

Landmark Designation Request

Benjamin Stewart Home in Madisonville

5540 Madison Rd

Cincinnati, Ohio 45227

Submitted to:

Cincinnati Historic Conservation Office

By: Eric S. Stringer, PLK Communities

For the Benefit of

Madisonville Community Council



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Introduction

Prepared by Eric Stringer of PLK Communities for the Benefit of The Madisonville Community Council, this report represents the findings and recommendations for local Historic Landmark designation of the Stewart Home.

Background

The owner PLK Communities, and Madisonville Community Council have an interest in the preservation of the property for the future. The building is architecturally and historically significant as a good example of The Greek Revival style that contributed to many homes of its era and is a significant structure in the Madison-Stewart Historic District in Cincinnati, OH. The building presently serves as the clubhouse and leasing offices for a townhome development.

Description of Property

Site

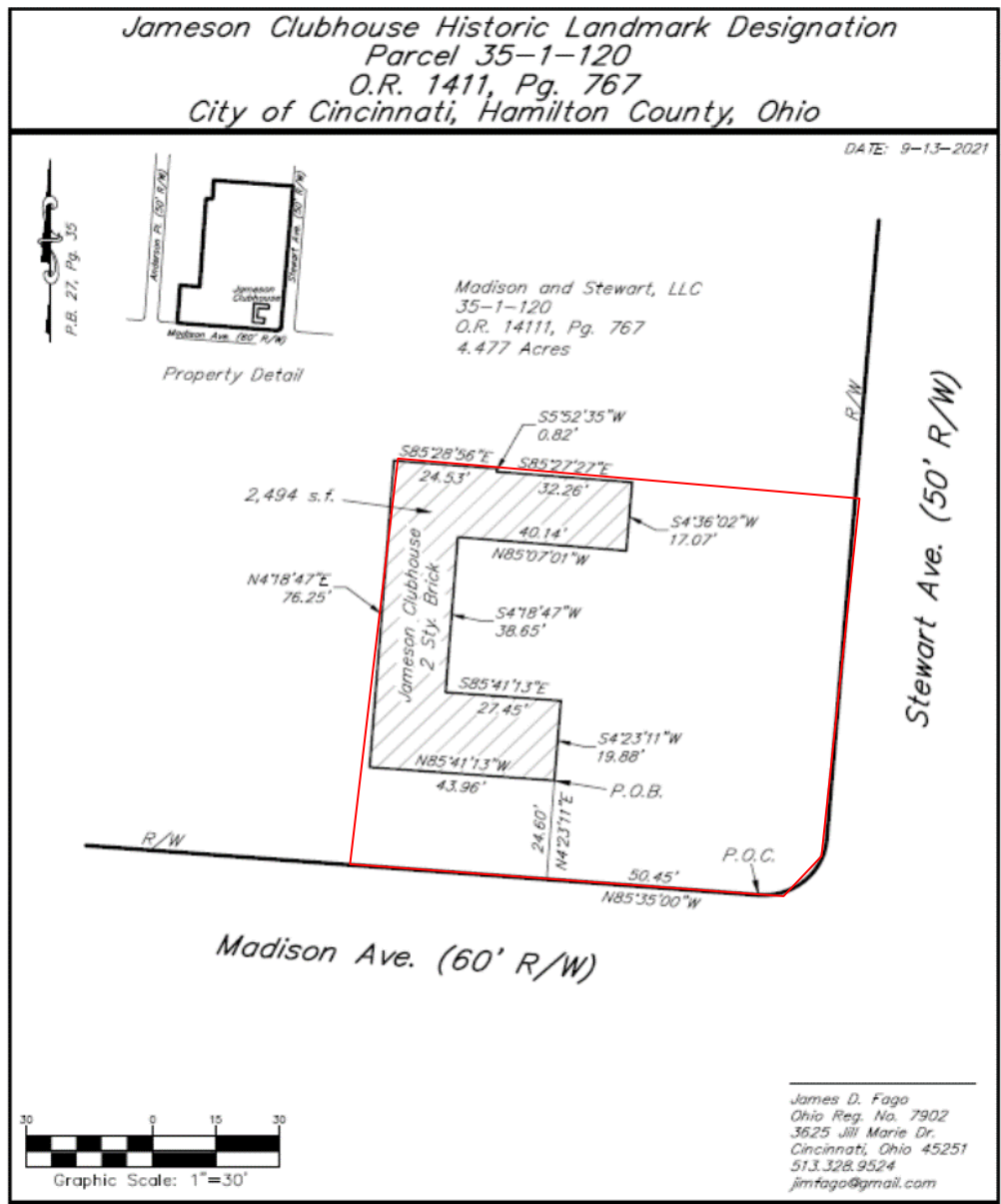
The Benjamin Stewart home at 5540 Madison Road sits along the line of latitude of 39° 09' 40", and line of longitude at 84° 23' 52". The home sits on a site that is 4.447 acres that it shares with multiple multi-family residential dwellings (noncontributing to landmark) that were built between 2020 and 2021.

