



123 MADISON STREET, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS 60302

HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION REPORT



**Charles S. Castle House
647 Linden Avenue**

**Preliminary Determination of Eligibility approved by the
Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission on January 14, 2010**

Designated by Village Ordinance on March 15, 2010

Charles S. Castle House

647 Linden Avenue

Built: 1924
Architect: Frederick Schock
Builder: John Lind

The 1924 Charles S. Castle House is located at 647 Linden Avenue in Oak Park, Illinois, and faces east. The two-story yellow brick structure is rectangular in plan, with rectangular wings to the south and west. The simple yet grand, symmetrical façade is designed in the Italian Renaissance Revival style. The main hipped roof is clad in green ceramic clay tiles with moderately overhanging eaves, wood soffits and fascia, and a wide brick chimney at the sound end of the house.. The two wings have flat roofs with crenellated parapets. The majority of the windows are casement windows with a trapezoidal decorative muntin pattern. French doors on the first floor are flanked by double-hung windows. The majority of second floor windows are double-hung. All window and door openings are wood with wood frames. A wide limestone plinth runs around the base of the house. A two-car yellow brick garage with a hipped, green clay tile roof sits at the west end of the lot facing Augusta Street.



The east (front) façade features a central round-arched entrance with a deep stone embrasure containing wood door and sidelights. The wide carved limestone entry surround is capped by a keystone and sits on two Corinthian column pilasters. Two low limestone walls with carved decorative flower motifs extend out to frame the entrance. Each wall holds a large stone urn. On either side of the entrance is a grouping of French doors flanked by double-hung windows in a limestone quoin surround pattern. The second floor features a

pair of small casement windows in limestone quoin surround pattern set directly over the first floor entrance. A pair of wide double-hung windows with limestone quoin surround pattern and prominent stone sills set on brackets are centered over the first floor windows. The south two-story wing is set back from the corners of the main house and features a crenellated parapet with limestone coping. A band of four casement windows is centered on the first floor set over inset wood panels that extend down to the stone base. A band of five casement windows with limestone sill on the second floor is centered on the façade. The windows all feature the honeycomb decorative muntin pattern.

The south (side) façade is a fairly simple brick façade with a crenellated parapet with limestone coping. The first floor features two sets of French doors flanked by casement windows set over inset wood panels that extend down to the stone base. All first floor windows feature the trapezoidal decorative muntin pattern. The second floor features two bands of five casement windows with limestone sill. A tall, wide brick chimney sits where the south wing meets the main clay tile roof.

The north (side) façade faces Augusta Street and includes the side of the main house as well as the west (rear) wing. A one-story bay with a crenellated limestone parapet is centered on the north side of the first floor. A single double-hung window with limestone sill is centered on this bay. One large double-hung window with limestone sill is centered to the east of the bay, and a pair of smaller double-hung windows with a limestone sill are centered to the west. The second floor features three double-hung windows with limestone sills, with the eastern-most window featuring a prominent sill set on brackets. All the windows on this façade feature the limestone quoin surround pattern.

The north (side) façade of the west wing is three floors and set back from corner of the house. This wing is similar to the south wing with a crenellated limestone parapet. A one-story yellow brick open porch with a crenellated limestone parapet sits in the corner with stairs facing to the west. Double-hung windows with a simple limestone sill are featured on each floor.

The west (rear) façade includes the west wing, the rear of the main house and the rear of the south wing which is set back from the corner of the house. The west wing features a large rectangular chimney centered on the façade. A pair of small casement windows on the first floor, and one double-hung window on the second and third floors sit directly to the north of the chimney. The west façade of the main house is a symmetrical row of double-hung windows on the first and second floors. The west façade of the south wing is a duplicate of the east façade.

The one-story yellow brick garage features a hipped roof of green clay tiles with wide overhanging eaves, wood fascia and soffits set on a concrete foundation. One large two-car overhead door with inset panels faces Augusta Street. The west façade features three small wood windows with limestone sills evenly spaced across the façade. A yellow brick chimney sits near the roof ridge. The east façade features two wood entry doors at each end and three wood windows with limestone sills.





History of the Charles S. Castle House

The Charles S. Castle House is an excellent example of an Italian Renaissance Revival style house designed by noted architect Frederick R. Schock in 1924. The Charles S. Castle House has retained excellent integrity, and its exterior stands virtually unchanged from its 1924 appearance.

Historical Context of the Charles S. Castle House

Charles Sumner Castle was born in Barrington, Illinois on May 13, 1859 to Lester and Lucy Castle. Castle received a high school education. Following school he married a Miss Bennett of Watertown, Wisconsin¹ and they had two children: Ward C. (1887), and Sidney L. (1888). Mrs. Castle passed away prior to 1900. Charles remarried to a woman named Anna in 1907 and they had two children: Charles S., Jr. (1908), and Ruth A. (1909). At the time of his second marriage, Charles was 48 and his new wife only 23. He made his home for many years in Austin at 627 N. Central Avenue prior to moving to Oak Park with his wife and two younger children.² The Castles lived at 647 Linden through the mid-1930s when Charles was well into his 70s.

