

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



FRED C. BEESON HOUSE #4 **5830 WEST MIDWAY PARK**

**Final Landmark Recommendation adopted by the Commission on Chicago
Landmarks, August 7, 2025**



CITY OF CHICAGO
Brandon Johnson, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
Ciere Boatright, Commissioner

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FRED C. BEESON HOUSE #4

5830 WEST MIDWAY PARK

BUILT: 1920

ARCHITECT: FREDERICK R. SCHOCK

INTRODUCTION

The Fred C. Beeson House #4 is the fourth in a series of homes Mr. Beeson had architect Frederick R. Schock design for him over the course of his life in Austin. When Beeson first moved there in 1886, developer Henry W. Austin was shaping the once sparsely populated village into his vision of a refined, pastoral retreat at the western edge of Chicago. Like many who moved to this “railroad suburb,” Beeson worked in the city, and the Chicago and North Western Railway passenger line provided him with a convenient way to commute from home to work and back.

Frederick R. Schock designed dozens of residences as well as larger public and private structures in the village. This work shaped the visual character of Austin during its period of greatest growth from the late nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries, during which it was annexed to the City of Chicago. He made connections to clients through the private clubs he helped to found as well as his participation on civic boards and a brief foray into politics when he served on the Cicero Township Board and then was elected its President.

Schock’s contributions to the architectural history of Chicago have been eclipsed by the rise and celebration of America’s first true architectural style, the Prairie School, at the turn of the twentieth century, and its creators, most notably Frank Lloyd Wright. Nevertheless, an examination of his work reveals his talent for individualizing and expanding the popular architectural styles demanded by his clients. He has a significant body of work throughout Chicago and its suburbs, a good portion of which still remains.



Above: The Fred C. Beeson House #4 sits on a wide lot on the north side of Midway Park.

Below left: Brickwork provides understated decoration such as the quoining at the home's corners. Below right: Stone ornament at a gable. (Photos by Patrick Pyszka)





Above: Map of Beeson House #4 and some of the other homes designed by Frederick R. Schock in the Austin neighborhood of Chicago's West Side.

Below: The detached garage at the northeast corner of the lot is closely based on the design of the home. (Photo by Patrick Pyszka)



CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN

A permit for a two-story, brick residence and garage at 5830 West Midway Park (at the time numbered 5806 Midway Park) was issued on July 13, 1920. The owner of the property was Fred C. Beeson, who lived next door at 5840 West Midway Park. The architect was Frederick R. Schock, who lived on the corner of the block, at 5804 West Midway Park. The masons were Guy & McClintock of Oak Park, Illinois. The cost was listed as \$30,000.

The residence sits on a 125'-wide and 150'-deep lot. The two-story home's original footprint was approximately 37' x 26', but a one-story rear addition, approximately 17' wide and 26' long, was built at the northeast corner of the home in line with the eastern wall. The front façade of the home is set back 40' from the sidewalk. The structure sits toward the western side of the lot approximately 32' from the western lot line, and approximately 56' from the eastern lot line. A detached garage, approximately 25' x 23', sits at the northeast corner of the lot and is reached via a concrete drive from the street. Freestanding, corbelled-brick piers with stone caps are set along the south lot line, one at the southwest corner and two on the southeast (one on either side of the driveway). An open wire gate is set between two more of the piers framing the entry walk. These piers are topped by round stone spheres and are joined by a central brick arch with stone coping. Fourteen corbelled-brick piers, all but two topped by pyramidal stone caps line the northern edge of the lot at the alley, with simple wood fencing in between.

The home is clad in a red brick veneer laid in a running bond with stone trim and ornament. A small water table projects slightly along the base of the home. The original portion of the home has a side-gabled roof covered in asphalt shingles and a small, simple metal cornice. Highly visible parapets above the gable ends are capped with long, flat, stone coping. Gable peaks are clipped and surmounted with a stone block flanked by double scrolls. The blocks display a single, blank shield. Stone blocks at the feet of the gables project slightly beyond each corner's sidewall and endwall above corbelled bases. Below these, brick quoining adorns the four corners of the home.

The home's gables project forward of the exterior walls by one wythe, rising from a series of projecting segmental arches at their bases. Stepped brickwork underneath the raked sides of the gables projects further forward of this layer. At the center of each gable end is a small, oval attic vent framed by a rectangular stone with keystones extending from each side.

The home's main (south) elevation faces Midway Park. A gable-roofed, 16'-wide by 11'-long, brick porch is centered on this elevation. Its gable end has much the same masonry treatment as the larger gable ends of the home, but sits on a lintel supported by single doric columns. Stone coping tops the porch's low brick walls and the sidewalls of the stairs. Large, wide-mouthed stone urns sit atop the porch's front walls and decorative fluted volutes sit on the lower sidewalls of the stairs. The ceiling of the porch is coffered.

The wood entry door has a sidelight with curving muntins. A fluted pilaster adorns the mull post between the door and sidelight. Unusual decorative shapes are affixed to the front of the door: floating above a central, paneled-door shape defined by moldings is a pediment supported by square columns atop tapered "feet" while square columns with notched "crowns" sit at either side of a floating horizontal below.



Above: East elevation of Beeson House #4.

Below: West elevation of the garage. (Photos by Patrick Pyszka)





Above: Looking northeast at Beeson House #4. The porch is relatively large and solid for a Colonial Revival home. (Photo by Patrick Pyszka)

Below: Looking west on Midway Park from just east of Menard Avenue. Beeson House #4 is visible in the distance in this 1978 photo from the *Chicago Sun-Times*. Architect Frederick R. Schock's own home is on the corner and Beeson House #2 is the intermediate home with the stone porch featuring tapered columns. (Photo by John H. White. Credit: ST-90003258-0026, *Chicago Sun-Times* Collection, Chicago History Museum.)



Original wood, double-hung windows remain. At the south elevation they are eight-over-eight while on the other three facades they are six-over-six except for two atypical, small, four-lite windows at the north elevation. Otherwise, windows vary only somewhat in height and width. There are two paired windows on the east elevation and one on the south, but the remainder are single units. Squat windows at the basement level are covered by metal grids.

There is a single, paneled door with one sidelight at the north elevation as well as a wide chimney with a simple stone cap and stepped stone accents along its angled portion. The rear, brick-veneer-clad addition has a gable roof sheathed in asphalt shingles with a short, stocky chimney in the center of its north gable end. Windows are either double-hung or casements. A single door opens at the addition's east elevation onto a set of steps with simple iron railings. This doorway is sheltered by a hipped roof which intersects with the addition's primary roof.

