



**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

*Planning Division*

**m e m o r a n d u m**

**TO:** Laurel Lunt Prussing, Mayor

**FROM:** Elizabeth H. Tyler, AICP, Director

**DATE:** May 18, 2007

**SUBJECT:** 502 W. Elm Street (Sutton House): Application for historic landmark designation, Case No. HP2007-L-01

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**Introduction**

Historic Preservation Case No. HP2007-L-01 is an application by Brian Adams and Ilona Matkovszki to designate the property at 502 W. Elm Street (referred to as the Sutton House) as a local historic landmark. Erwin Goldfarb, c/o Campus Property Management, is the property owner. A Registered Preference against the nomination has been submitted by the property owner (copy attached). The petitioners have also submitted an application for designation of neighboring 504 W. Elm Street as a local landmark, and that application is being considered separately but concurrently.

The Urbana City Council should also be aware that the property owners have submitted plans to the City to construct three apartment buildings at 502 and 504 W. Elm Street. Construction of this project would involve the demolition of the two buildings under consideration for landmark designation. However, due to the landmark applications, Section XII-8 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance prohibits the issuance of demolition or building permits until the landmark applications are resolved.

Should the application for designation as a local landmark be approved, the owners would be required to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission for future exterior changes to the property, including demolition.

At the Historic Preservation Commission meeting on April 4, 2007, the Commission made a preliminary determination that the property qualifies for designation as a local landmark under the following criteria (Section XII-5.C of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance):

- a) Significant value as part of the architectural, artistic, civic, cultural, economic, educational, ethnic, political or social heritage of the nation, state, or community;*
- b) Associated with an important person or event in national, state or local history;*

- c) *Representative of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable for the study of a period, style, craftsmanship, method of construction or use of indigenous materials and which retains a high degree of integrity; and*
- e) *Identifiable as an established and familiar visual feature in the community owing to its unique location or physical characteristics.*

According to the Urbana Historic Preservation Ordinance (Article XII-5.F.1.B), if an application is submitted by someone other than the property owner and the owner has submitted a Registered Preference against the nomination, the Historic Preservation Commission shall recommend the Urbana City Council approve or deny said application by a majority vote of the Commissioners then holding office. The property owner filed a Registered Preference against the nomination at the April 4, 2007 meeting. (Copy attached.)

At the Historic Preservation Commission meeting on May 2, 2007, the Commission held a public hearing on the application. Eight people, including one of the applicants, spoke in favor of designating Sutton House a local landmark. One person, a representative of the property owner, spoke in opposition to the designation. Since this application first went before the Historic Preservation Commission on April 4, 2007, the Historic Preservation Commissioners and City staff have received approximately 35 e-mails and letters in support of the designation and two against the designation (both from the property owner's representative). At the close of the public hearing, the Historic Preservation Commission voted six ayes and no nays to recommend to the Urbana City Council that Sutton House be designated as a local historic landmark.

## **Background**

According to the application:

“Elizabeth Sutton, widow of R.A. Sutton, Urbana mayor (1874-75) and “Brick King of Champaign County,” built the house in 1889. It is an excellent local example of the Queen Anne architectural style and is one of the few remaining examples of this style executed in brick. It is also the only documented residential brick structure that exemplifies the masonry product produced at Urbana's important Sutton-Sheldon Brick Yards. The integrity of the house remains apparent. Although modifications have occurred over time, mostly in the conversion of the house to apartments, many of these changes are historic and have in themselves gained significance.”

Based on extensive research and documentation in terms of the criteria for designation, the application states that the Sutton House:

- Has significant value as part of the architectural, artistic, civic, cultural, economic, educational, ethnic, political or social heritage of the nation, state, or community;
- Is associated with an important person or event in national, state, or local history;
- Is representative of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable for the study of a period, style, craftsmanship, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials and which retains a high degree of integrity; and
- Is identifiable as an established and familiar visual feature owing to its unique location or

physical characteristics.

For detailed documentation on the property's history and significance, please refer to the attached application.

## **Discussion**

Under Section XII-5.C of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance, the proposed landmark must meet one or more of the following criteria for designation. Following each criteria (*provided in italics*) is analysis offered by City staff.

