



123 MADISON STREET, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS 60302

HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION REPORT



Paul Blatchford House No. 1
250 Forest Avenue

Preliminary Determination of Eligibility approved by the
Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission on April 8, 2010

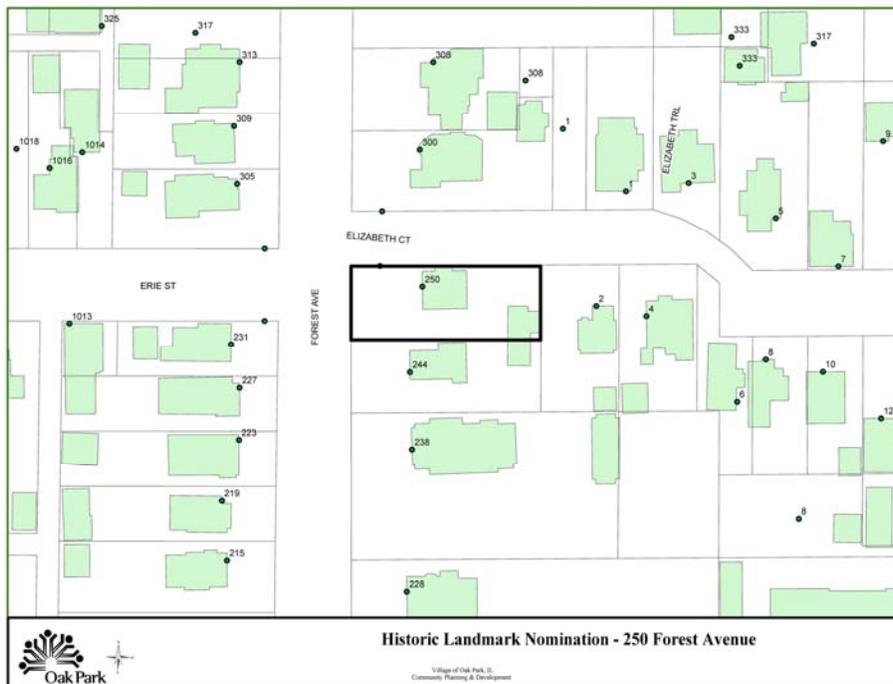
Designated by Village Ordinance on June 21, 2010

Paul Blatchford House No. 1 250 Forest Avenue

Built: 1887, 1915
Architect: Unknown
Builder: Unknown

The 1887 Paul Blatchford House is located at 250 Forest Avenue in Oak Park, Illinois, and faces west. The three-story wood frame house sits on the southeast corner of Forest Avenue and Elizabeth Court.

The three-story wood frame house has many Stick style features including the steep cross-gabled roof, the exterior ornamentation at the gabled ends, angled clapboards and overhung eaves. Above the porch is an unusual 'Juliet' style balcony. A unique decorative woodwork design can be found above the second floor window and above the third floor window in the gable end. The surface of the house features vertical as well as horizontal beams allowing the frame of the home to be seen and is detailed in vertical and angular clapboards broken up with a band of shingles. The front or west gable creates an overhung eave over the corner window on the second floor, where a corner balcony is created. Originally a spindled column was at the middle corner of the balcony with brackets at the top of the balcony. These brackets have been maintained where the south gable adjoins the west gable on the second floor. Decorative wood design is also above the second and third floor windows on the south gable side of the home. The trees surrounding the home are burr oaks.¹ A large square brick chimney with brick banding and a corbelled top is centered on the house.



¹ Balks, Irene, Mary Boyaris and Susan Olson. *Dwelling for Paul Blatchford I*. Prepared for the Wright Plus house walk, 2003.

The raised foundation is rusticated limestone with square wood windows running throughout. The main wall cladding is wood clapboard, with a wide band of wood shingles wrapping three sides of the house above the second floor windows. Diagonal wood boards flank the decorative window opening in the west gable end. A full-height bay is centered on the north façade of the house with wood windows of various sizes placed asymmetrically throughout. This bay is topped by a pediment gable. The rear (east) façade is devoid of decorative detail and is simply clad in wood clapboard with rows of wood windows. A small rear entry porch with shed roof sits at the northeast corner of the house.