The garage at the northeast corner of the property is clad in brick veneer matching the main home's. It also has a side-gable roof with asphalt shingles. Masonry at the gable ends mimics that of the home in materials and decorative treatment. The corners of the structure also have quoining. A single paneled door opens into the back yard from the garage's west elevation. The south elevation contains two paneled, wood, overhead garage doors incorporating a row of glazing.

THE COLONIAL REVIVAL STYLE

The Colonial Revival style is uncommon in Chicago despite its popularity in domestic architecture across the United States. Approximately forty percent of the homes built during the first half of the twentieth century were made in this style. Unlike other styles that went out of favor after WW II, Colonial Revival homes were still built into the 1950s and 1960s. These later versions were ever more simplified.

Architectural historian Virginia Savage McAlester groups it with co-existing styles under the umbrella of the Eclectic movement (1880-1940). The Colonial Revival "period" style, based on the seventeenth- through early nineteenth-century architecture of American colonists and other historic styles derived from English, French, and Italian sources, first came to prominence in the 1880s but lost favor after the dawn of the new century. At that time, the modern American Craftsman and Prairie styles took over. Aspects of these modern styles bled over into the second phase of the Eclectic movement which began around 1920 and dominated domestic architecture between the two world wars. New impetus to design in this style was triggered in the 1930s by the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg.

As opposed to earlier, Victorian-era designs which tended to freely blend multiple inter-related styles, the Eclectic movement sought to revisit specific, distinct styles of historic domestic architecture by incorporating more "correct" architectural details. In the case of Colonial Revival architecture, this meant looking to the Georgian- and Federal-style homes of the early Dutch and English colonists along the East Coast. Many architectural elements shared by the Federal and Georgian styles were carried through to the Colonial Revival. Though there are many variations, the most common identifying features include: a rectangular, two-story box form; façades with symmetrically balanced windows and a centered door; classical details; a moderately pitched roof, the majority of them side-gabled; a boxed cornice often with dentils; a red brick masonry exterior; quoining; double-hung, multi-lite windows; and decoration concentrated on a central door.

Colonial Revival homes do have specific variations which would not have been seen on Georgian- or Federal-style homes. Windows are often paired. The lower sash of double-hung windows may have only a single pane of glass. Broken pediments are a favorite above doors. Cornices may have open eaves, or even rafters. A small subset of Colonial Revival homes do not have symmetric window openings or a central door, and their overall forms may even involve complex massing. This was seen more often during the early and late phases of the style's trend, the former likely reflecting the influence of still-prevalent Queen Anne-style homes, and the latter becoming ever more common starting in the 1930s when attached side garages were desirable, thereby eliminating symmetry.

The home at 5830 West Midway Park was built in 1920, at the beginning of the second wave of the Eclectic movement, in the Colonial Revival style. All of the Colonial Revival elements seen in both Federal- and Georgian-style homes listed above are incorporated into the Beeson House #4, some with more fidelity than others. Other aspects are common only to Colonial Revival homes, such as the paired windows.

Beeson House #4 exhibits some interesting stylistic features that are outside the realm of Colonial Revival and its antecedents as well, namely those borrowed from the vocabulary of the American Craftsman and Prairie styles which dominated the first decades of the century. Except for the fluted columns, the large red-brick porch with solid balusters topped by contrasting, flat, stone coping looks more like a porch for a brick bungalow than the more delicately proportioned and detailed porches typical of Colonial Revival homes. In addition, one would expect to see the broad urns at the front of the porch on a Prairie School residence. The home's dramatic parapeted gables also are not typical for Colonial Revival, though they were seen in the Tudor style also popular during the Eclectic movement, a style which looked back to medieval structures for inspiration as did the Arts and Crafts movement.

The most unusual design component of the home is the front door's stylized "floating" elements. These are atypical and have more in common with the playful, historicist ornamentation of 1980s postmodern architecture than with Colonial Revival. It is possible the door was a later addition to the home and photographic documentation of the home soon after its construction would settle the matter, but thus far it has not surfaced. It is worth noting, however, that the front door's decorative, simplified geometric shapes are also seen in the interior. The newel post of the central stair is capped by a block form topped by pediments at all four sides with tapered, geometric keys below. In the living room, the brick columns supporting the arch which defines the fireplace sitting area has floating, stacked-block forms topped by triangular pediments. These elements are not unlike the stylized geometric elements seen in one of architect Schock's earlier Arts and Crafts-influenced works, the Gerson Apartments in Chicago's Logan Square neighborhood.

This home was the final residence built by Schock for Beeson. As late as 1895, the 5800-block of Midway Park was far from fully developed, with only three structures on the entire block. In the decades after Austin's final 1899 annexation to Chicago (a portion of Austin had previously been annexed), development accelerated and structures filled in the residential neighborhood. Most if not all of these were on smaller lots, but Beeson chose to maintain the oversized scale of the lot he carved out between his earlier homes at 5810 and 5840. So, although 5830 filled in a space between larger, older structures as happened with the rest of the district after 1900, its siting with a significant setback on an oversized lot maintained the character of this historic residential core of the city.

FRED C. BEESON, CLIENT

Fred C. Beeson (1859-1942) had completed the purchase of property at the northwest corner of Fulton Market and Carpenter Street by July of 1905 and subsequently tapped Frederick R. Schock to design a three-story brick warehouse there. In August, Schock's architectural firm, Schock & Swanson, procured a building permit for the new structure at 1032 West Fulton Market (then numbered 272-274 Fulton). The attractive structure became the business address and warehouse of Beeson where he stocked the imported and domestic woods he sold for use as decorative veneers in construction.

It's likely that construction of this warehouse coincided roughly with Mr. Beeson's split from the Chicago Veneer Company to establish his own business. Chicago business directories reflected his rise in the company over the years. From his role as salesman in 1887, rose to become a manager by 1888, secretary and manager by 1889, and treasurer by 1891. The Chicago Veneer Company had been incorporated officially in 1888 and was located on Kinzie Street in the block between Armour Street and North Ashland Avenue. The 1892 Rascher *Atlas of Chicago* shows a one-story frame structure attached to a large brick sawmill there. In 1899, the company leased a three-story, 137,000-square-foot manufacturing plant on Damen Avenue (then called Robey Street) just south of Blue Island Avenue, and only three years later, they built a new \$50,000 plant in Burnside, Kentucky. Beeson must have believed it was time to try his own fortune at a business he knew from the ground up. In 1907, he published several ads in the *Chicago Tribune* using the Fulton Market building as his business address. In the 1910 Census, he listed himself as the president of a veneer factory.

