

Building Plaque Application

Name _____

Building Address _____

471 Arlington Avenue

Original Owner Royal Spear

Date of Construction 1919

Architect (if known) _____

Builder (if known) _____

Check if attached:



Statement Of Value

Please review the criteria on page 5. The Elgin Heritage Commission uses these criteria to review your application and award a plaque. Attach an explanation of the historical **and** architectural value of the building. Attach photocopies of relevant materials such as copies of Sanborn maps, original property deeds and City Directory listings. Applications without these requirements will not be considered by the Elgin Heritage Commission.



Building Alterations

Describe any alterations to the exterior of the building and include dates. Attach description to the application.



Photograph

Include a recent photograph in which the building is clearly visible. Additional photographs depicting a close up and details of decorative features are helpful.

Stipulations

If the building is not awarded a plaque, the application fee of \$15.00 will be refunded.

This application and submitted materials shall be retained by the City of Elgin as a part of the permanent record of the building.

The Elgin Heritage Commission has the authority to edit and publish the information submitted in the application. This does not prohibit others from using the information.

When awarded, the plaque will remain the property of the City and cannot be altered or removed from the building. It is the City's responsibility to replace the plaque if and when the situation warrants it.

In addition to agreeing to the above stipulations, the undersigned attests that the information provided is, to the best of his/her knowledge, accurate.

Owner's Signature _____

Signed _____

Mary M. Hill

Date _____

Date _____

12-30-02

Historical/Architectural

Bowen Heights Addition was platted in 1888 by George S. Bowen, who moved to Elgin following the Chicago fire in 1871. He served as mayor of Elgin for one year, helped organize the Board of Trade, and was president of the Elgin Electric Light Company. The Addition was bounded on the north by Sherman Avenue, the south by Bent Street, the west by St. Charles Street, and the east by Liberty Street. Bowen's house, at 419 St. Charles St., is now gone.

Block 3 of the Addition was platted as "Julia E. Bowen's Subdivision" in 1907. It was bounded by Regent Street on the north, Bent Street on the south, Liberty Street on the east, and Arlington Avenue on the west. Miss Julia warranted lots in the subdivision to her son, George E. Bowen, who then sold them.

Julia Bowen was described as a "cultured and refined woman" in her obituary, *Elgin Daily News*, May 27, 1914. The Bowen house was "the social headquarters of the people of this section as well as the scene of many weekend parties to the best people of Chicago." Mrs. Bowen was vice president of the Elgin Woman's Club. She was considered as having "some prominence in the literary field." Miss Julia was an invalid for 20 years before passing away in May of 1914.

In 1916, lot 11 was sold to Royal Spear, a physician. The 1917-18 Elgin City Directory has no listing for 471 Arlington Avenue; the 1920 edition lists Royal Spear at 471. The Sanborn Maps from 1913 and 1939 update are confusing in that they show lots in the Subdivision numbered incorrectly and the drawing of 471 is only half completed on the 1939 update. The true, accurate, and legal description for 471 is lot 11, the fourth house north of the southwest corner of Arlington and Bent.

President Wilson ordered that no new housing construction would take place in the United States in 1918 so that all resources could be directed toward WWI. It is likely that 471 Arlington was built after WWI ended. The house stayed in possession of the Spear family until 1951 when Anna Spear, now a widow, sold it on contract to one Tom Lonergan. Lonergan and his wife divorced in 1957 and he gave up his interest in the property to his ex wife. The contract sale was part of Anna Spear's estate when it was probated in 1960 and was released by the estate in 1967 when 471 Arlington was sold for the second time to Arthur and Lois Vogt. They too were divorced. Two owners later, legal proceedings were initiated by a mortgage company who got the property back in 1984. There followed more owners for a total of 11, including the present ones who bought the house in 2002.

Architectural

471 Arlington Avenue is in the Elgin National Watch Factory Historic District and is listed as contributing to the historic significance of the area. Colonial Revival style houses became popular at the turn of the 19th century as part of the Eclectic movement in architectural design, a trend that combined different architectural traditions to define itself. The house is a rectangular box with a front facing gable, a full width front porch, and symmetrically placed, 1 over 1, windows--in the Colonial Revival style. Elements borrowed from the earlier Free Classic style are the three window band in the front roof peak, bay windows in the front and south facades, classical columns on the front and side

porches, the slightly flared roof line, and the difference in wall cladding used on the upper and lower floors.

mmh/dec02

