



123 MADISON STREET, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS 60302

## HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION REPORT



**Freeman Landon House  
700 South Lombard Avenue**

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**Preliminary Determination of Eligibility approved by the  
Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission on July 14, 2011**

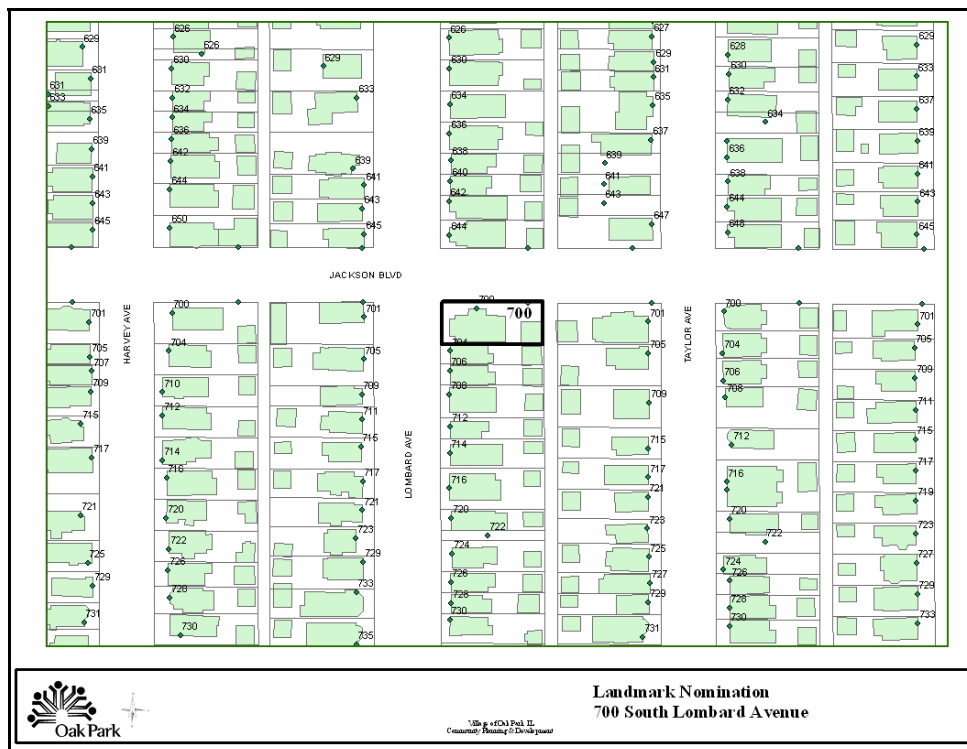
**Designated by Village Ordinance on September 19, 2011**

# Freeman Landon House 700 South Lombard Avenue

**Built:** 1922  
**Architect:** Jeremiah J. Cerny  
**Contractor:** William R. Mole

The Freeman Landon House was built in 1922 and designed by architect Jeremiah J. Cerny (also known as J. J. Cerny and Jerry J. Cerny). The house is located at the southeast corner of Lombard Avenue and Jackson Boulevard. The two story brick house is rectangular in plan and faces north. The north, east and west facades are clad in a reddish-brown brick, which is raked to provide texture. The south façade is mainly Chicago common brick. A one-story enclosed sunroom faces west, with a two-story inset enclosed porch facing east. The main entrance porch faces Jackson Boulevard to the north. The porch has two large brick posts supporting a hipped clay tile roof, with concrete stairs flanked by stepped brick side walls capped in limestone. Each post has a central geometric limestone decorative element centered facing the street. The wood entry door with large central window is flanked by leaded glass sidelights.

The distinctive green clay tile hipped roof has prominent ridge tiles, two small hipped clay tile dormers facing east and west, with a large double dormer, also hipped with clay tile, facing north. The original dormers have distinctive angled windows with corresponding triangular arched gables extending from the hip roof. This feature is repeated in each dormer. Clay tile finials are located at the peak of each dormer gable end and periodically spaced along the roof ridge. A dormer facing south was added in 1962 but is not visible from the street.



The house has limestone banding under the second floor windows, deep eaves with wood soffits and fascia and a built-in wood gutter system. The majority of the windows are 1-over-1 double-hung with storms, with three Chicago-style windows on the first floor – a large picture window flanked by smaller double-hung windows. A one-story two-car garage with clay tile hipped roof, also built in 1922, is placed on the east end of the lot at the alley facing north. The design of the garage, including a north-facing dormer and brick facades, matches that of the house.



