

**APPLICATION FOR LOCAL LANDMARK
QUINCY PRESERVATION COMMISSION**
706 Maine Street, City Hall Annex, Third Floor
Quincy, Illinois 62301 Telephone (217) 221-3663

Original name (if known) and address of proposed Landmark:

Villa Kathrine
W. George Metz House
532 Gardner Expressway
Quincy, IL 62301

Name, Address, and Telephone Number of Property Owner:

Quincy Park District
1310 Washington Street
Quincy, IL 62301
(217) 223-7703

Style: Moorish/Islamic

Date of Construction: 1900

Architect or Builder: George H. Behrensmeyer

Survey: Provide the date and name of past surveys of the proposed Landmark. If it is listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places, or in a Local Historic District, please provide the date of listing and the name of the district.

The Villa Kathrine at 532 Gardner Expressway was surveyed by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency in 1978 and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It was surveyed by the Gardner Museum of Architecture and Design in 1985. It is included in *Historic Quincy Architecture*, published in 1996. The Quincy Preservation Commission surveyed the property in 2007.

Provide information about the historical significance of the proposed Landmark and property owners.

The Villa Kathrine was built by "William George Metz (who) was born in Quincy on May 20, 1849. His parents, William and Ann Kientzle Metz, emigrated with their families from Germany, met in Iowa, then moved to Quincy on May 20, 1847.

Note: The history and chronology below were copied from storyboards located in the Villa Kathrine. The Local Landmark Committee and Friends of the Castle provided the information for the year 2008, and additional information (in italics) for 1987.

After beginning in the furniture business, William Metz entered the drug business that was to lay the basis for a great family fortune. He started out as a pharmacist with Ferdinand Flacks, then operated independently, and finally joined Flach's successor, Aldo Sommer, as a partner.

William's death in 1873 left a widow and two grown children, with William George (called George) the sole male heir. On May 6, 1897, George Metz's mother died, impelling him on a prolonged tour of Mediterranean Europe and Africa. He returned to America in 1899 and immediately set about planning a hilltop residence that would capture the spirit and atmosphere - as well as some of the actual detail - of late medieval Islamic buildings.

Construction began on George Behrensmeyer's plans in 1900 and was completed the following year. The residence was dubbed "Villa Kathrine" after Metz's mother, though legend has also attached that name to a lost love. Metz's only constant companion was that of his beloved dog, Bingo. Brought over from Denmark by Metz himself, Bingo was a 212-pound mastiff reputed to be the largest dog in America. But Metz was not

a total recluse. Warm summer nights often found him dining with friends on the roof of the northwest tower. On September 30, 1904, Albert Hastings and Pansy Darnell, an old family friend of Metz's, were married at the Villa with George Metz playing the wedding march on his pipe organ.

When Bingo died in 1906, a cloud descended over Metz's Oriental dream. Out of fear for his safety, George's relatives implored him to move, and a visiting couple, professing great enthusiasm for the artistry of the dwelling and its furnishings, prevailed on him to sell. In 1912 Metz gave in and walked away from the house and its contents, even though he knew by that time that the buyer was an agent for an interurban railway company planning to use the property for a railway yard.

Metz briefly visited the Villa with a St. Louis reporter the following year, only to find the house overrun with vermin and birds, its tinted wall design marred and its costly furnishings either stripped or in shreds. He left it vowing he 'never never will return to look upon this ruin.' Nineteen years later, Metz reneged on his vow, returning this time with a Decatur reporter to see the exterior overtaken by decay. 'I only wish the place were mine again,' he said. 'I'd tear it down.'

George Metz never lost his love of grand outlooks over the Mississippi river. After leaving the Villa he lived out his years in a succession of apartments with a broad view of the river: first in the Newcomb Hotel, then the second floor of a house on Jersey, and finally the Lincoln-Douglas Hotel. Ill health brought him to St. Vincent Home where on June 17, 1937, he died of pneumonia. Two days later he was interred at Woodland Cemetery.

At the time of his death Metz had only \$21 in personal possessions. But his fortune was still intact, consisting of \$3,000 savings, another \$3,000 in debts due, \$60,000 in bonds, a stock portfolio representing 33 different companies, and seven farms (2 in Adams County and 5 in Oklahoma). Apart from \$50 bequests to a handful of friends, Metz's inheritance was split between a grand nephew and a niece living in Hollywood.