- a) *Significant value as part of the architectural, artistic, civic, cultural, economic, educational, ethnic, political or social heritage of the nation, state, or community.*

When constructed in 1889, the local newspaper recognized the Sutton House as “one of the most beautiful and convenient residences in the city.” This statement indicates that contemporaries saw the home as significant. According to the application, the Sutton House survives as a notable example of the Queen Anne architectural style and a rare surviving example of a Queen Anne-style residence constructed of brick. For comparison, other local examples of Queen Anne architecture exist at 506, 508, 510, 603 and 605 Main Street and at 312 W. Green Street. These examples are of frame construction and built later in the 1890's. The Sutton House appears to be one of the earliest surviving examples of Queen Anne residential architecture in Urbana. The application also indicates the home was likely constructed from bricks produced at the Sutton-Sheldon brickyards which were associated with the Sutton family. The section of the application titled “Property Description” provides a description of the architectural features of the house. That the house has significant value as part of the architectural heritage of Urbana appears documented by the application.

- b) *Associated with an important person or event in national, state or local history.*

The application documents an association of this property with the Sutton family. Royal Sutton operated two brickyards in Urbana and supplied the bricks for the original buildings of the University of Illinois and for the Urbana gas works buildings. In 1874, Sutton was elected Mayor of Urbana and served one term. Despite this house being built eight years after his death, it remains an expression of the wealth and social status achieved by the family. The home was built by his widow, Elizabeth Waters Sutton, whose family carried on the brick business in Urbana. Additionally, her father, Samuel Waters, operated the Pennsylvania House (formerly the Urbana House) which was Urbana's first hotel and frequented by Abraham Lincoln. Early newspaper articles document the social events which took place at the property, indicating that the Suttons were considered part of the social elite of the period.

The application also establishes a link with the previous use of the property which was the location of the home of Clark Robinson Griggs. Griggs was a successful Massachusetts businessman and politician who following the Civil War relocated to Urbana. He was elected Mayor, served as a representative in the Illinois House of Representatives, and led the fight to locate what is now the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. Griggs' house was located at what is now 502 W. Elm Street, and after he returned East in 1873, the property was sold to Royal Sutton. The Griggs House survived on an adjoining

property until the 1980's but was then demolished. Although this means that the lot is associated with the Griggs, clearly an important person in state and local history, City staff does not find that this association extends to the Sutton House itself which is the subject of this landmark nomination.

- c) *Representative of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable for the study of a period, style, craftsmanship, method of construction or use of indigenous materials and which retains a high degree of integrity.*

The Sutton House is a good example of the Queen Anne style, with an irregular plan and highly asymmetrical massing that includes a massive attic tower, projecting corner pavilion, and a prominent cut-away bay. Emerging in the late Victorian era, the style employs inventive, multi-story floor plans that often include projecting wings, several porches and balconies, and multiple chimneys with decorative chimney pots. Steep cross-gabled roofs, towers, and vertical windows are all typical of a Queen Anne home. The Sutton house is a unique surviving example of the Queen Anne style in Urbana because of its masonry construction. A further description of the architectural significance can be found in the section of the application titled "Architectural Significance."

The second part of Criterion c) deals with integrity. The original house was constructed in 1889. The application does not document subsequent changes, but these obviously include a west side addition, a one-story rear addition, and construction of a stair tower on the east façade. Additions and modifications to buildings are the norm rather than the exception, but the question should be whether or not these changes inhibit our ability to perceive the historical character of the building. It must also be recognized that later additions and modifications, even when executed in a completely different architectural style, can achieve significance as part of the building's history and architecture. In comparing the 1909, 1924, and later Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, the west side of the building (facing the adjoining building) was extended outward approximately four feet sometime between 1924 and 1966. This addition "squared off" the west wall, removing what had been a bay window, and changing the roof line somewhat to the rear. Being a tertiary side of the house which is not well seen from the street, this does not appreciably change how the building's historic façade is perceived by the public. At the same time, this addition did affect the front façade slightly by extending in front of the brick tower above the cat slide roof line. Because it is only a minor change which leaves the character-defining elements in place, and does not appreciably change how the façade is perceived, the building remains "Representative of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable for the study of a period". A more serious modification has taken place by construction of an exterior stair tower of the east façade facing McCullough Street. Although the change certainly detracts from the building's original design, it does not block the ability to perceive the character-defining elements. Overall, 502 W. Elm Street retains a sufficient level of integrity as perceived by the public. In terms of local landmark designation, only the exterior is of concern, and the exterior elevations most prominently viewed by the public are the most important in terms of integrity.

