

STREET #

DIRECTION

STREET

SUFFIX

PIN

LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE RATING

POTENTIAL IND NR? (Y or N)

Contributing to a NR DISTRICT?

Contributing secondary structure?

Listed on existing SURVEY?



**GENERAL INFORMATION**

CATEGORY  CURRENT FUNCTION

CONDITION  HISTORIC FUNCTION

INTEGRITY  REASON for SIGNIFICANCE

SECONDARY STRUCTURE

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION  PLAN

DETAILS  NO OF STORIES

BEGINYEAR  ROOF TYPE

OTHER YEAR  ROOF MATERIAL

DATESOURCE  FOUNDATION

WALL MATERIAL (current)  PORCH

WALL MATERIAL 2 (current)  WINDOW MATERIAL

WALL MATERIAL (original)  WINDOW MATERIAL

WALL MATERIAL 2 (original)  WINDOW TYPE

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES  WINDOW CONFIG

ALTERATIONS

**HISTORIC INFORMATION**

**HISTORIC NAME**

**COMMON NAME**

**COST**

**ARCHITECT**

**ARCHITECT2**

**BUILDER**

**ARCHITECT SOURCE**

**HISTORIC INFO**

**PERMITS**

**LANDSCAPE**

**COA DATE**

**COA DECISION**

**PREPARER**

**PREPARER ORGANIZATION**

**SURVEYDATE**

**SURVEYAREA**



**DIGITAL PHOTO ID**

**DIGITAL PHOTO ID3**

**DIGITAL PHOTO ID2**

**DIGITAL PHOTO ID4**

CITY OF NAPERVILLE  
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 1, 1990  
TO: Ron Miller  
FROM: Walter Newman   
SUBJECT: Agenda Item for Council Meeting of May 15, 1990  
Landmarking the Knuckles Building at 48 E. Jefferson.

Under Section 6-11-3 of the Zoning Ordinance, the Historic Sites Commission can recommend to the Council the landmarking of any building within the corporate limits of Naperville.

Accordingly, the Historic Sites Commission, after study and public hearing, unanimously recommended on April 26, that the Knuckles Building at 48 E. Jefferson be landmarked. Mr and Mrs Knuckles have supported this designation.

This structure, formerly the Truitt residence, and constructed in 1916, was designed by Harry Robinson, who was the Chief Draftsman in Frank Lloyd Wright's office. It is a good example of Mr Wright's Prairie School design, and still retains many of the features which characterize that architectural style. The attached report provides additional information.

Section 6-11-3:1.8 provides further that within 120 days of the filing of the application for landmarking (which occurred on Feb 22, 1990), the Council shall grant or deny the designation.

If Council concurs, it should approve the Landmark designation for the Knuckles Building, and authorize the Legal department to prepare an appropriate ordinance.

WSN:

Attachments

CITY OF NAPERVILLE

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ORDINANCE NO. 90 - 123

AN ORDINANCE DESIGNATING THE KNUCKLES BUILDING ALSO KNOWN  
AS THE TRUITT HOUSE LOCATED AT 48 E. JEFFERSON STREET AS  
A HISTORIC LANDMARK

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PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL  
OF THE CITY OF NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS  
THIS 19th DAY OF June, 1990.

Published in pamphlet form  
by authority of the Corporate  
Authorities of the City of  
Naperville, Illinois, this  
20th day of June, 1990.

ORDINANCE NO. 90 - 123

**AN ORDINANCE DESIGNATING THE KNUCKLES BUILDING ALSO KNOWN  
AS THE TRUITT HOUSE LOCATED AT 48 E. JEFFERSON STREET AS  
A HISTORIC LANDMARK**

WHEREAS, Section 6-11-3 et seq. of the Municipal Code of the City of Naperville provides the opportunity for the Naperville Historic Sites Committee to recommend designation of certain buildings which are located within the corporate limits and may have historic significance as landmarks; and

WHEREAS, in conformance with the rules and regulations of the Municipal Code of Naperville the Historic Sites Commission held a public hearing on the designation of the Knuckles Building located at 48 E. Jefferson Street as a historic landmark; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Sites Commission found the Knuckles Building located at 48 E. Jefferson Street meets the criteria for the designation of landmarks as set out in Section 6-11-3:2 of the Municipal Code of Naperville; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Sites Commission unanimously recommended on April 26, 1990 that the subject building be designated as a landmark; and

WHEREAS, on May 15, 1990 the Mayor and City Council of the City of Naperville accepted the Historic Sites Commission's recommendation that the Knuckles Building be designated as a landmark.