In 1915, the second owner (George Walker) added a sunroom to the southwest corner of the house. During the addition the windows in the parlor were changed from double hung windows to leaded glass casement windows that match the sunroom, leaded glass doors connecting the parlor and sunroom were also added. The same leaded glass windows and oak wood is found in the sunroom. The dining room has the original double-hung windows and shutters. At the rear of the home off of what was originally the rear entrance are art glass windows. In 1915 a two-car wood-clad garage was added at the rear of the lot facing Elizabeth Court. A screen porch was also added to the southeast corner of the house in 1915.²

The keyhole-shaped front porch is a reconstruction of the original porch which was removed in the mid-twentieth century, possibly 1942. The design of the existing porch was based on historic photographs and was constructed in 1995. The asphalt shingle roof was installed in 1999. The front door configuration was restored based on historic photographs by the current owners in 2004.



² Ibid.

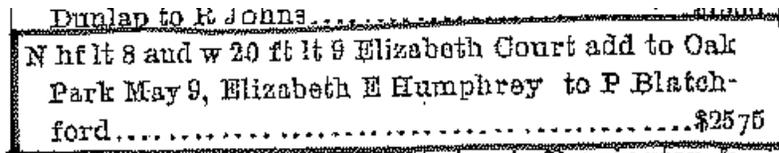


History of the Paul Blatchford House No. 1

The Paul Blatchford House (No. 1) is an excellent example of a late Victorian house designed in the Stick style in Oak Park. Paul and his wife Frances called the home *Plasderw*, which is Welsh for “home amongst the oaks.”³ It is the first of three houses in Oak Park owned by the Blatchfords. The second is an interim house on the 300 block of Linden in which they lived until completion of their new house (No. 3) located at 333 N. Euclid Avenue.

Paul and Frances Blatchford

Paul Blatchford married Frances V. Lord of Bangor, Maine on May 24, 1887. On May 7, 1887 Paul Blatchford purchased the 66' x 170' lot at the corner of Forest Avenue and Elizabeth Court from Elizabeth Humphrey for \$2,575.⁴



(Source: Real Estate and Building Journal, May 21, 1887, p. 286)

Paul Blatchford is a descendant of a distinguished Chicago family. He was the eldest son the seven children of Mary Emily (Williams) and Eliphalet W. Blatchford. Mary Williams came to Chicago at the age of seven when Chicago had a population of only 4,500 in 1841. Her cousin, Reverend Jeremiah Porter, had arrived in Chicago in 1833 when it numbered only 300 and was chaplain at Fort Dearborn. Upon her marriage to Eliphalet on October 7, 1858⁵ she was active in social, civic, educational and religious life of the community. Mrs. Blatchford started a kindergarten class before the Chicago fire, which for many years was held in her home as well as through her benevolence in a poorer district. She was instrumental in having kindergarten admitted into the public school system so that all might share its benefits.⁶ They lived for many years at 1111 N. LaSalle in Chicago. Mary Blatchford died in Portland, Maine on March 30, 1921 at the home of her son Charles.⁷

Eliphalet Wickes Blatchford was the son of the Reverend John Blatchford, the first ordained Protestant pastor in Chicago of the First Presbyterian Church. He was born in Stillwater, New York on May 31, 1826 and came to Illinois as a child. He was a graduate of Illinois College in Jacksonville in 1845, and served as a trustee from 1866-75.⁸ He was an active

³ Balks, Irene, Mary Boyaris and Susan Olson. *Dwelling for Paul Blatchford I*. Prepared for the Wright Plus house walk, 2003.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Newton Bateman and Paul Selby, Editors, Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois, Vol. II, Chicago: Munsell Publishing Company, 1918, p. 51

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ “Mrs. Mary Emily Blatchford, Helped Build Up The Primary School System in Chicago, Died in Portland, Maine.” Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, Vol XIV, April-July, 1921, Nos. 1-2, p. 209.