The relationship between client Fred C. Beeson and architect Frederick R. Schock went back well before the 1905 construction of his warehouse. Schock had established The Oaks club in 1882, described as "a well-known association of young men organized for social purposes" in *Inter Ocean* of September 7, 1884, when the club was formally incorporated. Beeson was an early member and both he and Schock attended the 1883 opening reception for the club at Austin's Town Hall. In 1890, when Schock established the Wyndemere Club for purposes of vacationing with other Austin families in Silver Lake, Wisconsin, Schock was President and Beeson was a Manager of the group.

In 1886, Beeson had purchased a lot in the village of Austin, a suburb west of Chicago. The lot was on Waller Avenue between Washington Boulevard and W. West End Avenue (then known as Bennett Street) and Beeson intended to build a "substantial residence" and move there per the April 11 *The Inter Ocean*. He engaged Schock to draw up plans for a frame residence, now referenced as Beeson House #1. Previous research suggests it was located at 129 North Waller Avenue (demolished). It was one of four frame residences Schock designed in the village that year, among other larger projects including the Austin train depot for the Chicago and North Western Railway line. The depot would have been within walking distance of Beeson's new home and the line ran along Kinzie Street in Chicago past the factory where Beeson worked.

Beeson, one of eight children born to English immigrants in 1859, may well have envisioned a large family when he married Agnes B. McGuigan in 1879. In 1889, however, their only son died from diphtheria at the age of nine. This loss may have played a part in Beeson's soon-to-be-recognized desire to move to a residence ready-made for social functions.



Photos from the 1888 *Picturesque Austin* book. (Source: Austin Community Collection [Box 13] , Special Collections, Chicago Public Library)

Above: Frederick R. Schock's 1886 Austin train depot for the Chicago and North Western Railway line. *Picturesque Austin* noted: "A twenty-three minute ride from the Wells St depot on the Northwestern Ry or from the Wisconsin Central depot on Harrison and Franklin streets, lands one in the village at an expense of 8 cents."

Below: Frederick R. Schock's 1887 Austin Library and Club House. *Picturesque Austin* called it "the home of the Oaks Club, whose elegant entertainments in the way of parties, receptions, lectures, dramatic performances and concerts make it the center of social life in the town, while the billiard, card and reading rooms, afford an attractive resort for an idle hour."





Above: A February 11, 1907, ad from the *Chicago Tribune*. Beeson had his own veneers business located at 1032 Fulton Market warehouse building (then numbered 272-274).

Below: The warehouse at 1032 West Fulton Market built for Fred C. Beeson by Schock & Swanson. The absence of surface decoration and use of projecting brick in simple geometric forms for visual interest are characteristic of the Prairie style. The building is located in the Chicago Landmark Fulton-Randolph Market District.



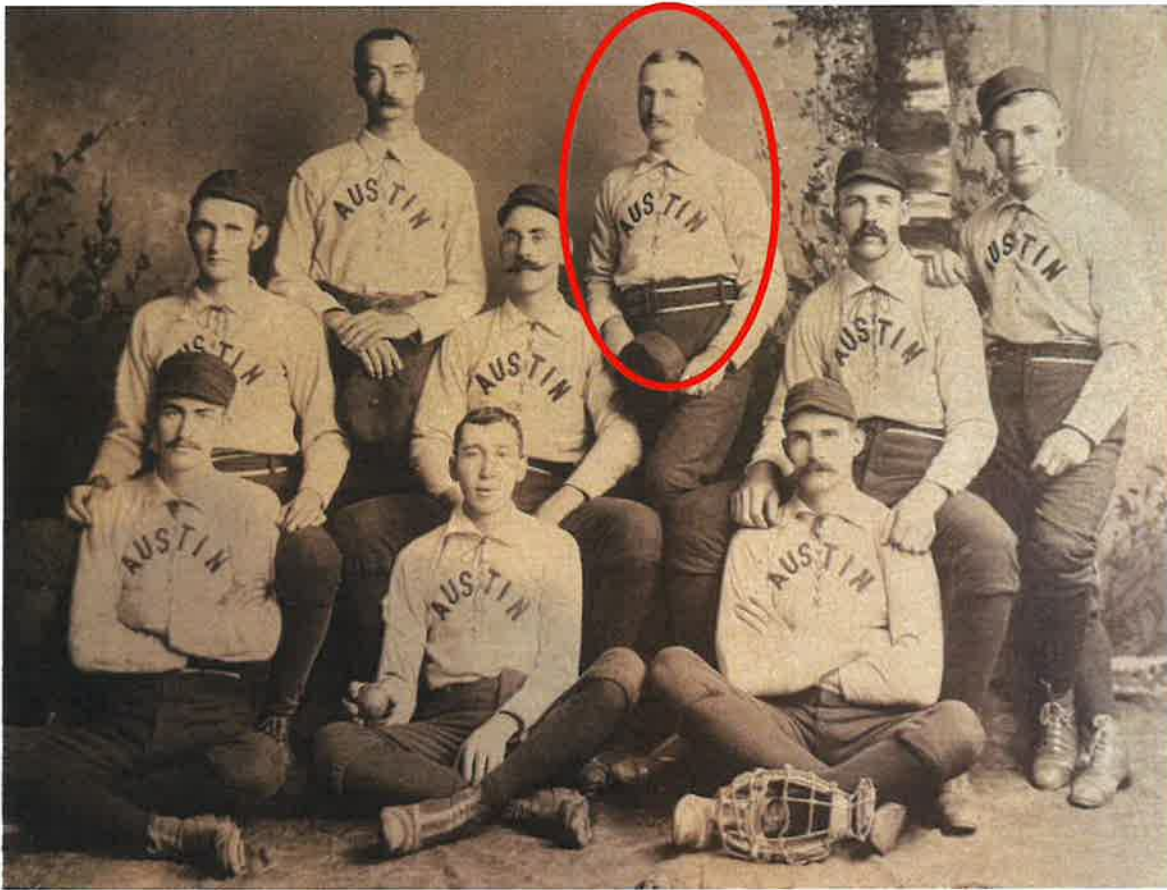
In 1891, Beeson bought land along Midway Park adjacent to Frederick R. Schock's home and once again asked Schock to design a new home for him. Completed in 1892, and now referenced as Beeson House #2, the grandly scaled Queen Anne-style home at 5810 West Midway Park (a designated Chicago Landmark) was sheathed in wood shingles above a first floor wrapped in rusticated stone with voussoir arches. Inside the ground floor was a series of open, ornate, formal rooms, each of which could double as a showroom for the various wood veneers Beeson sold. Continuing to serve with Schock as an elected officer of The Oaks, Beeson had room to entertain his fellow members and their families in grand style with the ballroom he had built on the third floor. A high-style design coach house was also built to the at the back of the lot.