While his main profession was in the banking industry, Charles had a long and varied career working in many different capacities, including teaching in the Palatine district school in 1877-78; working as a clerk in the treasurer's office of the C. R. I. & P. Railroad Company from 1878-80; and working as a bookkeeper in the John V. Farwell Company dry goods business from 1881-89. He was the postmaster in Austin from 1889-94 and was treasurer of the Town of Cicero from 1894-97. He was the president of the Austin State Bank for over 20 years beginning in 1895. He incorporated the bank, along with several members of his family and others, in 1891.³ In addition, he was the vice president of the Federal Trust &

¹ "Obituary: Watertown, Wis., Mrs. Bennett," Chicago Daily Tribune, January 15, 1881, p. 6.

² United States Census - 1900, 1910.

³ "Outside the Old Limits," Chicago Daily Tribune, April 5, 1891, p. 14.

Savings Bank of Chicago from 1902-05; cashier at the American Trust & Savings Bank from 1905-09; and president of the Standard Trust & Savings Bank beginning in 1901. He was also a director at the Des Plaines State Bank, the Niles Center State Bank, the Kee & Chapell Dairy Company, and the U. S. Ball Bearing Manufacturing Company. His interests included membership in the Union League Club, Bankers' Club, Mid-Day Club, Chicago Golf Club, and the Westward Ho Golf Club.⁴

STANDARD TRUST & SAVINGS BANK

Qualified as a Member of Federal Reserve System July 6, 1917. Began Business September 6, 1910

Statement of Condition at the Commencement of Business November 2nd, 1918

RESOURCES	LIABILITIES
Loans and Dis- counts \$4,081,551.58	Capital \$1,000,000.00
United States Bonds and Cer- tificates 1,696,500.00	Surplus 500,000.00
Other Bonds and Securities 661,878.97	Undivided Profits 129,317.55
Federal Reserve Bank Stock... 45,000.00	Reserved for In- terest and Taxes 29,034.76
Furniture and Fixtures 20,000.00	Deposits 10,264,339.46
Cash and Due from Banks... 1,357,812.12	\$11,862,741.77
\$11,862,741.77	

In establishing relations with our depositors we aim to make the connection mutually advantageous

DIRECTORS

W. Y. Carney, Pres. Carney Coal Co.	Major Robert F. Carr, Pres. Dearborn Chemi- cal Company.	William H. Colvin, Wm. H. Colvin & Co.
George H. Taylor, Vice-Pres. E. H. Mallins & Sons.	P. D. Castle, Cash. Austin State Bk.	James M. Miles, Vice Pres.
Wm. F. Merie, Pres. The A. H. An- drews Co.	Frederick A. Hill, Real Estate.	A. R. Marriott, Vice Pres. Chicago Title & Trust Co.
R. A. Cavanaugh, Secy. Illinois Com- mercial Men's Assn.	F. J. Lewis, Pres. F. J. Lewis Mast- ufacturing Co.	Jacob Mortenson, Lumber.
Charles S. Cutting, Emt. Cutting & Sibley.	Fred F. Bullock, Pres. Minnesota Malt- ing Co.	James B. Beckett, Lawyer.
		Charles S. Castle, President.

Banking, Savings, Investment and Trust Departments

OFFICERS

President, Charles S. Castle.	Cashier, Henry C. Stevens.
Vice President, James M. Miles.	Assistant Cashier, Ward C. Castle.
	Secretary, H. W. Hawkins

105 W. Monroe Street

(Source: Chicago Tribune, November 9, 1918, p. 16)

It is likely that Charles Castle and architect Frederick Schock knew each other prior to Castle hiring Schock to design his new home in Oak Park. Both lived in the Austin neighborhood of Chicago only a few blocks apart. Schock was an officer at the Austin State Bank, which was founded by Charles Castle and others in 1891, including Castle family members, and where Charles was later president.

Frederick R. Schock, Architect

Frederick Reuben Schock was born in Chicago on April 7, 1854 of French-born parents John Frederick and Marie Schock.⁵ Schock had three sisters: Fanny, Louisa and Amelia. Schock's grandfather Adam Schock, who died in 1883 in Chicago at the age of 92, was one of the then two surviving members of the old Napoleon body-guard, and had come to Chicago in the mid-1840s.⁶ Schock was educated in the Chicago city schools, and

⁴ Albert Nelson Marquis. *A Biographical Dictionary of Leading Living Men of The City of Chicago, 1917*, p. 123-124.

⁵ Rebecca Jones, genforum.genealogy.com/schoch/messages/377.html.