(Source of photos this page and following page: Village of Oak Park)



## History of the Freeman Landon House

The Freeman Landon House is significant as an example of an Eclectic mix of Colonial Revival and Prairie School architecture, as a prominent corner house in south Oak Park, and as one of architect J. J. Cerny's more affluent and prominent residential designs.

Walter McDonald of Chicago sold lots 150 and 151 in the Lombard Avenue Addition to Austin in 1891 to Samuel and Mary D. Koerr for \$1,000.<sup>1</sup> The deed specified that the property was to be used for “*no other than residence purposes for the like period of 15 years and no nuisance or thing detrimental to the neighboring property for the full use and enjoyment thereof shall be placed, had or done thereon.*” The property was never developed until Freeman Landon purchased the property in 1922.

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<sup>1</sup> Deed number 1455750 filed for record April 24, 1891 in Cook County, Illinois.

Freeman Landon was born in Sharon, Wisconsin in 1868. He was raised in Sycamore, Nebraska and moved to Chicago in 1891 at the age of 23.<sup>2</sup> He worked as a teamster until he founded the F. Landon Cartage Company in Chicago. The company specialized in hauling and delivering goods for clients by truck.

**CHAUFFEURS, truck, and tractor-semi trailer. Chicago, Suburban delivery. F. Landon Cartage Company, 5522 Division-st., 1010 Madison-st., 5030 85th-st. Phone Lee Landon. Haymarket 5080.**

(Source: Chicago Daily Tribune, November 19, 1944)

**Truck and tractor—Semi-trailer chauffeurs, for Chicago and suburban deliveries. F. LANDON CARTAGE CO., 1010 W. Madison, Ph. Lee Landon. Hay. 6080.**

(Source: Chicago Daily Tribune, March 29, 1944)

**W. ANTED—Closed panel side body semi-trailers with frames; 24 ft. single and tandem axles; 32 ft. single and tandem axles. F. Landon Cartage Co. 1030 W. Monroe HAYmarket 1-5080.**

(Source: Chicago Daily Tribune, October 10, 1954)

Freeman's wife Mattie Northrup was born in Huntley, Illinois in 1874.<sup>3</sup> The couple had three children – Arthur (1902-1960), Lee (1904-1958) and Bernice (b. 1906). The family resided at 1036 W. Monroe Street in Chicago, also the site of Landon's company through at least 1972, until the family moved to Oak Park in 1922 to live in their new house. Freeman died at Oak Park Hospital on July 6, 1947 at the age of 79 after four years of poor health.<sup>4</sup> Mattie died on July 13, 1955 at Oak Park Hospital, having lived in the house at 700 S. Lombard for 33 years. Both are buried at Forest Home Cemetery.<sup>5</sup> The Landon children remained in the area, with Arthur living in Riverside, Lee living in River Forest, and Bernice Gertsen living in Oak Park. Both Arthur and Lee worked at the F. Landon Cartage Company, with Arthur eventually serving as company owner and president. In 1972 Lee's son Sigurd Landon, the grandson of Freeman and Mattie, was president of the company.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "Cartage Company Owner is Dead," Oak Leaves, July 10, 1947.

<sup>3</sup> "Mrs. Freeman Landon Dies at 81," Oak Leaves, July 21, 1955, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> "Cartage Company Owner is Dead," Oak Leaves, July 10, 1947.

<sup>5</sup> "Death Notices: Mattie S. Landon," Chicago Daily Tribune, July 14, 1955, p. B4.

<sup>6</sup> "Businessman Convicted of Lie in Assessor Quiz," Chicago Daily Tribune, March 30, 1972, p. 5.

Strength, power, short wheelbase handiness, economy of operation, and low cost of replacement parts are distinctive Autocar advantages responsible for the phenomenal sales of Autocar four-cylinder trucks.

Among the recent purchasers of four-cylinder Autocars in Chicago are:

- |                                 |                           |                              |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Aberdeen Franklin Coal Co.      | Farr Bros.                | O'Keefe Bros. Coal Co.       |
| Robt. R. Anderson               | Florsheim Shoe Co.        | Pickens Motor Express        |
| Arcola Construction Co.         | Hales Coal & Material Co. | Piggly Wiggly Co.            |
| Auburn Coal & Matl. Co.         | Hanchett Paper Co.        | Pulaski Coal Co.             |
| Baker Smith Coal Co.            | Hinckley & Schmitt        | Henry Rabe                   |
| E. C. Bargery                   | James Coal Co.            | C. E. Reading Coal Co.       |
| Bartz Motor Express Co.         | P. A. Johnson             | Riverdale Motor Trans. Co.   |
| Andrew Benson                   | E. Kahn & Co.             | John H. Sell                 |
| W. F. Bohner                    | J. B. Kausal              | Standard Concrete Const. Co. |
| Bunge Bros. Coal Co.            | Wm. G. Korrell            | Standard Oil Co.             |
| Circuit Supply Co.              | Kramer Bros. & Mager      | Steel Sales Corp.            |
| Citizens Service Bureau         | Lake Bldg. Matl. Co.      | A. L. Strachan & Son         |
| Clearing Bldg. Matl. & Coal Co. | Lamb Bottling Works       | J. M. Sweeney Coal Co.       |
| Consumers Co.                   | F. Landon Cartage Co.     | Taylor's Motor Express Co.   |
| Thos. V. Crane                  | H. Lemein                 | Union Drawn Steel Co.        |
| Norman G. Cullen                | Levin Beverage Co.        | James Walsh Co.              |
| DeYoung & Eldrenkamp            | E. J. McQuaid Coal Co.    | West Chicago Coal Co.        |
| C. P. Dierks                    | Nuelsen Cartage Co.       | Western Coal & Supply Co.    |
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**THE AUTOCAR SALES & SERVICE CO.**

913-925 West Jackson Blvd., Chicago

Direct Factory Branch of The Autocar Co., Est. 1897, Ardmore, Pa.

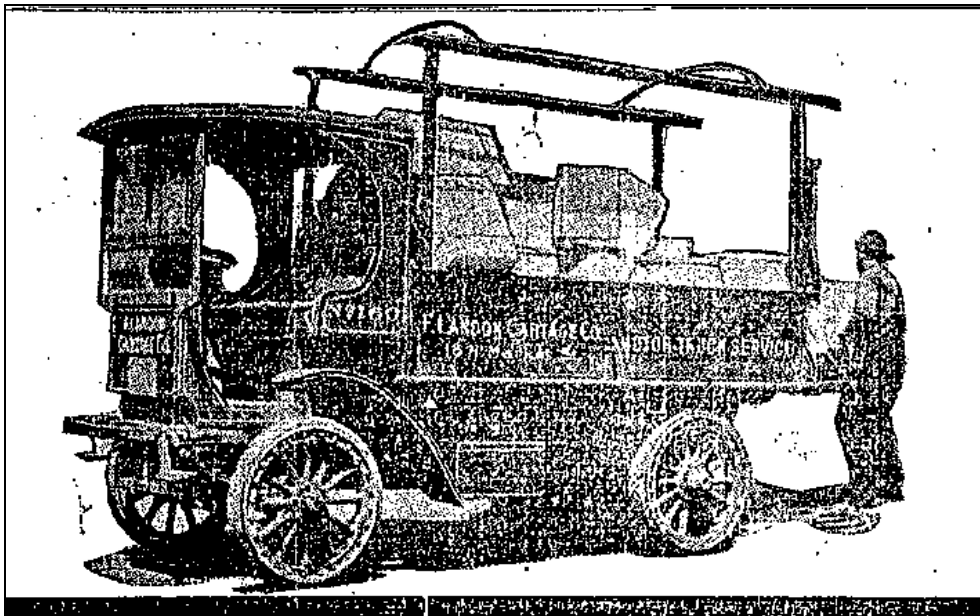
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A complete line of Autocar trucks—new, rebuilt and reconditioned  
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(Source: Chicago Daily Tribune, May 3, 1923)



F. Landon Cartage Co. Motor Truck Services

(Source: Chicago Daily Tribune, February 20, 1918)

## Jeremiah J. Cerny, Architect

Jeremiah J. Cerny (also known as J. J. Cerny and Jerry J. Cerny) was a Chicago architect who began his career as a draftsman. Cerny was born in Iowa in 1888. He first appeared in the Chicago Directory in 1905 as a draftsman working at 163 Randolph Street. From 1906 to 1910 he worked in the office of architect Frank O. DeMoney at 144 La Salle Street. His first listing in the Directory as an architect, working at 9 S. La Salle, was in 1911; he was 23 years old.<sup>7</sup> He was admitted to the Illinois Society of Architects in 1913,<sup>8</sup> and had opened his own office at 1444 S. Crawford (now Pulaski), where he remained until 1922, the last year he appeared in the Chicago Directory. He was working in this office when he designed the house at 700 S. Lombard for Freeman Landon.