However slight his personal possessions at the time of his death, they offered a clear window into the character of Metz's life. Contrasting coats and pants with a dozen scarf pins attested to a life long devotion to European fashions, while a gold marquise ring, appraised at \$5.00, likely recalled some lingering personal attachment.

- 1897 William George Metz tours North Africa and Spain for two years, gathering materials and inspiration for the building of a Moorish "villa" of his own, using the Villa Ben Ahben in Morocco as starting point.
- 1899 Metz returns to Quincy, collects his notes and sketches, and confers with several architects about creating a composite design.
- 1900 An ideal spot for Metz's villa is located on a high bluff south of State Street overlooking the Mississippi. Young Quincy architect George Behrensmeyer draws up the plans, reducing the Moroccan villa to 43' by 53' and specifying walls of brick with a plaster veneer. Construction of the Villa Kathrine begins, with Herman Schachtsieck as the prime contractor.
- 1901 The Villa Kathrine is completed, its main tower decorated with latticework inspired by the Giralda in Seville, Spain, and topped with a minaret replicating in miniature that on the Mosque of Thais in Tunisia. A sky-lit interior court is surrounded by columns whose arrangement recalls the Court of Dolls in the Alcazar in Seville and whose twisted forms and capitals are inspired by the famed Alhambra in Granada.
- 1904 The "Moorish dream palace" is described and illustrated in the March issue of *Scientific American Builders Monthly*.
- 1912 Metz sells the Villa Kathrine to Quincy grocer Archibald Behrens, who turns out to be acting for the Alton-Quincy Interurban Railroad. The railroad proposes to build a line to Alton, using the Metz property for a railroad yard. Behrens and his wife, an accomplished artist, are promised the contents of the house as his sales commission, but end up with only a rug. Local entrepreneur John J. Fisher, a principal backer of the rail, becomes virtual owner of the property and is believed by Metz to have furnished his house with the Islamic collection.

- 1917 The interurban rail project fails, and ownership of the former Metz property enters 18 years of litigation. Meanwhile the house becomes derelict and is rented out at low rates.
- 1928 Behrens gives up all claim to the property for \$1, and the house begins more than a decade of abandonment.
- 1939 Under the ownership of Fisher's company Excelsior Stove Works, the house undergoes its first restoration. Central heating is installed, the reflecting pool is filled with concrete, and the grounds are planted with Lombardy poplars.
- 1941 *The Chicago Daily News* publishes a feature article about the still-empty "Moroccan villa" on the Mississippi.
- 1942 Musician and nightclub owner Bob Moore rents the house with his wife Christine and two children, who are students at Quincy College.
- 1951 Harold C. McCoy purchases the house, repairs the casement windows and dome, modernizes the electricity, and landscapes the grounds with flowering shrubs and catalpas.
- 1954 Porter Settle, Jr., buys the house for development into a supper club but soon abandons the project.
- 1955 Quincy Park District purchases the Villa Kathrine and several lots to the north with a \$25,000 donation from the Moorman Company, demolishes the remaining housing, and turns the enlarged property into a neighborhood park and community center under the supervision of the Franklin neighborhood committee.
- 1966 The grounds of the Villa Kathrine are further enlarged through purchase of a residential lot on Third Street.
- 1976 The Park District partially restores and upgrades the Villa and various citizens groups engage in two years of debate concerning the feasibility of restoration and reuse.
- 1977 The Park District estimates the costs of complete restoration at \$150,000, the figure rising to \$200,000 the following year.
- 1978 The Quincy Jaycettes, led by Sharron Jett, spearhead a clean-up effort and incorporate "Friends of the Castle" as a support group for the Villa Kathrine restoration and reuse. The Villa Kathrine is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places and designated on September 26th.
- 1979 Quincy Park District leases the Villa Kathrine to Friends of the Castle, and architect Carl Fisher and Associates of Springfield develops a phased restoration proposal.
- 1981 The City of Quincy, the Federal Highway Administration, Illinois Department of Transportation and Quincy Park District jointly develop a program for the Villa Kathrine as a tourist center. Friends of the Castle member, Robert Christie, is to oversee restoration.
- 1984 The Great River Road Commission provides a \$225,000 grant for Phase I of the work at the Villa Kathrine. A match of \$75,000 is raised locally by Friends of the Castle.
- 1986 Waterkotte Construction completes Phase I, including restoration of the exterior and front parlor, construction of public rest rooms, and a driveway and parking lot.
- 1987 Bergman Nurseries replants the grounds, using many shrubs of near Eastern origin. *Tourist Information Center opens in the parlor of the Villa on Labor Day, Monday, September 7.*
- 1993 The Illinois Department of Transportation grants \$300,000 for Phase II for finishing exterior restoration, reworking mechanical and electrical systems, and returning the interior to its original plan and appearance. A second local match of \$75,000 is required and subsequently raised by Friends of the Castle. Friends of the Castle hires Poepping, Stone, Bach and Associates as architects and engineers for the restoration. Robert Christie is retained as consultant.
- 1996 Illinois Department of Transportation increases Phase II grant to \$551,000 with a required increase of the local match to \$138,000 raised by Friends of the Castle.
- 1998 Fischer Builders Inc. completes Phase II, including restoration of the interior, installation of basement restrooms and an exterior lift for handicap accessibility. The Villa Kathrine is essentially fully restored, and maintained by Friends of the Castle.
- 2008 Friends of the Castle continues to maintain and support the Villa Kathrine with various initiatives such as the current "raise the roof" campaign. It serves as the Quincy Tourist Information Center, the Great River Road Interpretive Center, and the home of the Quincy Convention and Visitors Bureau. It is also open for tours and the building and grounds are available to rent for weddings, parties, meetings, receptions, and other special events. Thanks to the efforts of Friends of the Castle, the Quincy Park District, volunteers and donors, the Villa Kathrine stands as a wonderful and unique