The Beesons lived there for just under a decade when, in 1901, Frederick R. Schock procured a permit for a brick residence at 5840 West Midway Park (then with the address of 5827 Indiana Avenue, an earlier street name for Midway Park) for Mr. Beeson. At just two stories, it was more modest than Beeson House #2, but the front façade was distinctive, with a large Mission-style dormer at the second floor. The dormer's shape was inspired by those seen on Spanish Colonial mission buildings, a nod toward the more purist inclination of styles adopted during the Eclectic era.

When discussing the Mission style, architectural historian Virginia Savage McAlester noted in *A Field Guide to American Houses*: "by 1900 houses in this style were spreading eastward [from California] under the influence of fashionable architects and national builders' magazines." The home's rectangular box shape, hipped roof covered in red tiles, wide eaves, and porch roof supported by large, square piers also ticked the boxes defining the style. Schock combined these elements with some features of the Craftsman and Prairie movements taking hold in America at the time such as Roman brick masonry and the geometric-accented urns at either side of the entry stairs.

Fred and Agnes Beeson remained at Beeson House #3 for almost two decades until Beeson asked Schock to design a fourth home in the adjacent lot to the east of 5840. (As a consequence, Beeson House #4 was placed between Beeson House #2 and Beeson House #3.) The Fred C. Beeson House #4 was more modest in size and simpler in form than the previous two homes.

The 1920 Census reflected their move to the new home at 5830 West Midway Park. In the census, Fred was listed as a "Broker" of veneers who employed others. In July of 1923, Agnes Beeson died at the age of 61. The *Chicago Tribune* notice of her death indicated that the funeral procession would depart from her late residence at 5830 Midway Park. According to a 1923 city directory, Fred C. Beeson remarried soon after. The 1930 Census suggested Fred C. Beeson and his second wife Elizabeth were living comfortably at 5830 with their son Thomas and a live-in maid. By 1940, however, Fred was no longer working, but his wife Elizabeth was. They also reported having taken in boarders, perhaps reflecting economic difficulties encountered during the Great Depression. Fred C. Beeson died in 1942.



Above: Fred C. Beeson (circled in red), center fielder for Austin's champion baseball team of 1885. Photo taken July 21, 1885. Inscribed on the back: "Score: Austin 7, Oak Park 2" and "Property of Howard Bowen" who was the pitcher seen in the middle of bottom row. (Source: Austin Community Collection [Nhrc Shared Box 1] , Special Collections, Chicago Public Library)



Right: Frederick R. Schock, circa 1893. (Source: *Inland Architect*, October 1980)

FREDERICK R. SCHOCK, ARCHITECT

Solo Practice

Frederick Reuben Schock (1854-1934) purchased property on Midway Park in 1885 from Austin founder and developer Henry W. Austin just as this central area of Austin was beginning to become a fashionable residential enclave. Schock designed and built his home at 5804 West Midway Park in 1886. The house had an exuberant Queen Anne design, combining multiple surface treatments with a variety of picturesque forms and pushing the Queen Anne style in unique and personal directions. An item in the suburban news section of *The Inter Ocean* lauded the design, calling it “Mr. Shock’s professional triumph,” and it helped to establish him as the society architect for Austin. He lived there for the next 48 years until his death.

At the time he built his home, Schock was already a successful architect with his own practice. The Chicago native had been born, along with three sisters, to French immigrant parents who ran a saloon. After graduating from high school in 1872, he apprenticed with architect Henry Lord Gay (1844-1921). Gay had worked for architect W.W. Boyington after arriving in Chicago from Baltimore and went on to publish the *Building Budget* architectural paper. After a deadly dome collapse in 1877 during construction of his Rockford courthouse, Gay pivoted his efforts to be of service to Chicago’s architectural community by setting up a permanent exhibit of building materials in 1884 by and for all those in the building trades. He provided free space at the building for the newly formed Builders and Traders Exchange of Chicago as part of his central role in getting architects to organize at the local, state, and regional levels as other trades had.

Schock moved on to the offices of Solon S. Beman in 1880 and worked on structures in the model industrial town of Pullman. The 1880 Census shows Schock living with his mother, two sisters, and grandfather in Austin. The family had moved there from Chicago where they had lived as recently as 1877. After only two years with Beman, Schock set up his own design firm with an office located in downtown Chicago in 1882.

Society events were regularly posted in an Austin section of the *Chicago Tribune* and they began noting Schock’s comings and goings as early as 1884. Another name seen in the articles is Sarah Fitzgerald “of Chicago.” In October of 1887, the two wed and moved into “the beautiful residence built by the young architect, in anticipation of this event” at 5804 West Midway Park in Austin.

Also in 1887, Shock completed 5804 West Race Avenue for his aunt (the Schlect House; a Chicago Landmark). By wrapping forms with shingles to allow for larger expanses of unadorned wall surface and using only a handful of features in unexpected ways to highlight the forms versus outlining them with the more typical trim and corner boards, Schock abstracted the exterior to a degree that crossed over into what has since become recognized as the Shingle style.

Frederick Schock built the small house at 5749 West Race Avenue for his mother, Marie, in 1888 (the “Marie Schock House”; a designated Chicago Landmark). Visual interest was created with a collection of different window types and the unexpected projection and recession of elements within larger, shingled, planar surfaces. This thoughtful design treatment combined with its modest size and cost (\$3,000), led to a drawing and plans of the project being published in his former boss Henry Lord Gay’s national architectural magazine, *Building Budget*, in 1888.



Above: "Residence for Frank Sturges, Elmhurst, Illinois" from September 1892 *Inland Architect*. (Source: Ryerson and Burnham Libraries' stacks)

Below: Postcard looking north up Kedzie Avenue from Milwaukee Avenue. Schock designed the Higgins Building (1905; seen at right), a store and flat building, at the northeast corner of the intersection. The extant building continues to serve as a commercial anchor in the Logan Square Community. (Source: Logan Square Preservation)



Architectural historian Alice Sinkevitch, in her article "Midwest Vernacular and Shingle Style," argues that Schock's work directly influenced Frank Lloyd Wright during that famed architect's early years in the neighboring suburb of Oak Park. Wright's own house and studio in Oak Park (1889) is an important example of the Shingle style and bears striking similarities to the Marie Schock House as well as the Oak Park residence Schock majorly remodeled in 1887 for Henry W. Austin (demolished). The latter stood across the street from where Wright initially lived when he moved to Oak Park in 1888. Sinkevitch believes Wright's disparaging remarks about Schock in his autobiography are a bit disingenuous and that Wright owed more of a debt to Schock than he would admit. Historians would agree that the Shingle style was a formative influence on Frank Lloyd Wright—and on his subsequent Prairie school designs.