Cerny partnered with architect Frank O. DeMoney in 1911 and 1912 on a number of commissions based on building permits listed in the Chicago Tribune. DeMoney, whose office was also at 144 LaSalle Street, was the architect who designed homes for S. T. Gunderson & Sons, builders of hundreds of homes in Oak Park between 1905 and 1920. It is possible that J. J. Cerny may have worked on designs for the Gundersons while in DeMoney's office. DeMoney was a friend of Seward Gunderson, and was listed in the Second Gunderson Subdivision sales brochure as "*a man devoted to art as well as skilled in practical application.*"<sup>9</sup> DeMoney & Cerny designed brick two- and three-flats common in Chicago at the time. Several examples include 1642 S. Harding (1912) and 3944 W. Van Buren (1912).



1642 S. Harding (1912)



3944 W. Van Buren (1912)

Cerny worked steadily through his early years, and is known to have designed at least 80 buildings in various Chicago neighborhoods. His earliest known work is an industrial style building designed for Essanay Studios at 1333-45 W. Argyle Street in the Uptown neighborhood of Chicago (1908-15).<sup>10</sup> Essanay was one of the nation's premier movie

<sup>7</sup> Thirteenth Census of the United States – 1910 Population.

<sup>8</sup> Handbook for Architects and Builders, April 8, 1913.

<sup>9</sup> S. T. Gunderson & Sons, *New Book of Standard Gunderson Homes*, 1908, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> Chicago Historic Resources Survey, City of Chicago, Department of Housing and Economic Development, Historic Preservation Division, 1995.

companies, producing hundreds of motion pictures, featuring such stars as Charlie Chaplin, Gloria Swanson, and Gilbert “Bronco Billy” Anderson.<sup>11</sup>

The majority of his work appears to be two-story brick flats (known locally as Two-Flats), a popular building type in Chicago in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>12</sup> He collaborated with several builders on multiple projects, including E. A. and L. F. Washburn (14 properties), and Fred Mraz, who was also lived next door to Cerny.<sup>13</sup> He also worked with builder B. Higgins to develop a 10-home subdivision of one-story bungalows on the 5200 block of W. Quincy in 1912.



1054 N. Kedzie (1910)



2438 S. Harding (1910)



1803 S. Springfield (1912)



6219 Bishop (1912)



5236 W. Quincy (1912)



5256 W. Quincy (1912)

Two of his larger buildings were brick apartments constructed at 2539-41 and 3007-25 W. Logan Boulevard for developer J. B. Couleur. They are both located within the Logan Square Boulevards Historic District in Chicago. The use of projecting bays and porches helped to break up the apartment façade into smaller units, making its presence in the streetscape less formidable.<sup>14</sup> Cerny also designed commercial buildings, typically one to three stories with storefronts on the first floor. His largest known work is the Miller Brothers Furniture Store at 4020-26 W. 26<sup>th</sup> Street in Chicago, designed in 1923. Although altered, it’s classical design motif applied to the commercial structure can still be clearly seen.

<sup>11</sup> Essanay Studios, 1333-45 W. Argyle Street, Chicago Landmarks Preliminary Staff Summary of Information, City of Chicago, November 1989.

<sup>12</sup> Based on a listing of Chicago building permits in the Chicago Daily Tribune on-line (1910-1929)

<sup>13</sup> Thirteenth Census of the United States - 1910 Population.

<sup>14</sup> Daniel Bluestone, “Logan Square Boulevards Historic District,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination, July 1985, p. 4-5.



4020-26 W. 26<sup>th</sup> Street (1923)  
 (Source: Cook County Assessor)

By the late 1920s and early 1930s his work progressed to include more affluent single-family homes, including a two-story Colonial Revival style house at 1942 W. 101<sup>st</sup> Place in the Beverly neighborhood, and a large Classical Revival style house at 6134 N. Kirkwood Avenue in the Forest Glen neighborhood.<sup>15</sup> The Kirkwood house is the last commission on record, constructed in 1934.



2539-41 W. Logan Boulevard (1913)



3007-25 W. Logan Boulevard (1914)



1942 W. 101<sup>st</sup> Place



6134 N. Kirkwood Avenue

(Source of four photos above: Cook County Assessor)

In addition to the Freeman Landon House, Cerny designed ten other buildings in Oak Park between 1921 and 1929, including two bungalows at 628 and 640 N. Grove (both in 1921

<sup>15</sup> Chicago Historic Resources Survey, City of Chicago, Department of Housing and Economic Development, Historic Preservation Division, 1995

for the Joseph E. Jones Co.), a brick two-flat at 332 S. Cuyler Avenue in 1924, a 3-story brick apartment building at 1101 S. Oak Park Avenue , and a large courtyard apartment building at 1158-64 S. Oak Park Avenue, also in 1924.