- d) *Notable work of a master builder, designer, architect or artist whose individual genius has influenced an area.*

The Sutton House does not clearly qualify for criterion d). The builder, designer, and architect (if any) for this building are unknown. Although this property is associated with the wife and family of Royal Sutton, described by the *Champaign County Gazette* in 1871 as the "Brick King of Champaign County",

Royal Sutton was not recognized strictly speaking as a master builder, designer, or architect.

- e) *Identifiable as an established and familiar visual feature in the community owing to its unique location or physical characteristics.*

The physical characteristics on the main façade, primarily the cat slide gable, the attic tower and projecting corner pavilion, are dramatic and unique. The home's asymmetrical design and wrap-around front porch with Queen Anne spindle-work are also character-defining elements of this house. Given these unique physical characteristics, the Sutton House is certainly identifiable as an established and familiar feature in the community. In terms of "unique location", all properties are uniquely located, but this criterion refers to a property being recognizable due to unique placement, such as on a hill. Being located on a street corner, the home's visual character is prominent but should not be considered as identifiable based specifically on a unique location.

- f) *Character as a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure, including, but not limited to, farmhouses, gas stations or other commercial structures with a high level or integrity or architectural significance.*

The Sutton House does not qualify under criterion f). The building is not a utilitarian structure.

- g) *Located in an area that has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.*

The Sutton House does not qualify under criterion g). City staff and the applicants are not aware of any archaeological significance of the area.

## **Summary of Findings**

The recommended statement of findings based on the application and Staff analysis are as follows:

1. Article XII. of the *Urbana Zoning Ordinance* provides the City of Urbana the authority to designate local landmarks and historic districts with the stated purpose to promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the community.
2. The City of Urbana on March 12, 2007 received a complete application to designate the property located at 502 W. Elm Street as a local landmark.
3. The property located at 502 W. Elm Street and known as the Sutton House was constructed in 1889 in the Queen Anne architectural style.
4. The Sutton House is significant as part of the architectural, economic, political and social heritage of the community. The property is a rare surviving example of Queen Anne construction in brick, and the earliest identified Queen Anne-style house in Urbana.
5. The Sutton House is associated with an important person or event in national, state or local history.

The Sutton family was prominent in local business and politics and considered part of the city's social elite in the late 1800's.

6. The Sutton House is representative of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable for the study of a period, style, craftsmanship, method of construction or use of indigenous materials and which retains a high degree of integrity. The property is a rare surviving example of Queen Anne construction in brick, and the earliest identified Queen Anne-style house in Urbana. Later changes have not appreciably inhibited the public's ability to perceive the property's historic character, and the property retains a sufficient degree of integrity.
7. The Sutton House is not a notable work of a master builder, designer, architect or artist whose individual genius has influenced an area.
8. The Sutton House is an identifiable and familiar visual feature in the community owing to its unique physical characteristics, including its brick construction, asymmetrical design, square attic tower, cat slide roof, corner pavilion, and wrap-around porch with Queen Anne detailing.
9. The Sutton House is not a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure.
10. The Sutton House is not known to be located in an area that has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

## Options

In considering Case No. HP2007-L-01, the Urbana City Council may:

- a) Approve the application; or
- b) Deny the application.

## Recommendation

The Historic Preservation Commission determined on April 4, 2007 that 502 W. Elm Street qualifies for designation as a local historic landmark based on criteria a, b, c, and e of Section XII-5.C of the *Urbana Zoning Ordinance*. On May 2, 2007, the Historic Preservation Commission voted six ayes and no nays to recommend that the City Council approve the application for designation.

Based on the documented significance of Sutton House to the community and the fact that the property retains sufficient integrity, staff recommends the Urbana City Council approve the application. A two-thirds majority vote of all Councilmembers holding office would be required to do so per Section XII-5.F.2 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance.

