

A Look Back in Time

The Anthony and Caroline Isermann House, 6416 Seventh Avenue, sits in a dense residential neighborhood that is located south of Kenosha's downtown commercial district. The house sits on a small, narrow lot that is landscaped with mature lawns, trees, and bushes. Section 15.04 of the City's Zoning Ordinance establishes standards and sites as historic, and the site or structure must meet at least one (1) of the six (6) standards. The Anthony and Caroline Isermann House meets both Standard 3: "embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen..." and Standard 4: "is representative of the notable work of a master builder, designer or architect." The Anthony and Caroline Isermann House is architecturally significant because it is a fine example of the Prairie Style of architecture. The Prairie Style originated in the Midwest and some of the best examples of the style are located in Wisconsin. The house was designed by Milwaukee architect, Russell Barr Williamson, who was a student of Frank Lloyd Wright. The Isermann House was originally designated a Kenosha Historic Site in 1979 and re-designated on July 15, 1996. In 2004, The Anthony and Caroline Isermann House was placed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

Built in 1922, the Isermann House is a two-story residence with a one-story ell. The house has a rectangular plan and a low, horizontal form and massing. The hip roof is low-pitched and features wide, overhanging eaves. The walls are primarily faced with brown bricks, but the upper half story of the main block is covered with a stucco finish. Most of the openings are medium-sized casements grouped in small "window bands." On the first story main elevation of the main block and the ell, there are larger openings flanked by sidelights. A plain stone surround decorates the larger window of the main block. On the south wall are two (2) shallow bays, one (1) which consists of brick piers running from the foundation to the roof eaves. Projecting from the main elevation of the main block and the ell are small sections of brick walls with stucco ledges.



Anthony Isermann was the President of the Isermann Clothing Store, a prominent, long-time commercial business in downtown Kenosha. The Isermann's lived in the house until the 1960s.

This house is architecturally significant because it is a fine example of the Prairie Style of architecture and because it was designed by Russell Barr Williamson, a student of Frank Lloyd Wright, the leading architect of the style. The Prairie Style was developed by a group of progressive architects in early twentieth century Chicago. The style emphasizes horizontal lines by using low-pitched rooms with wide, overhanging eaves; banded windows; emphatic belt courses; and natural building materials. This house is a fine example of the style because it has all the typical features, including the

low-pitched roof with wide, overhanging eaves; banded windows; an emphatic belt course highlighted with a different finish than the rest of the house; and natural building materials. Although a small house, the long, low massing of the style is displayed by effective use of the Prairie details.

Russell Barr Williamson was a Milwaukee architect who studied with Frank Lloyd Wright, the foremost practitioner and inventor of the Prairie Style. Wright's influence was strong during Williamson's early career, even though the Prairie Style had already peaked in popularity by the 1920s. This house, and its neighbor to the south, the Frank and Jane Isermann House, are traditional Prairie School designs, very reminiscent of the work of the mid-western Prairie architects during the first two (2) decades of the twentieth century. The houses well illustrate that Williamson was a successful, if not innovative, interpreter of Wright's prairie Style ideas. The Anthony and Caroline Isermann House is a fine example of the Prairie Style designed by a master architect. A drive down Seventh Avenue will award you with a view of this distinctive style of architecture.