building is situated behind a small grassy front lawn. There are some foundation plantings. The house sits on a brick foundation and is clad in wood clapboards. The hip roof with gable has asphalt shingles. The house is irregular in plan with a wing at the north and south elevations and a rear addition. It is wood framed with clapboards that have a narrow exposure on the upper story and wider exposure on the first.

The facade feature a full length front porch with hip roof that is supported by three pairs of double fluted Ionic columns that rest on brick piers. Brick wing walls that framed the steps have been removed. On the first story is a large bay window to the right or north of which are entry doors. The second story features a pair of 6-over-one windows above the bay window on the south and a single six-over-one window to the north or right. These windows are emphasized by gables that extent through the hip roof. The largest, at the south, shelters the paired windows and is clad in shingles. It also features a Colonial Revival circular multi-paned window. The bargeboards are wide and simple. To the right or north is a smaller gable that features half-timbering. Between the two gables, on the roof is a petite dormer with hip roof, multi-paned windows and shingle cladding.

The north elevation features a pair of windows and a small oriel. The projecting wing features a gabled roof that is oriented parallel to the street. There is one large window on the first story and a smaller window on the second story with six-over-one sash.

The south elevation features one small square window on the first story and a larger window on the second. At this elevation is a wing with gabled roof that parallels the street. It serves as a large two-story bay with windows located to meet the needs of the rooms within.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Areas of significance:

☐ agriculture	☐ economics	☐ law	☐ science
☒ architecture	☐ education	☐ literature	☐ social/humanitarian
☐ art	☐ engineering	☐ military	☐ theater
☐ commerce	☐ exploration/settlement	☐ music	☐ transportation
☐ communications	☐ industry	☐ philosophy	☐ other (specify)
☐ community planning	☐ invention	☐ politics/government	☐ history
☐ conservation	☐ landscape architecture	☐ religion	

Date built or altered: 1880, addition 1903, remodeled front 1904

Builder/architect: 1880 unknown; 1903-1904 H. A. Betts

Written statement of significance: (continue on a separate sheet, if necessary)

The Crain / Claflin House is significant both for its architecture and its owners.

The house belongs to the golden age of Cambridge Avenue when the street was populated with prominent business people, policy makers and socialites. The house was built in 1880, per the tax rolls, and was most likely Italianate or Victorian Gothic in style. The basic footprint of the house dates to this time period and the north and south wings are typical of this period. The 1894 Sanborn map shows that the covered entry was located in the north wing, where a large window is situated today. A prominent bay window extended from the front. Under the second owner, the house was remodeled into its current appearance. The architect of this remodeling, H. A. Betts was well known for his work in the Arts and Crafts style but in this instance, created a very hybrid design. He changed the entrance to the front of the house and built a large porch across the facade, supported by pairs of Ionic columns. This along with the oculus or circular window in the south gable are elements of the Colonial Revival style. The plain shingles in the south gable, the half-timbering in the north gable, the six-over-one sash are all elements of the Arts and Crafts. The house had been maintained in this form with some modifications to the present day. The house is a good example of 19th and early 20th century practices that preferred remodeling and updating to demolition and building over. The house is a very well designed example of the type of hybrid that could be produced by a talented

The house is also prominent for its early owners. It was built in 1880 by Charles E. Crain, who was prominent in the insurance industry and was the head of a free Lecture Society that brought notables into town. A letter written to Crain by Frederick Douglass is at the University of Chicago. The letter indicates that Douglass was unable to lecture in Milwaukee (at least at the time requested). Crain was also active as a school commissioner and in veterans societies.

The next owner of the house was Thomas Claflin the president-treasurer of the Model Laundry Company. This business located in the neighborhood after being downtown, and constructed a 2-story building at 1719 North Warren Avenue. A later addition in 1908 was built at 1716 North Arlington. The prominent Huebsch Laundry Company acquired the Model Laundry in 1914.

8. Major Bibliographical References

Milwaukee City Directories
Milwaukee Tax Rolls
Milwaukee Permit Records
Milwaukee Sentinel

9. Property Description

Acreage: less that one acre

Legal property description:

CAMBRIDGE SUBD PART LOT 6 SEC 21 & LOTS 15-16 BLK 198 ROGER'S ADDN IN NE & SE 1/4 SEC 21-7-22 BLOCK 242
S 18' LOT 18 AND N 37' LOT 19

10. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Carlen Hatala on behalf of Ald. Kovac

Organization: City of Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission staff / Milwaukee Common Council

Street: 200 East Wells Street

City: Milwaukee

State: WI

Zip: 53202

Telephone (days) (414) 286-5722 (evenings)

Date: June 16, 2015

Return to: Historic Preservation
City Clerk's Office
200 E. Wells St.
Room B-4
Milwaukee, WI 53202

(414) 286-5722