Prepared by:

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Rebecca Bird, Planning Intern

cc: Erwin Goldfarb, c/o Campus Property Management  
Brian Adams & Ilona Matkovszki  
Libby Tyler, Director, Community Development Services Department  
Alice Novak, Chair, Urbana Historic Preservation Commission  
Betsy Cronan, West Urbana Neighborhood Association

Attachments:

Application for HP 2007-L-01 Sutton House, 502 W. Elm St, including photographs and maps  
Property Owner's Registered Preference  
Defects of Face of Petition  
March 30, 2007 staff memorandum to the Historic Preservation Commission  
Minutes from the April 4, 2007 Historic Preservation Commission meeting  
April 26, 2007 staff memorandum to the Historic Preservation Commission  
Minutes from the May 2, 2007 Public Hearing on 502 W. Elm St., Case HP 2007-L-01  
Written correspondence received



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

*Planning Division*

**m e m o r a n d u m**

**TO:** Laurel Lunt Prussing, Mayor

**FROM:** Alice Novak, Chair, Urbana Historic Preservation Commission

**DATE:** May 11, 2007

**SUBJECT:** 502 W. Elm Street (Sutton House): Application for historic landmark designation, Case No. HP2007-L-01

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Historic Preservation Case No. HP2007-L-01 is an application by Brian Adams and Ilona Matkovszki to designate the property at 502 W. Elm Street (referred to as the Sutton House) as a local historic landmark. Erwin Goldfarb, c/o Campus Property Management, is the property owner. A Registered Preference against the nomination has been submitted by the property owner (copy attached). The petitioners have also submitted an application for designation of neighboring 504 W. Elm Street as a local landmark, and that application is being considered separately but concurrently.

At the Historic Preservation Commission meeting on April 4, 2007, the Commission made a preliminary determination that the property qualifies for designation as a local landmark under the following criteria (Section XII-5.C of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance):

- a) *Significant value as part of the architectural, artistic, civic, cultural, economic, educational, ethnic, political or social heritage of the nation, state, or community;*
- b) *Associated with an important person or event in national, state or local history;*
- c) *Representative of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable for the study of a period, style, craftsmanship, method of construction or use of indigenous materials and which retains a high degree of integrity; and*
- e) *Identifiable as an established and familiar visual feature in the community owing to its unique location or physical characteristics.*

For more detailed information on how the Sutton House meets the above criteria, please see the attached application, staff memoranda to the Historic Preservation Commission, and Commission minutes.



## Recommendation

At the May 2, 2007 Historic Preservation Commission meeting, the Commission held a public hearing on the application. Eight people, including one of the applicants, spoke in favor of the application for designation of the Sutton House as a local historic landmark. One person, who represented the property owner, spoke in opposition to the application. Additionally, since this application first went before the Historic Preservation Commission on April 4, 2007, the Historic Preservation Commissioners and City staff have received approximately 35 emails and letters in support of the designation and two against the designation (both from the property owner's representative).

Following the public hearing, the Historic Preservation Commission voted six ayes and no nays to recommend to the Urbana City Council that the Sutton House be designated as a local historic landmark. The following information on the historical and architectural significance of the property was provided as part of the motion to recommend approval.

- Under Criteria A, the importance of this house is primarily in terms of its architecture and the civic component associated with the Sutton family which satisfies the requirement that the property has significant value as part of the architectural, artistic, civic, cultural, educational, ethnic, political or social heritage of the nation, state or community.
- In terms of Criteria B, the Sutton family was obviously important in local social, political, and economic history. When a fire destroyed most of Urbana's downtown, then mostly of wood construction, the Sutton family, which owned a brick factory, provided the bricks to rebuild much of what is now known as "historic Urbana."
- For Criteria C, there remains a high degree of integrity to this structure. Most of the materials originally used to construct this house remain intact and it is a very unusual example of the Queen Anne style, being constructed in brick. Not many of these exist in Urbana.
- Under Criteria E, this structure is identifiable as an established and familiar visual feature owing to its unique physical characteristics.