⁸ Newton Bateman and Paul Selby, Editors, Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois, Vol. II, Chicago: Munsell Publishing Company, 1918, p. 51.

businessman, owning E. W. Blatchford & Company, a lead pipe manufacturing company,⁹ but he also had varied and wide interests. While taking a pleasure trip with his family to Europe, he selected casts of the famous Greek and Italian sculptures for the Art Institute, then beginning its collections and he served as one of their trustees. He was one of the trustees of the Newberry Estate, responsible for establishment of the Newberry Library and eventually served as President of the Board of Trustees, a position he held until his death.¹⁰ He also served as president of the Chicago Academy of Sciences, president of the Board of Directors of the Chicago Theological Seminary for nearly 40 years, trustee of the John Crerar Library, one of the founders and President of the Board of Trustees of the Chicago Manual Training School, life member of the Chicago Historical Society, Vice President of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, as well as a member of the Congregational Club, Chicago Union League, University Club, the Literary Club and the Commercial Club.¹¹ He was a member of the New England Congregational Church in Chicago, where his funeral services were held on January 28, 1914.¹²

Paul Blatchford was born in Chicago on July 18, 1859. He graduated from Amherst College in 1882, where he most likely met his future wife. Paul was also busy in the business, social and civic community and was a member of Pilgrim Congregational Church. In his business life was a Director of the Public Savings, Loan and Building Association, he owned Blatchford & Co., served as secretary and director of E. W. Blatchford & Company, and served as secretary for the Central Supply Association,¹³ which served manufacturers of water, steam and gas supplies. His social activities included serving as Governor of the Illinois Society of Mayflower Descendants from 1907-1909, after having previously served as a member of the Board of Assistants, treasurer and deputy governor. His lineage was traced back to Governor Bradford.¹⁴ He was a member of the University Club and the Caxton Club, and was involved with the Society of Colonial Wars, Sons of the American Revolution, Masons, Medinah Temple, Oak Park Country Club and other organizations.¹⁵ Like his parents, Paul was always deeply interested in the welfare of Chicago. He published a book written by his parents of their experiences during the Chicago Fire on behalf of the Chicago Historical Society. Frances Lord Blatchford co-authored a book "*Illinois Grows Up*" written for children on the history of the state. At the time of publishing, the book was well received and used by many school systems.¹⁶

⁹ Blatchford Family Papers, The Newberry Library Chicago, www.newberry.org/collections/FindingAids/blatchfordadditions/blatchfordadditions.html.

¹⁰ Barks, Irene, Mary Boyaris and Susan Olson. *Dwelling for Paul Blatchford I*. Prepared for the Wright Plus house walk, 2003.

¹¹ Newton Bateman and Paul Selby, Editors, *Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois, Vol. II*, Chicago: Munsell Publishing Company, 1918, p. 51.

¹² "Honor E. W. Blatchford's Memory," *Oak Leaves*, January 31, 1914.

¹³ Barks, Irene, Mary Boyaris and Susan Olson. *Dwelling for Paul Blatchford I*. Prepared for the Wright Plus house walk, 2003.

¹⁴ "Governor of Mayflower Descendants," *Oak Leaves*, December 7, 1907, p. 1.

¹⁵ "Death of Paul Blatchford," *Oak Leaves*, October 17, 1925, p. 2.

¹⁶ Barks, Irene, Mary Boyaris and Susan Olson. *Dwelling for Paul Blatchford I*. Prepared for the Wright Plus house walk, 2003.



THE BLATCHFORD

"NO. 1" STEREOTYPE METAL.
 STAR STEREOTYPE METAL.
 BLATCHFORD PERFECTION LINOTYPE METAL.
 MONOTYPE METAL.
 AUTOPLATE METAL.

THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS. CHICAGO, November 9, 1909.

Messrs. E. W. Blatchford Company,
 70 North Clinton-st., City.