628 N. Grove Avenue (1921)  
(Source: Cook County Assessor)



640 N. Grove Avenue (1921)  
(Source: Cook County Assessor)



1101 S. Oak Park Avenue (1924)  
(Source: Cook County Assessor)



1158-64 S. Oak Park Avenue (1924)  
(Source: Village of Oak Park)

He also designed several commercial buildings, including a modest two-story brick building at 58 Madison Street and the T. A. Holm Building, an exuberant terra cotta structure at 905 S. Oak Park Avenue. This building was constructed for Thor A. Holm, a prolific local housing developer. His last known Oak Park commission is a large two-story brick house for John Fraser at 1100 Fair Oaks Avenue, designed in 1929 in the Classical Revival style. According to the building permit he was still working from his office at 1444 S. Crawford Avenue.



58 Madison Street (1921)  
(Source: Cook County Assessor)



1100 Fair Oaks Avenue (1929)  
(Source: Cook County Assessor)



T. A. Holm Building, 905 S. Oak Park (1925)  
 (Source: Village of Oak Park)

Very little of Cerny's life is known outside of his work. He and his wife Josephine<sup>16</sup> lived at 1944 S. Crawford (now Pulaski) for many years. The brick two-story building included a first floor storefront and second floor apartment. His office was also located there. They later moved to 5408 W. 26<sup>th</sup> Place in Cicero, Illinois. Cerny died on October 25, 1948 at the age of 60, and is buried at St. Adalbert's Cemetery in Niles, known for serving the Polish (Bohemian) Catholic community.<sup>17</sup>

## William R. Mole, Contractor

The house was constructed by William Robert Mole, a mason and contractor. Mole's office was at 133 W. Washington in Chicago. He lived at 639 Washington Boulevard in Oak Park, an attractive Craftsman bungalow he also built.<sup>18</sup> He is also known to have built the Dole Valve Company factory in Chicago in 1920.<sup>19</sup> Mole and his wife Edna (Schreiber) had four children – William, Edna (Newton), Marijane (Stoner), and Marjorie. After retiring to Chicago, Mole died on November 5, 1950 at the age of 63.<sup>20</sup>



Dole Valve Co., 1923 W. Carroll, Chicago (1920)  
 (Source: Cook County Assessor)

<sup>16</sup> Fourteenth Census of the United States – 1920 Population.

<sup>17</sup> "Death Notices: Jerry Cerny," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 26, 1948, p. A2.

<sup>18</sup> Mole's office and home addresses were taken from the Oak Park building permits for 700 S. Lombard and 639 Washington.

<sup>19</sup> "Building Permits," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 26, 1920, p. 16.

<sup>20</sup> "Death Notices: William Robert Mole," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 7, 1950, p. 20.

## The Eclectic Movement in Domestic Architecture

The Eclectic movement refers to combining elements of historic and/or modern styles together to create individual design interpretations. In Eclecticism many different styles vie with one another to delineate between historical and modern styles.<sup>21</sup> The Landon House at 700 S. Lombard Avenue represents an eclectic mix of Colonial Revival and Prairie School elements.

The Eclectic movement began in the 1890s as European-trained architects began to design period houses for wealthy clients in styles such as Italian Renaissance, Tudor and Colonial Revival. The emphasis on period styles was interrupted by the first wave of architectural modernism such as Craftsman and Prairie styles, which dominated American houses in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. After WWI, fashions in domestic architecture shifted to period styles. In the early 1920s inexpensive techniques were perfected for adding a thin veneer of brick to the exterior of the traditional balloon-framed house.<sup>22</sup>

During the early years of the eclectic era, experimental combinations of styles were common. From about 1890 to 1915 styles as different as Colonial Revival, Neoclassical, Prairie, Tudor, Mission and Craftsman were being built simultaneously. Many architects and builders experimented with fanciful combinations of these styles, though it was less common after 1915.<sup>23</sup>