Signed:

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Alice Novak, Chair, Historic Preservation Commission

cc: Erwin Goldfarb, c/o Campus Property Management  
Brian Adams & Ilona Matkovszki  
Libby Tyler, Director, Community Development Services Department  
Alice Novak, Chair, Urbana Historic Preservation Commission  
Betsy Cronan, West Urbana Neighborhood Association

Attachments:

Application for HP 2007-L-01 Sutton House, 502 W. Elm St, including photographs and maps  
Property Owner's Registered Preference and Defects on the Face of the Petition  
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April 26, 2007 staff memorandum to the Historic Preservation Commission  
Minutes from the May 2, 2007 Historic Preservation Commission meeting

ORDINANCE NO. 2007-06-045

**AN ORDINANCE DESIGNATING A HISTORIC LANDMARK**

(502 W. Elm Street, "Sutton House" Historic Preservation Case No. HP2007-L-01)

WHEREAS, Brian Adams and Ilona Matkovszki have nominated the property located at 502 West Elm Street, Urbana (commonly referred to as the "Sutton House") to be designated a historic landmark pursuant to the Urbana Historic Preservation Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the owner of the subject property, Erwin Goldfarb, c/o Campus Property Management, has been duly notified of the nomination and has submitted a Registered Preference against the nomination; and

WHEREAS, after due publication and notice to all parties as is required under the Ordinance, a public hearing was held by the Urbana Historic Preservation Commission on May 4, 2007 concerning the subject historic landmark nomination; and

WHEREAS, following the public hearing, the Historic Preservation Commission voted to approve landmark designation for the subject parcel by a vote of 6 ayes and 0 nays, and made a written recommendation accompanied by a report summarizing the evidence presented at the hearing, with an explanation of its recommendation, which said recommendation and attachments were forwarded to the City Council; and

WHEREAS, the owner of the subject parcel was notified by letter with a copy of the recommendation and attachments on May 17, 2007 of the date of the City Council meeting at which the designation is to be considered.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CORPORATE AUTHORITIES OF THE CITY OF URBANA, ILLINOIS, as follows:

The Council does hereby find and determine, based upon the recommendation and report of the Historic Preservation Commission, that the subject parcel should be designated as a historical landmark on the basis of meeting the following criteria:

- a. Significant value as part of the architectural, artistic, civic, cultural, economic, educational, ethnic, political or social heritage of the nation, state, or community;
- b. Associated with an important person or event in national, state or local history;
- c. Representative of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable for the study of a period, style, craftsmanship, method of construction or use of indigenous materials and which retains a high degree of integrity; and
- e. Identifiable as an established and familiar visual feature in the community owing to its unique location or physical characteristics;  
and

thus, the said parcel at 502 West Elm Street, commonly referred to as the "Sutton House", is hereby designated as a historic landmark, pursuant to the Urbana Historic Preservation Ordinance.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Lot One (1), except the North 110 feet thereof, all in Sutton's Subdivision of Lot Three (3) of Assessor's Subdivision of a part of the Northwest Quarter (NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ ) of the Northeast Quarter (NE  $\frac{1}{4}$ ) of the Northwest Quarter (NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ ) of Section Seventeen (17), Township Nineteen (19) North, Range Nine (9) East of the Third Principal Meridian, in Champaign County, Illinois.

PERMANENT PARCEL NUMBERS: 91-21-17-110-023

Section 2. The City Clerk is directed to publish this Ordinance in pamphlet form by authority of the corporate authorities. This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and publication in accordance with the terms of Chapter 65, Article 11, Division 13 (Zoning) of the Illinois Compiled Statutes (65 ILCS 5/11-13-14).

PASSED by the Corporate Authorities this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_,  
2007.

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSTAINS:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phyllis D. Clark, City Clerk

APPROVED by the Mayor this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2007.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Laurel Lunt Prussing, Mayor

**CERTIFICATE OF PUBLICATION IN PAMPHLET FORM**

I, Phyllis D. Clark, certify that I am the duly elected and acting Municipal Clerk of the City of Urbana, Champaign County, Illinois.

I certify that on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2007, the Corporate Authorities of the City of Urbana passed and approved Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_\_, entitled AN ORDINANCE DESIGNATING A HISTORIC LANDMARK (502 W. Elm Street, "Sutton House" Historic Preservation Case No. HP2007-L-01) which provided by its terms that it should be published in pamphlet form. The pamphlet form of Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_\_ was prepared, and a copy of such Ordinance was posted in the Urbana City Building commencing on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2007, and continuing for at least ten (10) days thereafter. Copies of such Ordinance were also available for public inspection upon request at the Office of the City Clerk.

DATED at Urbana, Illinois, this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2007.