Gentlemen: We have used the Blatchford metals—stereotype, linotype and autoplate—continuously for many years, and with uniform satisfaction. We believe them to be unsurpassed in quality.

Very truly yours,
 VICTOR F. LAWSON, Publisher.

Manufactured Exclusively by

E. W. Blatchford Company
 CHICAGO NEW YORK

While the Blatchford's lived in the home, they had two of their four children: John, born April 20, 1888 and Dorothy Lord, born December 10, 1889. Their second daughter Barbara followed and youngest son Charles was born February 12, 1897. Both John and Charles attended Amherst College.¹⁷ John graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and married Esther Roberts, niece of E. E. Roberts.¹⁸ Due to their growing family and increased staff, the Blatchford's purchased the house and lot at 333 N. Euclid in Oak Park in June 1890. They subsequently sold the home at 250 Forest Avenue on August 8, 1890 for \$7,700 to George Walker.¹⁹ They lived at the Italianate style home at 333 N. Euclid for seven years until they moved the house one block east to 333 Linden Avenue and constructed a new home designed by architects Pond and Pond on the lot at 333 N. Euclid, where Paul lived until his death on October 8, 1925. His death was unexpected following a short illness and he was buried at Graceland Cemetery in Chicago.²⁰ Frances Blatchford eventually moved to 930 Jackson in River Forest.

¹⁷ *Amherst College Biographical Record*, Centennial Edition (1821-1921).

¹⁸ Balks, Irene, Mary Boyaris and Susan Olson. *Dwelling for Paul Blatchford I*. Prepared for the Wright Plus house walk, 2003.

¹⁹ Balks, Irene, Mary Boyaris and Susan Olson. *Dwelling for Paul Blatchford I*. Prepared for the Wright Plus house walk, 2003.

²⁰ "Death of Paul Blatchford," *Oak Leaves*, October 10, 1925, cover.

Oak Leaves

Oak Park, Illinois, Saturday, December 7, 1907



PAUL BLATCHFORD
Oak Park Citizen Elected Governor of Society
of Mayflower Descendants of Illinois.

(Source: Oak Leaves, December 7, 1907)

George and Ellen Walker

George Walker was born in Vermont on August 29, 1846 but moved to Wisconsin in 1850 where his father carried on farming. He served during the Civil War as part of Company C, Fortieth Wisconsin Volunteers Infantry. After the war he married Ellen Ferris on January 31, 1869. His business life includes the Creamery Package Manufacturing Company of Chicago where he was secretary, treasurer and director for many years. He was also active in social, religious and civic community having served as Oak Park Township supervisor. He lived in the home until his death on May 20, 1930. His wife Ellen Walker, who was also active in the community, lived in the home until her death on December 10, 1938. Their only son, George Albert, lived in the home until his marriage to Pearl Walter. They maintained a home next door at the 244 Forest Avenue. After his parents' deaths, George Albert and Pearl moved into the 250 Forest Avenue home. George Albert Walker business life included serving as director of the Creamery Package Manufacturing Company and founder of the Aeroshade Company. He lived in the home until his death in March 1939. His wife Pearl continued to live in the home until her death in March 1941.²¹

Subsequent owners included the following (from 2003 Wright Plus Report):

Edward Keener purchased the home on December 1, 1941.

Charles Cooley purchased the home on February 23, 1950.

LeRoy Protzman Jr. purchased the home on November 23, 1955

S. T. Sutton and wife purchased the home on September 29, 1960.

Robert E. Patrick purchased the home on August 2, 1965.

Milton and Charlotte Levine purchased the home in 1968.

Gregory and Patricia Gerber purchased the home on August 31, 1988.

Marc and Sarah Chodera purchased the home in May, 2002 and are the current owners.



Blatchford Family in front of home (1889)

(Source: 2003 Wright Plus Report, originally from Natalie Alberts)

²¹ Balks, Irene, Mary Boyaris and Susan Olson. *Dwelling for Paul Blatchford I*. Prepared for the Wright Plus house walk, 2003.