architectural example that can be seen from miles away. The Quincy Preservation Commission nominates the Villa Kathrine for local landmark designation.

Provide information about the Architect or Builder.

George H. Behrensmeyer (1869 – 1950) was a Quincy native. After studying architecture at the University of Illinois, he returned to Quincy to practice his trade and became partner in the firm Behrensmeyer and Hafner. Behrensmeyer is responsible for many of the prominent historic structures in Quincy from public buildings to churches to private residences.

Behrensmeyer designed the Villa Kathrine based on sketches that his client, George Metz, created during his travels in North Africa and Spain.

Provide a statement about the architectural significance of the proposed Landmark.

Architectural styles and inspiration for the Villa Kathrine came from the Moorish lands of southern Spain and North Africa. The exterior resembles buildings that George Metz visited, such as the Villa Ben Abben in Morocco. A miniature replica of a minaret of the Mosque of Thais in Tunisia sets atop the south tower. The building is constructed of common brick with a stucco finish.

The plan follows a square geometric design with a main two-story unit in the middle, a north and south tower, a one-story wing off the south façade, and a two-story wing off the north façade. Although Behrensmeyer's original plans do not show a single-story service entrance on the north façade, early photographs show a square single-story unit with a melon-shaped dome shielded by a stucco and latticework privacy screen. An exterior handicap-accessible lift was installed at the west side of this entrance. There are two bays: one on the southwest, and another on the second level of the north side. The overall effect is one of asymmetry throughout, and with the combined elements of the romantic site and massing of the forms, it is no wonder that some think of this building as the "Castle."

Moorish/Islamic influences include melon-shaped domes, finials, multiple geometric applied designs, a variety of arches and a miniature minaret. A single-story entrance foyer is topped by a small dome with a symbolic finial. There is a low tower ringed with windows and topped by a pyramidal roof over the central unit. The original stucco was a common material used in dry climates in the Middle East and after a number of years this early stucco disintegrated and fell off. During restoration it was replaced with more durable stucco suitable for the Midwestern climate.

Most windows are deeply recessed into the building facades within indentations of different shapes and sizes. There are a great variety of shapes of the windows including horseshoe arch, keystone, rounded arch and pointed arch. The windows themselves are multi-paned in varying geometric designs, culminating in a diverse Moorish/Islamic visual effect that further enriches the facades.