Regardless, the Marie Schock House is an important survivor from a critical turning point in architectural history. It shows how rich and creative the American architectural profession was at the end of the nineteenth century, and how architects generally--not just the handful of internationally known ones--were pushing the boundaries of architectural styles. When it led to the dominance of Arts and Crafts and Prairie styles in America, Schock continued to adapt and innovate, shifting easily between styles.

Nowhere is this more powerfully illustrated than in the 5800-block of Midway Park where the three homes by architect Schock for client Beeson are adjacent and strikingly different. The juxtaposition of these three homes on the same block provides insight into the arc of Schock's career. In the 1980s, the Austin/Schock Historical Association, a group that put together tours of Schock's architecture, provided this summary in their tour hand-out:

His early designs were frequently of the shingled Queen Anne type, characterized by the use of shingles on walls and roofs, stone bases, turrets and wide porches, and colored ornamental glass. During the 1890s, he experimented with more of the classical architectural forms made popular by the Columbian Exposition of 1893. In the later part of his career, simple low forms embellished with geometric ornament characterize his houses and show the influence of the Prairie School, while in his public buildings he frequently combined classical forms with modern rectilinear details.

When it came to business practices, Schock was extremely practical. He mixed his public and private roles, leading or joining social clubs and public committees for which he would design signature buildings. Schock had led the effort to start The Oaks social club in Austin in 1882 which set up headquarters in one of Austin's central commercial buildings, the Giles Block. When the Giles Block burned down in 1885, Mr. Giles hired Schock to design a new commercial block which The Oaks again made their home.

In 1887, Schock became a director of the Austin Library Association while being engaged to design their new library. As president of The Oaks, Schock saw to it that the new library building served dual purposes. Part of the new Austin Club and Library Building functioned as the public library while private spaces for The Oaks included a reception hall, parlors, card and billiard rooms, a banquet hall, and a theater which was shared for public use. In 1890, Schock built the clubhouse for the Wyndemere Club in Wisconsin while he was its President.

Schock also pursued a career in local politics, further merging his public and private roles. The Cicero township was then a 36-square-mile entity which included the village of Austin as well as what are now the village of Oak Park, the city of Berwyn, and the town of Cicero. Schock



Above Left: Remodeled home owned by Henry W. Austin in Oak Park. Schock contemporized the 1859 home's exterior and interior in 1887. (Source: *Inland Architect*, October 1980)

Above Center: Side elevation of the Marie Schock House at 5749 West Race Avenue in Chicago. Frederick R. Schock designed and built the home for his mother in 1888. (Source: "Four Houses by Frederick Schock," Commission on Chicago Landmarks)

Above right: Frank Lloyd Wright's Home and Studio in Oak Park, 1889. (Source: Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Trust website)



Above: Circa 1908 postcard looking west on Midway Park from Menard Avenue (formerly Prairie Avenue). The grand homes, expansive lawns, and trees in the center median and at the sides of the road align with Henry W. Austin's vision of a genteel railroad suburb. The house at right is Frederick R. Schock's home. To the left is Fred C. Beeson House #2. Beeson House #3 is in the distance. Beeson House #4 will be built in between these. (Source: Worthpoint.com)

was elected as a trustee of the Cicero township board in 1888 and became president of the board in 1889. While on the board, he remodeled the interior of the Cicero Town Hall, a classic intermingling of business and politics.

His efforts to maintain a high profile paid dividends. Schock had the opportunity to create a showpiece residence in Chicago when Orrin W. Potter wanted a new home at 130 North Lake Shore Drive (at the southwest corner of Lake Shore Drive and Burton Place). Schock's design was Romanesque with exterior walls of granite and the project rung in at \$80,000 according to the listing in *Inter Ocean*. It was around this time that Schock was regularly included alongside architects Holabird & Root, Henry Ives Cobb, Pond & Pond, and other top-tier architects in the *Inter Ocean* newspaper's roughly annual reviews discussing the state of architecture in Chicago and highlighting recently constructed buildings. In September 1892, drawings for two of his residences were included in *Inland Architect*, a national publication based out of Chicago.

Shock was asked to opine on the prospect of state licensure of architects in an 1897 *Inter Ocean* article titled "Architects Gladly Pay License." Shock was quoted in support of the proposed measure:

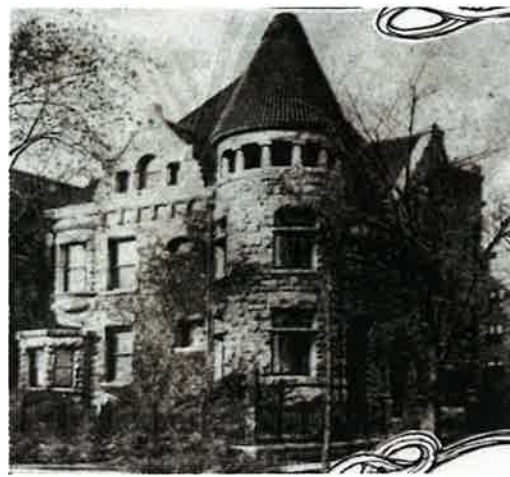
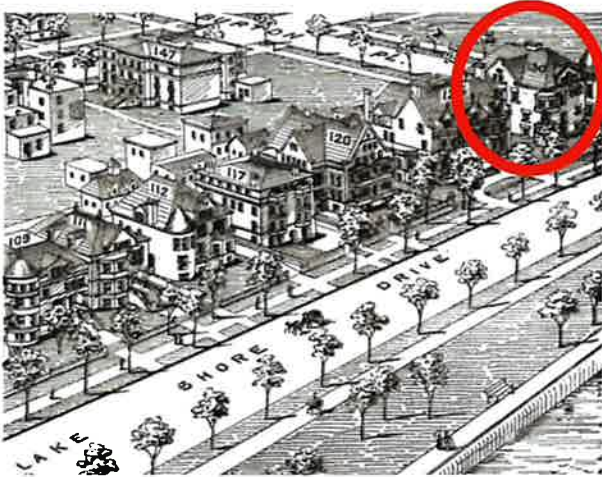
I heartily approve of the aims of the Architects' Business Association, and of the license law, which, very largely through its well-timed efforts, has been placed upon the statute books of Illinois. The reform has been introduced none too soon. In time it will bring a different class of men into the practice of the profession of architecture. In the future, instead of at one bound from a carpenter's bench to the designation and employment of an architect, a man must first pass a rigid examination, and be justly entitled to some consideration as a professional man. The new law, translated in the architecture of the future, means a great advance not only in genuineness of work, but in the development of a distinctive American style of architecture.