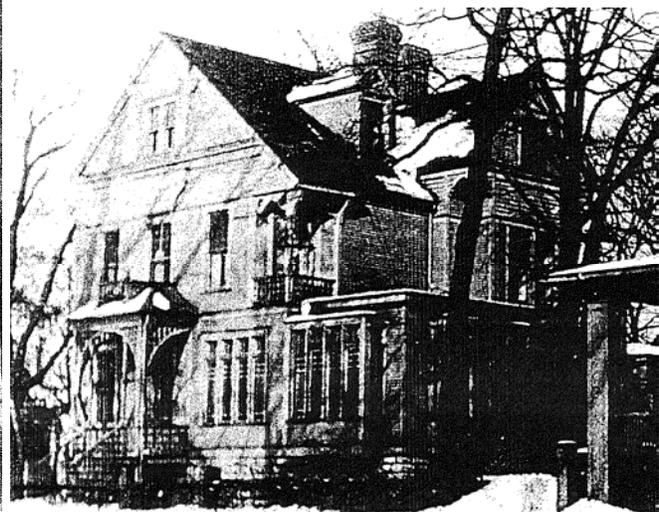
Stick style

Evolving out of the Carpenter Gothic, the Stick style flourished in the mid-19th century. This style of wood construction was characterized by angularity, verticality and asymmetry. Roofs were composed of steep intersecting gables. Verandas and porches were common and were often decorated with simple diagonal or curved braces. In keeping with the idea that architecture should be truthful, the principal characteristic of the Stick style was the expression of the inner structure of the house through the exterior ornament. Most often found on gable ends and upper stories, this stick work was usually a series of boards intersecting at right angles and applied over the clapboard surface to symbolize the structural skeleton. Sometimes diagonal boards were incorporated to resemble half-timbering.²² Other identifying features of the Stick style include a gabled roof, usually steeply pitched with cross gables; overhanging eaves, usually with exposed rafter ends; and wooden wall cladding, either shingles or boards, interrupted by patterns of horizontal, vertical or diagonal boards (stick work) raised from wall surface for emphasis.²³



1914

photos taken by Walker Family (Source: 2003 Wright Plus Report)



after 1915

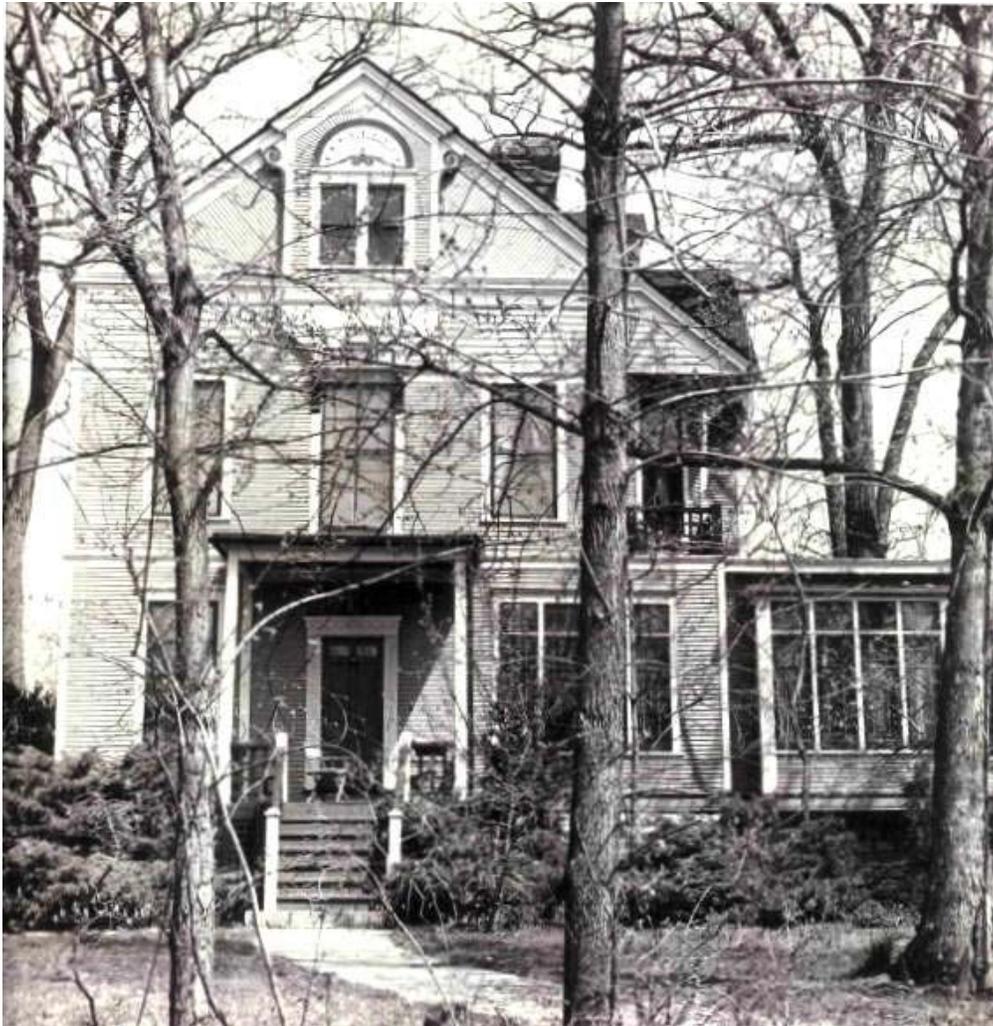
The style is defined primarily by decorative detailing – the characteristic multi-textured wall surfaces and roof trusses whose stick work faintly mimics the exposed structural members of Medieval half-timbered houses. Varied patterns of wood siding and shingles are applied in the square and triangular spaces created by the stick work. This detailing was applied to