When compared to other examples of exotic revival buildings, the ornamentation of the Villa Kathrine is restrained. There are several small, amber-colored, diamond-shaped windows illuminating the south wing. At some point, the front entrance (vestibule) was removed. During restoration, the vestibule, including the dome, triple south windows, horseshoe, and multifoil (scalloped) arch were recreated. The original incised triangular design contributed to rapid deterioration of the stucco veneer. During the restoration the design was replicated in paint. A small area of the original incised design is preserved on what is now an interior wall of the present service entrance.

Most materials used in the original construction of the Villa Kathrine were from local sources including: limestone, brick and (mostly) oak timber. Even the iron rails and grates were supposedly made locally from old smelted stoves. During the restoration there was great sensitivity in restoring the building to its original appearance.

The Villa Kathrine is a one-of-a-kind architectural structure located on a unique geographical bluff with a commanding view of the Mississippi River. It is the only building of this type found on the Mississippi River and in the region.

List and number the significant exterior architectural features of the building that are to be protected. Include photographs of building façades and features of the proposed Landmark. The numbers of the architectural features should correspond to numbers of the photographs attached at the end of the application.

- (1) Two-story residence with two one-story wings and two towers, all with stucco over brick on a limestone foundation.
- (2) Clerestory tower topped by a pyramidal roof surmounted by iron finial.
- (3) Decorative, wooden, diagonally positioned blocks surrounding north tower, south tower and the second story bay on the north façade.
- (4) Multi-pane and small box windows throughout.
- (5) Metal acroteria on corners of south tower, north bay, and north entrance foyer.
- (6) Decorative chimney pots.
- (7) North tower with melon-shaped dome and crescent-shaped iron finial.
- (8) Inset woodwork of overlapping rounded arch design applied to the north façade.
- (9) Three rounded arch windows behind wooden support brackets on the north façade.
- (10) Rounded arch windows on three sides of the north tower.
- (11) Single-story service entrance on northeast topped by a melon-shaped metal dome.
- (12) Wooden bracing and decorative wooden brackets supporting second-story bay on north façade.
- (13) Entry porch on southeast corner with concrete balustrade and quatrefoil inserts.
- (14) Three keystone-shaped windows, two on the south façade and one on the east façade.
- (15) East main entry vestibule includes melon-shaped dome, triple south arched windows, and multifoil horseshoe arch with inset door and transom. Also visible in photo is a horseshoe arch with inset window on the east façade of the south wing.
- (16) "Villa Kathrine 1900" inset etching on east façade.
- (17) Inset decorative wooden frieze with pointed arch design on east facade.
- (18) Six vertical slots in north facade of service entrance over a single horizontal rectangular window.
- (19) South tower topped by a striped "minaret" with conical roof surmounted with a metal finial.
- (20) Inset diamond-patterned latticework resting on short pilasters on three sides of the south tower.
- (21) Narrow wooden frieze of stepped pointed arch design surrounding south tower.
- (22) Diamond-shaped, amber-colored glass windows inset in decorative frieze on three sides of south wing.
- (23) Syrian arch with inset window fronted by original decorative iron balustrade on the south tower.
- (24) Bay window on second level of south façade between south tower and main unit with ornamental brackets supporting soffit.
- (25) Bay window facing southwest with ornamental brackets supporting soffit.
- (26) Porch on northwest with stucco piers and decorative iron balustrades.
- (27) Double horseshoe arch with center wooden column and flanked by two engaged wooden columns on the second level of the west façade.
- (28) Wooden louvered vents on foundation level.
- (29) Decorative painted design in horizontal strips containing a progressive series of triangles on north, east and west facades.
- (30) Stucco pillars with latticework privacy fence at the service entrance.
- (31) Replica of original flagpole on north wall of south tower.

Why do you think this property merits designation? Check appropriate item(s):

☒ Architecture ☒ Persons ☐ Event(s) ☒ Prominent Landmark

☐ Historical ☐ Unusual Use ☐ Other (list)

Is owner aware of this application? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Does owner consent to this designation? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

Signature of Applicant

Date

Applicant's Name: Quincy Preservation Commission (at address above), and

Mailing Address: Friends of the Castle
P.O. Box 732, Quincy, IL 62306
Phone: (217) 224-3688 cell, 617-5460.
E-mail: paulbrown2003@comcast.net

Legal Description:

The South Forty-five (45) feet of Lot (1) in Block Forty-four (44) in John Wood's Addition to the City of Quincy, situated in the County of Adams, in the State of Illinois.