One of Schock's last projects was for Charles S. Castle, a member of the family which had begun the Austin State Bank and Chairman of the bank's Board of Directors on which Schock served. Completed in 1924, the Italian Renaissance Revival residence at 647 Linden Avenue (extant) in Oak Park had an arched entry portal and green-tiled roof and was set on an oversized corner lot, giving the home considerable visibility.

Over the course of his career, Schock designed hundreds of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional structures across Chicago and in suburbs including Park Ridge, Oak Park, River Forest, Evanston, Elgin, and Riverside. But his impact was greatest in Austin where he built a large number of residences as well as public and commercial buildings. Like Frank Lloyd Wright in Oak Park, Schock's prominence in the Austin community is still felt today as many of his buildings remain. Schock died at his Midway Park home in Austin in 1934, a year after his wife Sarah died. They were survived by two daughters, Natalie and Jean.

The Firm of Schock & Swanson

The brief bios of Frederick R. Schock included in multiple editions of the *Book of Chicagoans* erroneously suggest that Schock formed the architectural firm of Schock and Swanson with H. F. Swanson in 1883. (In 1883, Swanson would have been sixteen years old.) Unfortunately Schock's obituary added additional inaccuracies, suggesting he spent eighteen years in the firm and then entered practice for himself. In actuality, Schock had a solo practice from 1882-1902 and then took on Swanson as a partner.



Above Left: Frederick R. Schock's residence at 130 North Lake Shore Drive for O.W. Potter was included as #130 in the 1893 *Rand-McNally & Co.'s Bird's-Eye Views and Guide to Chicago*.

Above right: Photo of O.W. Potter residence from the October 27, 1907, *Chicago Tribune*.



Left: Frederick R. Schock's 1913 apartment building at 135-141 Ridgeland Avenue in Oak Park, Illinois, 2014 (Photo by Irina Hynes. Source: Flickr.)



Left: Frederick R. Schock's 1924 residence for Charles Castle at 647 Linden in Oak Park, Illinois. (Photo by Alexa Rogals. Source: *Austin Weekly News*.)

Hans Frederick Swanson (1867-1913) was born in Norway and immigrated to the United States when he was two. He married his wife Emma, who was from Illinois, in 1888. At that time he was listed as a draughtsman in the *Lakeside Annual Directory*. He is cited in journal and newspaper listings as the architect for a handful of projects between 1898 and 1901.

The annual *Handbook for Architects and Builders* was first published in 1898 and included listings for licensed architects. Both Frederick R. Schock and H. Frederick Swanson are included separately in the listings, working at different addresses in that volume. It is not until 1903 that they are both listed at 172 Washington Street. From 1904 onward, each has the firm name of Schock & Swanson in parentheses after their names. This continues through 1911, but the men are shown working at different addresses that year, suggesting they had split up. The firm's name is entirely absent from the 1912 handbook.

Additionally, a March 17, 1902, want ad for a draughtsman was placed by "Schock & Swanson" of 172 Washington Street. Journal and newspaper listings for projects by the firm are found as early as 1902 and there are at least 70 by 1911. The weight of this evidence suggests that the firm of Schock & Swanson was established in 1902 and continued through 1911.

H. Fred Swanson picked up again with his solo practice in 1911 and completed over a dozen projects by 1912. He died in November of 1913 at the age of 46. His obituary noted the cause was thought to be apoplexy. At the time he was a new widower, having lost his wife Emma three months earlier. The couple were survived by a son, Harry, who was 24 years old.

FREDERICK R. SCHOCK AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AUSTIN

Oak Park resident Henry W. Austin purchased 280 acres in the Cicero Township about seven miles west of downtown Chicago in 1865. The following year he began subdividing the property and established a temperance settlement named Austinville. The community's gradual growth was fueled by his construction of a railroad station that year on Central Avenue, the first suburban station on the Galena Division of the Chicago and North Western Railway. The train ran on tracks which had been laid in 1848 parallel to an existing toll road.

The rail line led east through Chicago into the central business district, providing the key ingredient needed to establish a "railroad suburb." These late nineteenth-century developments consisted of substantial single-family houses on oversize lots in a pastoral setting, but with modern conveniences including established commuting via rail. These communities grew as real estate developers promoted the area's large lots, its distance from the city's congestion and pollution, and its excellent transportation.

During the last four decades of the nineteenth century, such rail service had a strong influence on patterns of urban settlement, as real estate speculators began to plan outlying communities around commuter railroads. Developers often sold land at a discount or simply gave it to civic and religious institutions that would build in the area as a means to attract middle- and upper-class families to these new railroad suburbs.

Henry W. Austin was one of these developers, making improvements as he went to entice potential purchasers. Initial development in the 1860s included modest structures such as utilitarian tenements for the workers of a clock manufacturer he had enticed to move to Austin from Connecticut. However, hints of his long-term vision are evident in an 1867 auction notice for the sale of a hundred lots which touted "the streets are broad with double drives, and parks in the center, and can be made the finest subdivision of the village." Austin also invested in his pastoral vision by donating four acres in the center of the village for a park (Holden Park) and planting 27 miles of trees along the village's streets.

Though land sales of subdivided areas were successful, many of the purchasers were not ready to build homes and the area remained largely undeveloped for some time. Growth came to a near standstill with the financial crisis of 1873. When the economy recovered in the 1880s, the community's development accelerated. Having started with only a handful of farmsteads in the 1860s, by 1874 Austin had 1,000 residents. By the 1890s, Austin's population had quadrupled to be around 4,000.

Architecture was one of the factors contributing to this acceleration. A tone was set when architect Frederick R. Schock designed the striking new Chicago and North Western Railway station at Austin Avenue in 1886 in the emerging Shingle style. The *Inter Ocean* noted that Schock's design looked "more like a fine residence than a railway station." When combined with more frequent train service, Schock's refined design had the desired result of starting a run on the adjacent undeveloped residential properties.