The Freeman Landon House is essentially a Colonial Revival style house in massing and proportion with the main house accentuated by side wings. Colonial Revival is the most popular architectural style in American history beginning in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. A sudden wave of nostalgic patriotism in the late 1800s and a yearning for old-time simplicity swept the country.<sup>24</sup> The term “Colonial Revival” refers to the renewed interest in the architecture of the early English homes of the East Coast. The Georgian and Adam styles form the backbone of the Revival, with secondary influences from Post-medieval English or Dutch colonial prototypes. Details from two or more of these precedents are freely combined in many examples so that pure copies of colonial houses are far less common than are eclectic mixtures.<sup>25</sup> The Colonial Revival style maintained its popularity well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, becoming simpler with each passing decade.<sup>26</sup>

The main elaboration on Colonial Revival houses are the entrances, cornices and windows. One sub-type of the Colonial Revival style includes symmetrical homes with hipped roofs and simpler details – reminiscent of the home at 700 S. Lombard. The introduction of brick veneer in 1915 resulted in its common use on this style of home.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> McAlester, Virginia & Lee, A Field Guide to American Houses, p. 319.

<sup>22</sup> McAlester, p. 319.

<sup>23</sup> McAlester, p. 12.

<sup>24</sup> Massey, James and Shirley Maxwell, House Styles in America: The Old House Journal Guide to the Architecture of American Homes, p. 177.

<sup>25</sup> McAlester, p. 324.

<sup>26</sup> Massey and Maxwell, p. 185.

<sup>27</sup> McAlester, p. 324.

The Freeman Landon House also exhibits characteristics of the vernacular Prairie style. The Prairie style of architecture was the result of a progressive movement away from the Classical and Victorian architectural styles and was concentrated in Chicago and in Oak Park. The group of architects considered part of this movement were referred to as the “Prairie School.” This progressive era is generally associated with the period from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through World War I. Following the war the popularity of the Prairie style waned and many of the architects who worked in the style adapted with the changing times.<sup>28</sup>

Common features of a Prairie style home include a low-pitched roof, often hipped, with wide overhanging eaves; two stories with one-story wings or porches; and cornice and façade detailing emphasizing horizontal lines.<sup>29</sup> Often these vernacular Prairie style homes showed Mission style details such as a clay tiled roof.<sup>30</sup> These characteristic elements of the Prairie style are reflected in the design of the house at 700 S. Lombard Avenue.

Although less common during the 1920s than in the previous two decades, the combination of architectural styles had its precedence in Oak Park and elsewhere. Both the Colonial Revival and Prairie styles were common and popular forms of architecture in the community and other examples of their combination existed, perhaps providing a basis for Cerny’s design. One prominent example is the A. J. Redmond House at 422 Forest Avenue, designed by E. E. Roberts in 1900. This house exhibits the symmetry and proportions of the Colonial Revival style, including a prominent Palladian dormer, with the horizontal emphasis of the vernacular Prairie style, including the brick and stone exterior and the clay tile roof.



422 Forest Avenue (1900)  
(Source: Village of Oak Park)

## Criteria for Designation

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<sup>28</sup> McAlester, p. 439.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 439.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 439.

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 Freeman Landon House at 700 South Lombard Avenue 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. 12042, dated 5 July 1922 for 700 S. Lombard.  
Owner: F. Landon, Architect: J. J. Cerny, Contractor: W. R. Mole. 2 story brick residence valued at \$12,000.

Village of Oak Park building permit no. 12665, dated 17 November 1922 for 700 S. Lombard. Owner: F. Landon, Contractor: W. R. Mole. Brick garage valued at \$1,000.

Village of Oak Park building permit no. 30217, dated 4 June 1962 for 700 S. Lombard.  
Owner: Mr. R. Hanrahan, Contractor: Frederick Construction Company. 28-foot brick dormer valued at \$5,000.

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“*Chicago Historic Resources Survey*,” City of Chicago, Department of Housing and Economic Development, Historic Preservation Division, 1995.

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“*Death Notices: Mattie S. Landon*.” Chicago Daily Tribune, July 14, 1955, p. B4.

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“*Display Ad*.” Chicago Daily Tribune, February 20, 1918, p. 8.

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“*Obituaries: Arthur Landon*.” Chicago Daily Tribune, April 8, 1960, p. B8.

“*Obituaries: George Landon*.” Chicago Daily Tribune, May 31, 1947, p. 8.

“*Obituaries: Lee S. Landon*.” Chicago Daily Tribune, April 22, 1958, p. A6.

“*Obituaries: William Mole*.” Chicago Daily Tribune, November 6, 1950, p. C6.

“*Permits to Build*.” Oak Leaves, July 8, 1922, p. 48.

#### **OAK PARK HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

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