A part of Lot Numbered One (1) in Block Numbered Forty-four (44), in John Wood's Addition to the City of Quincy, bounded as follows: Commencing on the East line of said Lot, one hundred one (101) feet South of the Northeast corner, running thence West parallel with the North line thereof, ninety-nine (99) feet to the West line, thence South on said West line forty-three and three-fourths (43 3/4) feet, thence East parallel with said North line ninety-nine (99) feet to the East line of said Lot, thence North forty-three and three-fourths (43-3/4) feet to the place of beginning, situated in the County of Adams, in the State of Illinois.

All that part of Lot 3 in Block 44 in John Wood's Addition to the City of Quincy, lying East of a line described as follows: Beginning at a point on the North line of said Block, 2 feet East of the East end of a stone wall on the North line of said Lot 4 in said Block 44, thence running South to a point 2 feet East of the Northeast corner of the kitchen of a dwelling house now situated on the East side of said Lot 4, thence South to a point 2 feet East of the Southeast corner of said kitchen, thence due South to the South line of said Lot 3, being the East 99.2 feet of said Lot 3, situated in the County of Adams, in the State of Illinois.

Lots 9 and 10, and all of Lots 11 and 12 excepting the South 48 feet of Lot 12 and the South 48 feet of the East 61 feet of Lot 11; also all of Lot 14; also Lots 2 and the West 2 feet of Lot 3 and all of Lot 4; all in Block 44 in John Wood's Addition to the City of Quincy, all situated in the County of Adams, in the State of Illinois.

Lot Number Thirteen (13) of Block Forty-four (44) of John Wood's Addition to the City of Quincy, situated in the County of Adams and State of Illinois.

Researchers and writers for this application: Elton Trojniar, 2008 Quincy Preservation Commission summer intern, and members of the Local Landmark Committee listed below.

Local Landmark Committee: Kirby Eber, (Chair) Nathaniel Brooks, Janet Conover, Chuck McClain, Tom Fentem (staff), and Paul Brown (Vice President, Friends of the Castle)

Bibliography:

Bucher, Ward. *Dictionary of Building Preservation*. New York: Preservation Press 1996.
Busen, Jamie. "Villa Fever, Friends of the Castle Celebrated the Almost-Finished Villa Kathrine Project" *Quincy Herald-Whig*. May 30, 1991. p. 4D.
Husar, Edward. "Volunteers' Hard Work Helps Villa Kathrine Shine." *Quincy Herald-Whig*. April, 1991.
Jett, Sharron and Flemming, Jeffrey S. Villa de Kathrine, National Register of Historic Places Inventory. United States Department of the Interior form 10-300. August 26, 1978.
Landrum, Carl. *Quincy Quiz*. [no date]

Larson, Paul. Timeline of the Villa Kathrine. Gardner Museum. c. 1994
Payne, Richard. *Historic Quincy Architecture*. Houston, TX, Herring Press, 1996.
Schweda, Jean and Don. "Villa Kathrine." *Quincy Merchant and Advisor*. [no date].
Storyboards located in the Villa Kathrine.

Please attach photographs with identifying captions of significant exterior features at the end of the application.
(Attached)