The same year Schock completed construction of his own showcase home which embodied elements of picturesque Queen Anne style and what would become the Shingle style. Schock was responsible for many other residential structures in Austin which used the same vocabulary. The residents of Austin could have afforded the stone and masonry of other exclusive neighborhoods, but showed a preference for the wood and stained shingles marking the elite communities of the East Coast.

In 1887, when Schock designed one of Austin's most prominent community buildings, the combined Oaks Club and Austin Library, he chose to employ his unique brand of Shingle style. The *Inter Ocean* proclaimed it "the finest structure of the kind of the whole range of Chicago suburbs." The article noted in particular the exterior stained shingles "in the style much in vogue in Eastern suburban structures." Schock's commission was likely facilitated by Henry W. Austin who provided funding for the effort. This was reflected in Henry W. Austin's 1889 obituary which provided an overview of his importance to Austin:

He went to great expense laying out the town and in building in it a system of improved roadways and parks. He gave a great deal of money for schools and churches, and it seemed to be his especial delight to have fine buildings for these purposes. He built at his own expense the station house of the Northwestern road at Austin. While the Austin public library was casting about for money to put up a building and to buy a place to locate it Mr. Austin came forward and gave them the site at the corner of Lake Street and Waller avenue, valued at \$7,500. To this he added a cash donation of \$2,500, and secured for the village its present handsome library building.

Another community structure Schock designed was Austin High School, completed in 1890. This structure, as with most of the prominent buildings of this earlier era of Austin are now gone. After multiple additions, the high school was demolished in 1959. The Austin Avenue depot was demolished when the railroad tracks were elevated circa 1915. A 1920s apartment building has replaced the Austin Club and Library Building. However, many fine residences

Left: Auction notice in the June 20, 1867, *Chicago Evening Post* for the sale of 100 lots in Austinville. The notice ticks all the boxes needed for a "railroad suburb." It touts the parks and extensive number of trees planted, the broad roads with double drives perfect for carriage rides, the fine residences, and the convenient transportation.

AUCTION.

AUCTION SALE OF LOTS

IN THE

VILLAGE OF AUSTIN

Will be sold at the office of WM. A. BUTTERS & CO., 46 Randolph street, on

Wednesday, 26th June, at 7:30 p. m.,

About ONE HUNDRED LOTS, being a subdivision of Block 10, in Austinville.

This town was laid out one year ago, six miles west from the Court House, on Lake street, and is the first station on the Galena Division of the Chicago and Northwestern railway, on the first rise of land west from the city, formerly known as Sand Ridge. The land is rolling, with good drainage. The town is beautifully laid out with parks and broad streets, all of which were planted with trees, and are now in a thriving condition, which will soon make this one of the finest suburban villages of Chicago.

The United States Brass and Clock Company is located here; a Postoffice, Passenger House, and many fine residences have been erected during the past year, which, with the short carriage drive, and extra railroad facilities to the city, offer inducements in favor of this place.

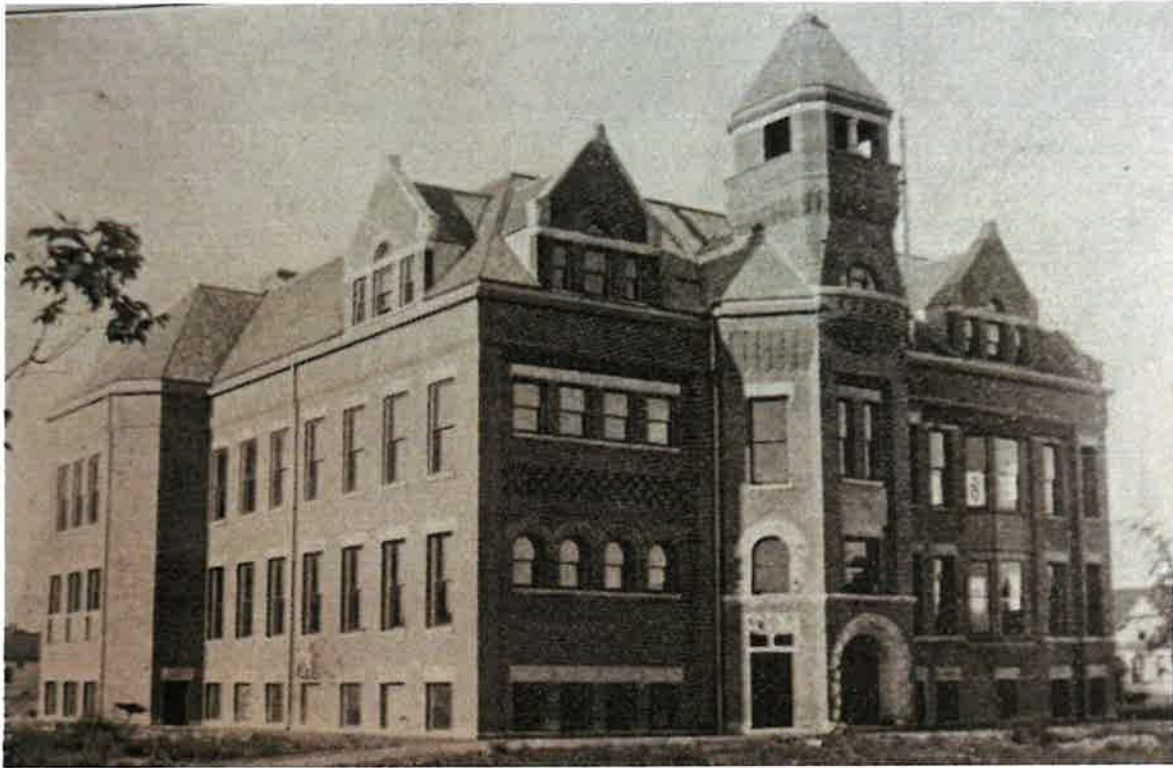
In the subdivision of block ten the proprietor has, after disposing of all the lots in his original subdivision to a large number of citizens who have purchased for improvements, decided on the above plan to more speedily build up and settle the village. The lots are all on the ridge, the streets are broad, with double drives, and parks in the center, and can be made the finest subdivision of the village.

A value of \$50 to \$75.00 will be placed on each lot, and then sold to the highest bidder above such price.

Terms: Cash, or one-third cash, one-third in three months, and one-third in two years, at ten per cent. interest.

Title perfect. An abstract can be seen at the office of E. Roby, Room 3, No. 38 La Salle street, Chicago, who will also furnish half-fare tickets to parties wishing to see the lots, which will be pointed out by the station agent at the place; or a map of the original subdivision can be found in the depot, which indicates block ten, where every lot is staked out and street labeled.