Legal Description

Situate in Section 16, Town 4, Fractional Range 2, Columbia Township, City of Cincinnati, Hamilton County, Ohio and being part of a tract conveyed to Madison and Stewart, LLC in O.R. 14111, Pg. 767 and being more particularly described as follows:

Commencing at the intersection of the west line Stewart Avenue, 50' R/W and the north line of Madison Avenue, 60' R/W; thence with the north line of said Madison Avenue, North $85^{\circ}35'00''$ West, 50.45 feet to a point; thence leaving said Madison Avenue, North $04^{\circ}23'11''$ East, 24.60 feet to the Place of Beginning; thence with the exterior of the existing Jameson Clubhouse the following ten courses; North $85^{\circ}41'13''$ West, 43.96 feet to a point; thence North $04^{\circ}18'47''$ East, 76.25 feet to a point; thence South $85^{\circ}28'56''$ East, 24.53 feet to a point; thence South $05^{\circ}52'35''$ West, 0.82 feet to a point; thence South $85^{\circ}27'27''$ East, 32.26 feet to a point; thence South $04^{\circ}36'02''$ West, 17.07 feet to a point; thence North $85^{\circ}07'01''$ West, 40.14 feet to a point; thence South $04^{\circ}18'47''$ West, 38.65 feet to a point; thence South $85^{\circ}41'13''$ East, 27.45 feet to a point; thence South $04^{\circ}23'11''$ West, 19.88 feet to the Place of Beginning. Containing 2,494 square feet of land more or less. Bearings based on P.B. 27, Page 35 H.C.R.O.. Subject to all legal highways, easements and restrictions of record. This description is based on a survey performed under the direction of James D. Fago, Ohio Reg. No. 7902.

Map Showing Designation Boundaries (See Below)



Boundary

The home is identified as parcel 035-1-120 of the Hamilton County Auditors Records. The historic home is set on the corner of Madison Road and Stewart Ave as the eastern boundary. Anderson Place is the next street to the west and Chandler Street is to the north.

Justification of Boundary

The above-listed parcel is both the original and legally recorded boundary line for the property for which designation is being requested. The building occupies the parcel and the parcel designated for Landmark Designation is for the Stewart home only and no other structures.

Setting

Located on the northwest corner of Madison Road and Stewart Avenue in Madisonville, the Benjamin Stewart home sits prominently on a small slope, roughly 15 feet from the street front. In its historic setting, the home may have been surrounded by similar residential dwellings and tucked away from the busy streets of downtown, but today Madison Road is a thoroughfare for commuters moving between Cincinnati's various neighborhoods and many businesses operate within a short vicinity of the property. Today, such businesses include MedPace, a publicly traded company with 2,800 employees, as well as a multitude of independent shops and restaurants.

Statement of Significance

The Benjamin Stewart home according to one source, was built in 1833 from lumber that Stewart had floated down the Ohio River on flatboats¹. However, it should be stated that this is a legend, as the deeds indicate that Stewart bought the land in 1844 from Jonathan Ward. Jonathan Ward bought the property from the state in 1837 and the house was built between 1837-1844 when the property was sold to Benjamin Stewart. The house is a two and a half story American bond brick building with an L-shaped floor plan. Constructed in the Greek Revival Style, this home is one of the oldest standing examples of this type of architecture in the district.

The Madison-Stewart District was designated by the National Register of Historic Places on May 29, 1975 (No. 75001419). The Stewart home sites prominently on the intersection of Stewart and Madison Road and is representative of an iconic architectural style as well as an anchor building to the historic district. Benjamin Stewart became a successful businessman in Cincinnati via his lumber enterprise and the home is on land that has been inhabited by Jonathon Ward, the grandson of Madisonville's first settler, Joseph Ward.

According to CZC 1435-07-1 (2) the home is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past and, (3) the Stewart home embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction (Greek Revival) that represents a significant and distinguishable entity. The request for Historic Landmark designation of the Stewart home also is consistent with the desire to have a prominent structure represented. The style of the home, as well said historic ownership, combine and fulfill the requirements to have such a building landmarked and to avoid the loss or demolition of the structure.

¹Busald, Ruth Ann, et. Al., *Images of America: Madisonville*, Charleston, Arcadia Publishers, 2012.