OFFICE USE ONLY

Filed at Quincy Preservation Commission Office

Date 4/25/08

Preservation Commission Preliminary Review

Approved ☒ Disapproved ☐ Date 12/02/08

Meeting with Property Owner

Date 12/02/08

Public Hearing

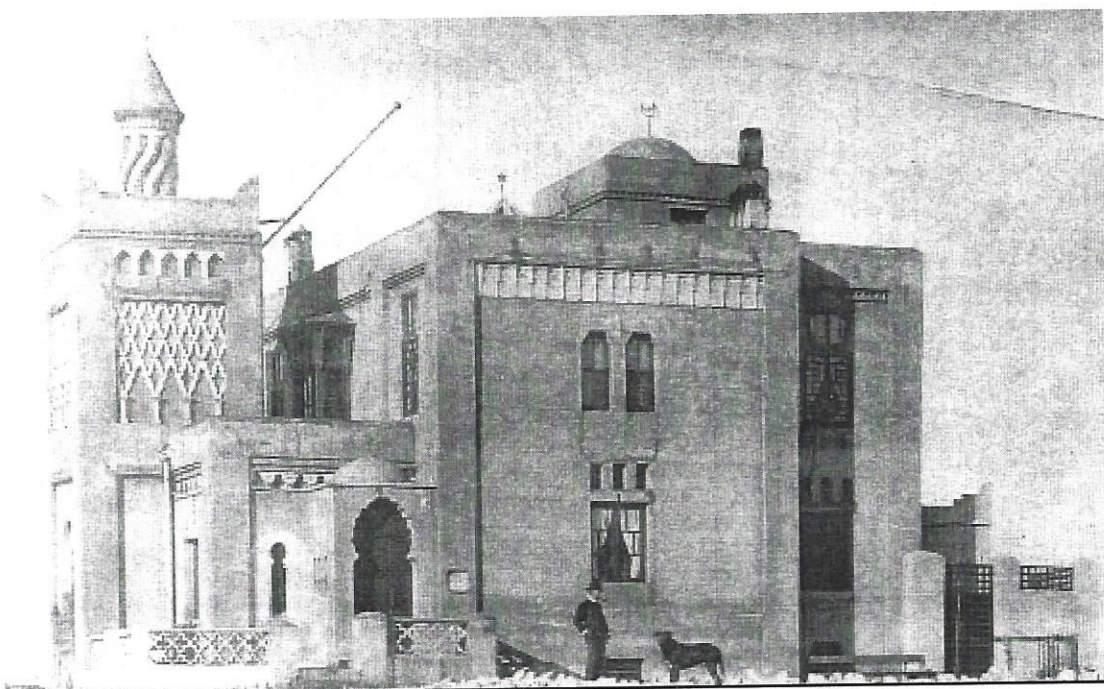
Date Jan. 13, 2009

Preservation Commission Decision
on Recommendation to Designate

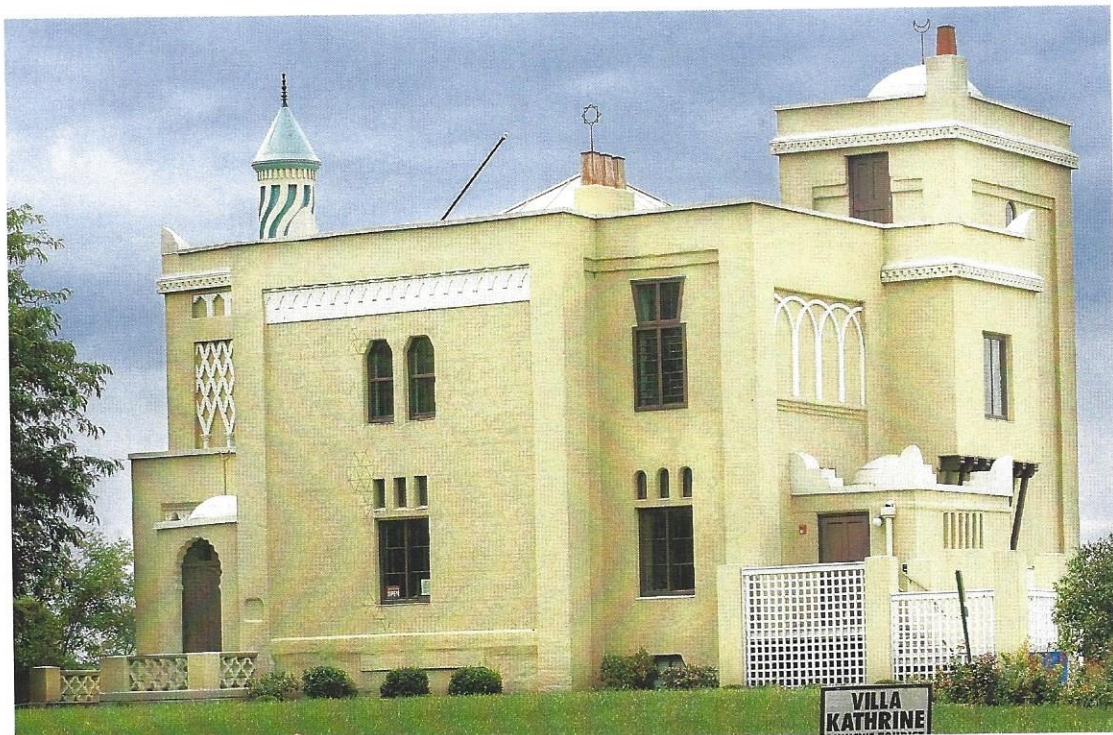
Approved ☒ Disapproved ☐ Date Feb. 23, 2009