⁶ Andreas, A. T. *History of Chicago from the Earliest Period to the Present Time, Vol. III, 1886*, p. 73.

graduated from high school in 1872. He began his architectural career with prominent Chicago architect Henry L. Gay who had worked in the office of W. W. Boyington until starting his own practice in 1867.⁷ Schock remained in Gay's office for eight years, until joining Solon S. Beman's firm in 1880. Under Beman, Schock worked on the design of the model factory town of Pullman, Illinois, a planned community whose focus was the manufacture of Pullman railway cars.⁸ He also moved to the Chicago suburb of Austin in 1880 and in 1882 established his own office at 81 Clark Street,⁹ concentrating on residential commissions for clients in Austin, Douglas Park, Garfield Park, Kenwood, as well as Oak Park. His early buildings were in the popular Shingle and Queen Anne styles; later designs were modified Prairie structures and the popular Revival styles.



5804 Midway Park, 1886 (Schock House)



5804 Race, 1887 (Catherine Schlecht House)

Most of Frederick Schock's work was in Chicago – mainly Austin, where he lived in a home of his own design for 50 years. The Castle House, completed ten years before Schock's death in 1934, is very different from his early, shingled, turn-of-the-century Queen Anne residences, which were often quite complex and dramatic.¹⁰ His own 1886 Austin home at 5804 Midway Park is considered the "Empress of the Queen Annes," and is considered one of Chicago's finest examples of the style. This and three other homes he designed in the Shingle and Queen Anne style in Austin were designated as a Chicago Landmark District in 1999.¹¹

⁷ Ibid., p. 68.

⁸ Molly Wickes, Editor. Guide to the Frank Lloyd Wright and Prairie School Historic District, 1999, p. 142.

⁹ Andreas, A. T. op. cit., p. 73.

¹⁰ Op. cit., p. 116.

¹¹ Commission on Chicago Landmarks, City of Chicago. Landmarks Maps. <http://egov.cityofchicago.org/Landmarks/>



5749 Race, 1888 (Marie Schock House)



5810 Midway Park, 1892 (Fred Beeson House #2)

In the Castle House, Schock used the Italian Renaissance Revival style to create a substantial and conservative façade. In the post World War I period when it was constructed, historical revival styles were in vogue. Corresponding with the decline in popularity of the Prairie style, the appeal of these styles was fueled by a nostalgic interest in all things historical, as well as by improved masonry veneering techniques that allowed closer imitations of the original Italian structures. The towers on the south and west wings, complete with crenellated parapets, raises speculation about Schock’s sense of humor when he created this castle-like dwelling for the Castle family.¹²

The Castle House is the last of Schock’s four Oak Park buildings, and his only design in a period revival style. The George Davis House at 136 Wesley Avenue is decidedly Prairie in style, and was constructed in 1907. The two buildings on Ridgeland designed for local real estate developer E. E. Cummings are also heavily influenced by the Prairie style. The building at 400 Lake (at Ridgeland) is a commercial building with apartments above, constructed in 1911. The apartment building at 135-141 N. Ridgeland was constructed in 1913.



136 Wesley Avenue, 1907 (George Davis House)



400 Lake street, 1911

¹² Op. cit., p. 116.



135-141 N. Ridgeland Avenue, 1913

Second (Italian) Renaissance Revival Style

The Italian Renaissance Revival style is found in early 20th century houses throughout the country but is considerably less common than the Craftsman, Tudor Revival or Colonial Revival styles. Vernacular interpretations spread widely with the perfection of masonry veneering construction techniques; most of these date from the 1920s. The style steadily declined through the 1930s.¹³

The second revival of the style began in New York in the 1880s. These houses tended to mimic their Italian predecessors more closely than the preceding Italianate style. By the late 19th century many American architects and their clients had visited Italy and experienced the architecture first-hand. Improved printing techniques provided access to excellent photographic documentation of these homes. Earlier Italianate houses had wood cladding, where later examples mimic the masonry walls of the original Italian prototypes. Perfection of masonry veneering construction techniques after World War I made this possible even in the most modest of examples of the style.¹⁴

The house at 647 Linden displays characteristics of the Italian Renaissance Revival style. These elements include a rectangular brick house with balanced and simple, symmetrical façade and wings off the side and back; a low-pitched clay tile hipped roof; roof-line balustrades on the wings, windows with stone surrounds; and recessed arched entry with Classical stone surround.

¹³ Virginia & Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 2000, p. 398.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

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 Charles S. Castle House 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;
- (6) Identification as the work of an architect whose individual work is significant in the development of the Village of Oak Park, the State of Illinois and the United States;

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

Village of Oak Park building permit no. 14475, dated 5 April 1924, residence for 647 Linden Avenue. Owner: C. S. Castle, Contractor: John Lind, Architect: F. R. Schock. Valued at \$50,000.

Village of Oak Park building permit no. 14476, dated 5 April 1924, garage for 647 Linden Avenue. Owner: C. S. Castle, Contractor: John Lind. Valued at \$2,500.

Secondary and published sources

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The Commission is staffed by the Community Planning and Development Department, Village of Oak Park, 123 Madison Street, Oak Park, Illinois 60302

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