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Above: **Frederick R. Schock's Austin High School, 1890, from *Austin and Some of Her Prominent Citizens Illustrated*.** (Source: Austin Community Collection [Box 13] , Special Collections, Chicago Public Library)



Above left: **Frederick R. Schock's Cicero Township Fire Station, 1898, at 439 North Waller Avenue.** The fire station was taken over by Chicago Fire Department after Austin's annexation in 1899. (Photo by Max Chavez. Source: X media platform.)



Above right: **Frederick R. Schock's Austin State Bank Building, 1913 and 1926.** Schock was a member of the bank's board of directors at the time of construction. (Photo by James Foster. Source: October 8, 2018, *Chicago Sun-Times*.)

survive intact and Midway Park even retains the central, tree-filled median denoting the boulevards which graced some of Austin's streets.

The biggest changes that led to the demolition of these earlier village landmarks took place during Austin's period of greatest growth from 1910 to 1930. It was undergirded by the proliferation of transportation options—electric streetcars, trolley cars, and eventually the Lake Street Elevated train—that were in place at the turn of the century. Combined with Austin's 1899 annexation by the city of Chicago, the neighborhood's population had risen to 33,000 by 1910. The following two decades it almost quadrupled to 131,000 which led to greater density in most of Austin. Beeson House #4 was built during this time, but the building's setback and large parcel size were a continuation of earlier historic patterns.

The series of homes Frederick R. Schock designed for Fred C. Beeson reflect the early character of Austin as it developed into a railroad suburb at the western edge of Chicago. They also illustrate the richness and creativity of Chicago's architectural community around the turn of the twentieth century. At the same time architecture firms like Adler and Sullivan were adapting traditional architecture to create a "new" American architecture, Frederick R. Schock was experimenting with the ornate Queen Anne style, at times simplifying and abstracting it as the Shingle style took shape, work reflected in Beeson House #2. He was equally adept with the Eclectic movement's revisiting of specific styles of historic domestic architecture with more "correct" architectural details as reflected in Mission-style Beeson House #3 and in Colonial Revival-style Beeson House #4.

Schock was a prolific architect in the Austin community for decades. He designed dozens of homes, many of which remain. Though many of his commercial and institutional buildings are gone, the Cicero Township Fire Station at 439 North Waller (1898), and the Austin State Bank Building at 5645 West Corcoran Place (1913 and 1926) remain as evidence of the architect's continuing imprint on Austin as it continued to grow in the early part of the twentieth century.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Section 2-120-690), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a recommendation of landmark designation for an area, district, place, building, structure, work of art, or other object within the City of Chicago if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated "Criteria for Designation" and that it possesses a sufficient degree of historic integrity to convey its significance. The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that the Fred C. Beeson House #4 be designated as a Chicago Landmark:

Criterion 1: Value as an Example of City, State, or National Heritage

Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, or the United States.

- The Fred C. Beeson House #4, built in 1920 on a spacious lot on the boulevard of Midway Park, exemplifies the early history and development of Austin as an area of substantial single-family houses on oversize lots built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
- The construction of 5830 West Midway Park by Chicago factory executive and owner Fred C. Beeson reflects the economic and social character of the "railroad suburbs" that developed at the edges of Chicago in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Real estate developers like Henry W. Austin promoted their area's large lots, distance from the city's congestion and pollution, and excellent transportation to attract executives and professionals like Fred C. Beeson and architect Frederick R. Schock from the city.

Criterion 4: Significant Architecture

Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.

- As the last in a series of distinctly different homes by architect Frederick R. Schock commissioned by Fred C. Beeson, this home and its precedents reflect the changing architectural styles over the arc of Schock's career.
- The Fred C. Beeson House #4 is an excellent example of residential architecture in the Colonial Revival style, one of the nation's most ongoingly popular styles during the twentieth century, but one seen much less frequently in Chicago. It possesses numerous features characteristic of the style, including a rectangular, two-story box form; classical details; a moderately pitched, side-gable roof; a red brick masonry exterior; quoining; double-hung, multi-lite windows; and decoration concentrated on a central door and entry.
- The Fred C. Beeson House #4 possesses a high quality of design, building materials, and excellent craftsmanship in traditional materials.

Criterion 5: Important Architect

Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history of development of Chicago, the State of Illinois, or the United States.

- Although overshadowed in architectural history by the advance of the Prairie School of architecture and its progenitors such as Frank Lloyd Wright at the beginning of the twentieth century, the work of architect Frederick R. Schock has an enduring quality. Schock was a particularly skillful interpreter of popular residential styles and has a significant body of work throughout Chicago and its suburbs, much of which still remains.
- Austin resident Frederick R. Schock was a prolific architect, especially in the Austin community, and the grand scale, style, and quality of his designs for residential as well as institutional and commercial buildings helped to give the “railroad suburb” its distinctive identity during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His work there included dozens of homes, the Chicago and North Western Railway depot (1886; demolished), the Austin Library and Club House (1887; demolished), and Austin High School (1890; demolished). Two prominent remaining buildings are the Cicero Township Fire Station (439 North Waller Avenue; 1898) and the Austin State Bank Building (5645 West Corcoran Place; 1913 and 1926).

Integrity

The integrity of the proposed landmark must be preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and ability to express its historic community, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value.

The Fred C. Beeson House #4 and its garage have outstanding integrity down to the level of original wood windows in the home and wood doors on the garage. The addition from circa 1940 was located at the rear of the structure so does not impact any of the original features from the public way. Visible changes are minor such as sections of tuckpointing done in a different profile and color than the original. In 2016, the masonry above the porch’s columns was taken apart to replace corroding lintels. It was reconstructed to match historic and damage to the column capitals was repaired with the upper section of the west column replaced in kind with limestone.

SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

Whenever a building or district is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks is required to identify the “significant historical and architectural features” of the property. This is done to enable the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Staff recommends that the significant historical and architectural features for the property are:

- all exterior elevations and rooflines of the Home and Garage.

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The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor and City Council, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. The Commission is responsible for recommending to the City Council that individual building, sites, objects, or entire districts be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law. The Commission is staffed by the Chicago Department of Planning and Development, Bureau of Citywide Planning, Historic Preservation Division, City Hall, 121 North LaSalle Street, Room 1000, Chicago, IL 60602; (312-744-3200) phone; website: <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dcd/provdrs/hist.html>

This Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation process. Only language contained within a designation ordinance adopted by the City Council should be regarded as final.

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