²² Chambers, Jr. S. Allen, John C. Poppeliers and Nancy Schwartz. What Style Is It? A Guide to American Architecture, Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1983, p. 56.

²³ Virginia and Lee McAlester. A Field Guide to American Houses, Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 2000, p. 255.

a variety of mid-19th-century house shapes; most show one-story porches, either entry or full-width.²⁴

Although pattern books of the day show many examples of the style, relatively few were constructed in comparison with the contemporaneous Italianate or Second Empire styles. Gabled examples survive principally in the northeastern states and date from the 1860s and 1870s.²⁵ Oak Park's earliest residential styles were the Gothic Revival, the Italianate, and the Stick, all fashionable in the 1870s and 1880s. The Gothic Revival style has very few remaining examples today. The Italianate homes were popular until around 1884. The Stick style, as opposed to these European imports, was a distinctly American vernacular form, so named because of its timber stripping applied in decorative patterns over the surface. The Stick style is more prevalent in Oak Park than the other two, for it continued to be built well into the 1890s.²⁶



Undated photo (Source: 2003 Wright Plus Report)

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 256.

²⁶ Frances H. Steiner. Victorian Oak Park, Sigma Press, 1983, p. 8.

The Stick style is a transitional style which links the preceding Gothic Revival with the subsequent Queen Anne, all three styles are free adaptations of Medieval English building traditions. Unlike early Gothic Revival houses, the Stick style stressed the wall surface itself as a decorative element rather than merely as a plane with the principal decorative detailing applied at the doors, windows, or cornices. The Stick style is considered by some authorities to be simply the wooden version of the High Victorian Gothic. The emphasis on patterned wood walls seen in the Stick style was still further developed in the succeeding Queen Anne style.²⁷

The Stick style grew from the Picturesque Gothic ideals of Andrew Jackson Downing and flourished in house pattern books of the 1860s and 1870s. Downing popularized the Gothic Revival style by publishing two successful house pattern books in 1842 (*Cottage Residences*) and 1850 (*The Architecture of Country Houses*).²⁸ Although its proponents lauded the structural honesty of the style, the visible stick work, unlike true half-timbering, was merely applied decoration with no structural relation to the underlying balloon-frame construction. During the 1880s the style was rapidly replaced by the closely related Queen Anne movement, which was to become far more influential and widespread.²⁹