City Council Decision on
Designation by Ordinance

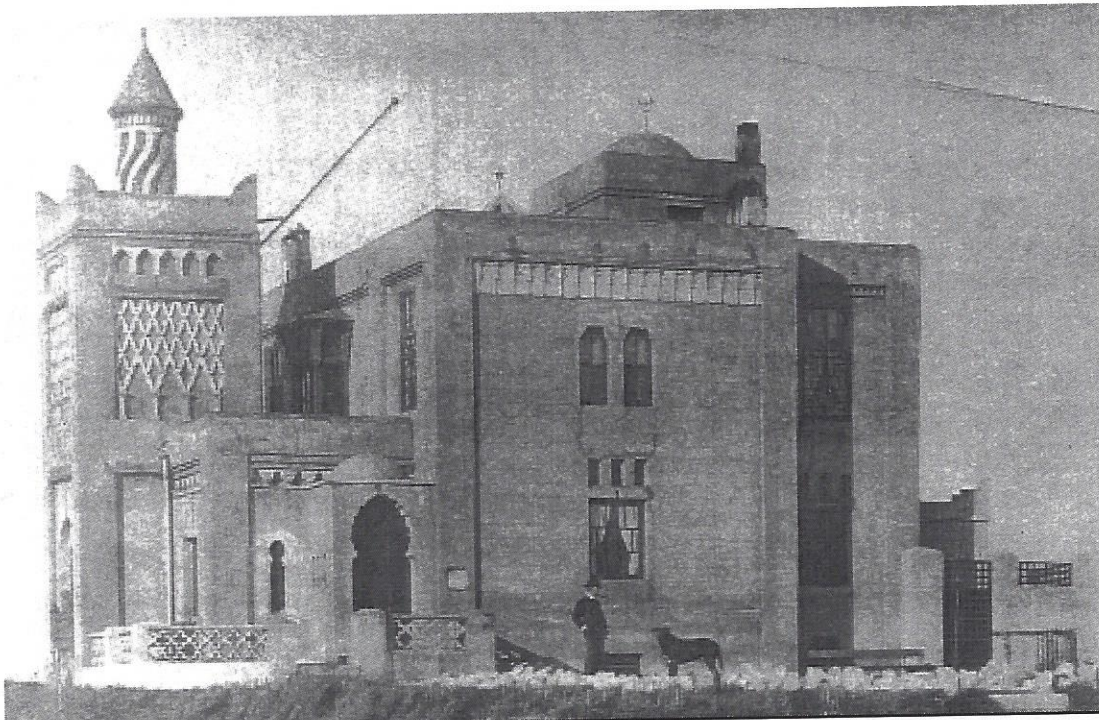
Approved ☒ Disapproved ☐ Date 4/28/09



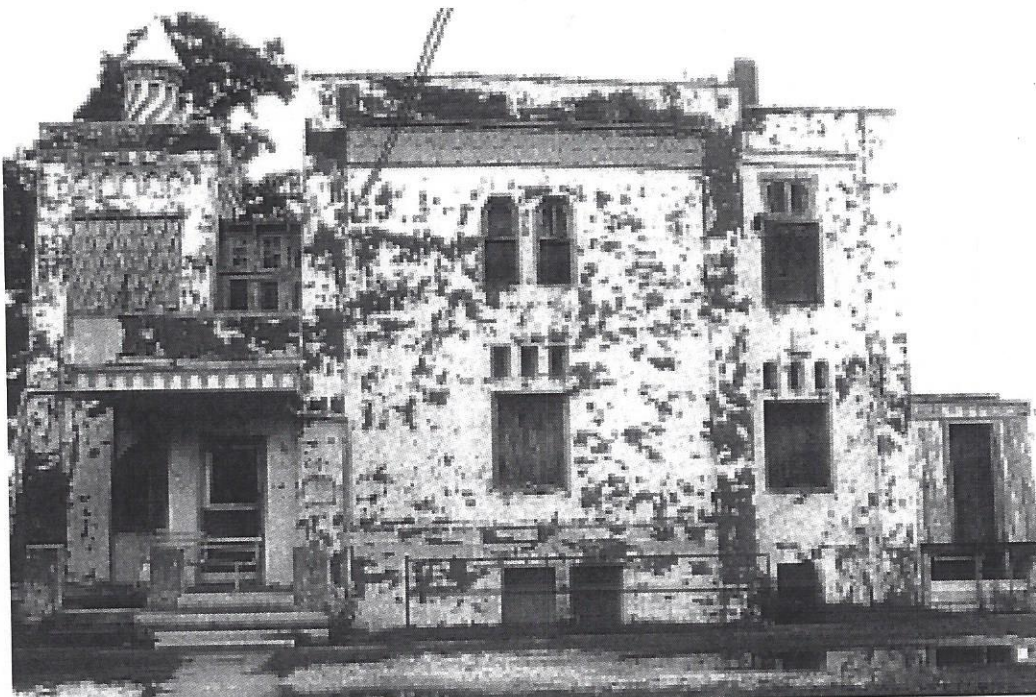
1903 photograph of Villa Kathrine with owner Metz and dog Bingo—east façade.



East Facade—photo by Mike Kipley