**LANDMARKING REPORT RE 48 EAST JEFFERSON AVENUE  
NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS**

**I. NAME OF BUILDING**

COMMON

Knuckles Building /  
Truitt House

HISTORICAL

Truitt House

**II. USE**

PRESENT

Commercial

ORIGINAL

Residential/Commercial

**III. OWNERSHIP**

PRESENT

Mr. & Mrs. Jeffrey Knuckles

ORIGINAL

Dr. & Mrs. Ruliff Truitt

**IV. REGISTRY INFORMATION**

DOCUMENT NUMBER

119850

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

East 8 ft. Lot 7 and West  
39 ft. of Lot 6 of the plat  
of Sigmund's Addition to  
Naperville, DuPage County,  
Illinois (See appendix one  
appendix two)

**V. CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION**

The former Truitt residence at 48 East Jefferson is on the easterly fringe of the City's Central Business District. The site was purchased by the Truitts in 1915 and the home with an adjoining medical practitioner's office was completed in late 1916. The premises were designed in the tradition of the Prairie School by Harry Robinson as were the first major renovations. Robinson was an associate of Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright employed Robinson as Chief Draftsman during World War I and Robinson supervised Wright's office in his employer's absence. The Truitt house was the last of three Naperville homes designed by Robinson following the lines and philosophy of the Prairie School.

The Truitt house remained in the Truitt family until 1985 when it was sold to Knuckles and converted to office space for Mr. Knuckles' law firm and several other businesses. With the exceptions of the demolition of a two car garage, the addition of sidewalks, the conversion of the kitchen to a copy room and the enclosing of screened porches, the structure and much of Robinson's original design and later improvements are evident. The structure's original yellow and peach leaded glass windows and French doors have been preserved as have the oak staircase, the original wooden floors, wood trim, interior and exterior stuccoed walls, the impressive fireplace, Robinson's lighting fixtures and the original steam heating system. The patio which replaced the lily pond still exists and the single car garage that Robinson converted into a dining room is now the law office library. The former Truitt house remains a testament to the Prairie School of architectural design and a means of documenting the work of Harry Robinson since his portfolio was destroyed by his widow after death in 1963. The sketches preserved by Robinson's grandson, James Robinson of Hong Kong, reveal how effectively later renovations remained true to the original concept. (See appendix three and four)

**VI. PHYSICAL CONDITION**

INTERIOR

Excellent

EXTERIOR

Good but a new roof, new gutters and the refacing of the facade will be required over the next few years.

**VII. CONSTRUCTION**

The structure was constructed of hollow clay tile walls with stucco plaster on interior walls and light brown stucco facing on the exterior surfaces. The interior contains redwood and oak trim. The leaded windows and doors have accents in yellow and peach glass. The original structure contained an attached, rear single-car garage, two sunporches on the west side of the residence, an east side main entrance, a lily pond framed by the garage and the lower level sunporch and an office adjoining the northwest corner of the four bedroom residence.

VIII. HISTORICAL NOTES

James A. Robinson's research of his grandfather's design work indicates the Givler and the Nichols - Kneip homes were also designed for Naperville residents prior to the Truitt's residence/office.<sup>1</sup> Audrey Truitt McCabe revealed that the family considered Robinson to be a protege of Frank Lloyd Wright in a 1979 interview with the Naperville Sun.<sup>2</sup>

The Truitt family was a highly respected local family and both Dr. Truitt and his wife were involved in the promotion of the local sanitarium. Ruliff Truitt arrived in Naperville in 1906 when he assumed temporary responsibility for the medical practice of his infirm half brother, Dr. T. W. Truitt.<sup>3</sup> Ruliff Truitt remained in Naperville and established his own practice. In 1908 Ruliff married. He and his wife Audrey later raised two daughters in the Jefferson Avenue house.

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<sup>1</sup>See the Knuckles file on the building containing extracts from: James A. Robinson's 1987 reprint of his 1977 research regarding Harry Robinson for graduate requirements in the Department of Architecture, Iowa State University. The Knuckles file contains pages 92 through 96 of the manuscript as well as a variety of renderings of the Truitt House.

<sup>2</sup>Interview with Audrey Truitt McCabe, Naperville Sun, September 26, 1979. Also in the Knuckles file.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.