

## Sherman Avenue Historic District

Sherman Avenue and its surrounding area were included in the original plat of Madison, drafted in 1836 for pioneer land agent and speculator, James Duane Doty. Following the shoreline of Lake Mendota, it was one of only a few streets that did not conform to the plat's rectangular grid pattern. Sherman Avenue was a scenic backwater and, indeed was sometimes under water, until the early 1890s when the City experienced its second period of rapid growth. It was during this period that the City's first suburbs were developed, and major filling of low lying land in the Sherman Avenue area became economically feasible.

The Sherman Avenue historic district includes both sides of a five-block section of Sherman Avenue from Giddings Park to Tenney Park. This area was developed during the first era of Madison's suburban expansion, when streetcars made the ten- to twelve-block commute to downtown more tolerable. Nearly all the houses in the district were built as single-family homes for middle-class families. Since most of them were built between 1890 and 1920, early twentieth century styles predominate. Of the 80 houses in the district, about a third are Queen Anne or Shingle styles. Another third are Craftsman or Prairie styles, and the rest consist of period revival styles.

This district is also significant for its concentration of residences designed by some of Madison's most important architectural firms, including Claude and Starck, Alvan Small, Gordon and Paunack, Law, Law and Potter and Frank Riley. Most of the houses in the district look very much like they did when they were built. Similar setbacks, heights, rooflines, and materials, combined with high historic integrity present a unified appearance and feeling throughout the neighborhood.