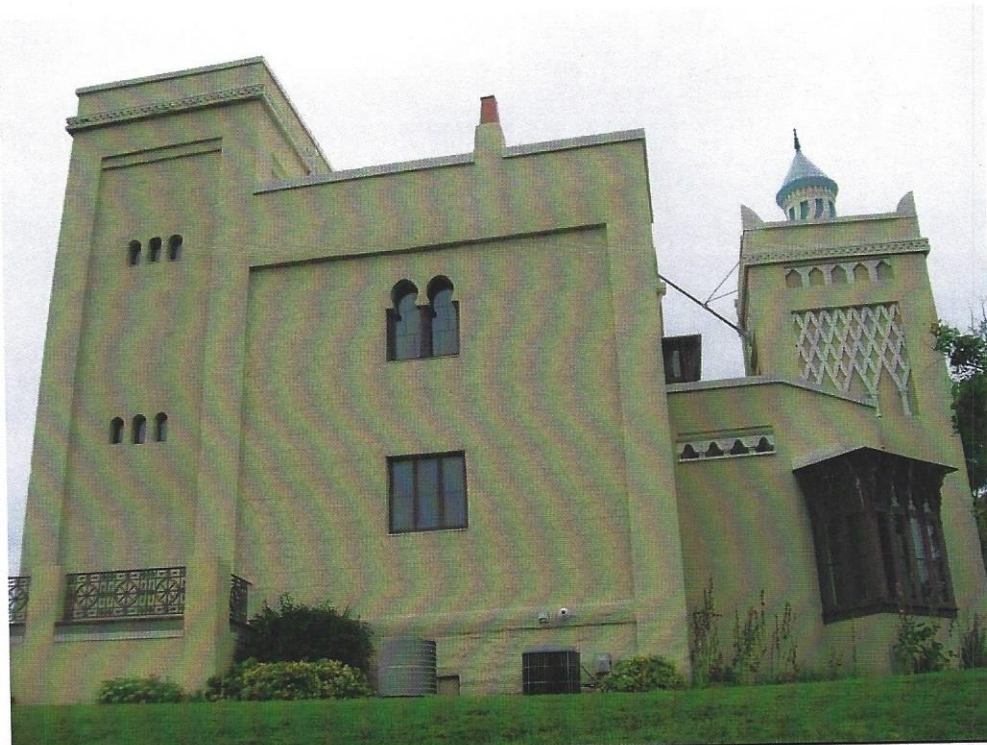
1903 photograph of Villa Kathrine with owner Metz and dog Bingo—east façade.



Mid-twentieth-century photograph of Villa Kathrine in disrepair—east façade.



General view, 2008 -- east façade.



General view, 2008 -- west façade.