The Stick style was a quintessentially American style meant to be built in wood, and emphasized the structure rather than the “skin” of the building. The cross braces and vertical and horizontal wood framing on the exterior walls were intended to express the internal construction of the building. While the framing sometimes looks a bit like half-timbering, it was actually the more modern balloon-framing technique that was meant to be expressed since these wooden pieces were generally only superficial decoration. The characteristic, stick-like brackets, however, provided real support for high-pitched gable roofs with deep eaves.³⁰



308 N. Kenilworth Avenue, 1886



1026 Erie Street, c. 1880

²⁷ Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 2000, p. 256.

²⁸ Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 2000, p. 200.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 256.

³⁰ Massey, James C. and Shirley Maxwell. *House Styles in America: The Old-House Journal Guide to the Architecture of American Homes*. New York: Dovetale Publishers, 1996, 141.

The Paul Blatchford House No. 1 at 250 Forest Avenue exhibits many of the characteristics of the Stick style, such as the gabled roof and decorative diagonal, vertical and horizontal stick work on the walls and front porch. Frances H. Steiner refers to house in her book Victorian Oak Park, “*This delightful Stick style home has flat surfaces which are articulated with horizontal and vertical moldings. The exuberant linear pattern treatment above the second story window gives the house a distinctive character.*”³¹

Criteria for Designation

According to Section 7-9-6(B) of the Oak Park Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Historic Preservation Commission must make a preliminary determination of eligibility after receiving a nomination. A determination of preliminary eligibility must be based upon a finding that there is a likelihood that a nominated historic landmark will meet one or more of the "Criteria for Designation" set forth in Section 7-9-5 of this Article.

The Paul Blatchford House No. 1 was nominated under the following criteria:

- (1) Significance as an example of the architectural development or heritage of the Village of Oak Park;
- (5) Embodiment of those distinguishing characteristics of a significant architectural style;
- (7) Contains design elements, detail, materials or craftsmanship that make the property architecturally innovative, rare or unique;

In addition, the property is at least 50 years old and has sufficient integrity of location, design, materials and workmanship to make it worthy of preservation or restoration.

Bibliographical References

Primary and unpublished sources

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Village of Oak Park building permit no. 5706, dated 23 March 1915 for 250 Forest Avenue. Owner: George Walker, Contractor: George Merphe. Garage valued at \$1,000.

Village of Oak Park building permit no. 23185, dated 12 January 1942 for 250 Forest Avenue. Owner: E. Keener, Contractor: E. W. Johansen. Alterations valued at \$2,100.

³¹ Frances H. Steiner. Victorian Oak Park, Sigma Press, 1983, p. 19.

Village of Oak Park building permit no. 12503, dated 2 October 1995 for 250 Forest Avenue. Owner: Greg and Trish Gerber, Architect: Holbert & Associates Architects, Contractor: Hamilton Homer. Reconstruct front porch valued at \$10,000.

Village of Oak Park building permit no. 18372, dated 19 November 1999 for 250 Forest Avenue. Owner: Gerber, Contractor: J.C. Roofing & Carpentry. New asphalt shingle roof valued at \$15,000.

Village of Oak Park building permit no. 03067, dated 13 August 2004 for 250 Forest Avenue. Owner: Mark and Sarah Chodera, Contractor: Von Dreele-Freerksen Construction Co. Restore front door valued at \$11,000.

Secondary and published sources

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"P. Blatchford, Who Was in '71 Blaze, is Dead." Unknown source, 1925.

"Paul Blatchford: Prominent Oak Park Man Died Thursday After Brief Illness." Oak Parker, October 16, 1925.

"N. hf It 8 and w 20 ft It 9 Elizabeth Court add to Oak Park, May 9, Elizabeth E. Humphrey to P. Blatchford, \$2,575." Real Estate and Building Journal, Vol. XXIX, No. 21, May 21, 1887, p. 286.

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OAK PARK HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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