Historical Significance

The designation of the Madison-Stewart district in 1975 reflects the desire and need to highlight and preserve our city's rich architectural and cultural landmarks. This home requested for Historic Landmark status has the attributes of not only reflecting a culturally significant style of building (Greek Revival), but also of a descendant of both the Revolutionary War and Madisonville's first permanent resident. Madisonville, named in honor of President Madison, was a settlement to the north of Columbia, where some settlers left due to being in a flood zone in the early 19th century. The Madison-Stewart district derives its name from Benjamin Stewart, whose residence being the most prominent in the district, as well as President Madison.

The first permanent settler of Madisonville was Joseph Ward. He and his three eldest sons were soldiers in the patriot army during the Revolutionary War. Born in New Jersey in 1784, Ward emigrated from New Jersey to Ohio in 1797. Originally, Ward arrived in the settlement of Columbia, but due to the flooding of the area, moved to a plot of land of what is now the neighborhood of Madisonville.

Joseph Ward and his two sons Nehemiah and Amos were granted land to them by the government for their services in the Revolutionary War. In all, Joseph and his wife Phebe had 9 children. Joseph Ward's grandson, Jonathan, would eventually live on the property that is the site of the Stewart home. According to records, the property would have been sold by Jonathan to Benjamin Stewart in 1844.

Benjamin Stewart, to whom the home is named after, was a prominent businessman of Madisonville. Stewart made a living from lumber, which is potentially where the legend that he made the home on Madison and Stewart from lumber he floated down the river. Stewart's daughter Sarah and his son in law James White, would also live in the home. The home would have a descendent of Benjamin Stewart living in it until the 1940's.

The Ward family extends back to the very beginning of Madisonville, and the home on Stewart and Madison Road is fully renovated and stands as a prominent fixture to this historic district. In 1911 the City of Cincinnati annexed the neighborhood of Madisonville and now Madisonville is one of fifty-two neighborhoods in the city, being situated to the east of the neighborhood of Oakley on the east side of the city.

Architectural Significance

The Benjamin Stewart home has been characterized as being Greek Revival. The move from Georgian-Colonial style homes was an intended move and the early 19th century settlers wanted an architectural style that was distinct from their British ancestors. The Stewart home exemplifies the characteristics of Greek revival style in that it is constructed with several features such as columns to mimic marble, entablatures, trim between roof and columns, pilasters, and a covered front porch.

From the 1820's to 1860's, homes were being built in the Greek Revival style. Typical features included a gabled and/or low pitch roof, entry porch supported by square or round prominent columns. Greek Revival architecture was favored for its elegant yet simplistic style. One of the first published works on this style of architecture was James Stuart's *Antiquities of Athens and Other Monuments of Greece*, in 1762. Architects drew inspiration from the temples found throughout Greece and Italy and began incorporating these design features into their own buildings. The style would be referred to as the national style due to its popularity as a symbol of Democracy.

The features of the Benjamin Stewart home include the low-pitched roof as well as the Doric columns on the front porch and entryway. Another element that the home features are the multi paneled windows. The building was constructed in an L shape, and the chimneys were placed on the side and in the back of the building. Greek temples are usually built from marble or stone, so to replicate the light color, the wooden finishes would have been painted white due to the lack of resources to make homes from marble. The Stewart home also incorporates the use of entablatures at the roof trim. The entablature is the band of trim at the base of the roof.

While many homes built in the Greek Revival style have rather grand or large porticos, the Stewart house was built with a more modest portico, giving the home a refined yet modest look. The columns on the portico similarly were not built above the second story but were below the window trim line of the second story. The Doric columns similarly were the more simplistic of the three traditional styles: Doric, Ionian, and Corinthian.

Planning Considerations

Consistency with CZC Chapter 1435, Historic Preservation

The designation of the Stewart home meets the requirements of chapter 1435-07-1, a site of Historic Significance and chapter 1435-03, of the Cincinnati Zoning Code (Historic Conservation),

“To safeguard the heritage of the city by preserving districts and landmarks which reflect elements of its history, architecture and archeology, engineering or culture”

The documentation in this designation report provides conclusive evidence that all the required findings may be made for the proposed designation.

Research Methodology

Research was conducted using various sources, both on-line and hard copy. Sources include the National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, the book *Images of America: Madisonville*, as well the Hamilton County Auditor and Recorder for deed and plat research.

References

Records of the Hamilton County Auditor and Recorder.

Editorial Staff State History Publications, *Ohio Historic Places Dictionary, Volume 2.*, Ohio: Native American Books, 2008.

Busald, Ruth Ann, et. Al., *Images of America: Madisonville*, Charleston: Arcadia Publishers, 2012.

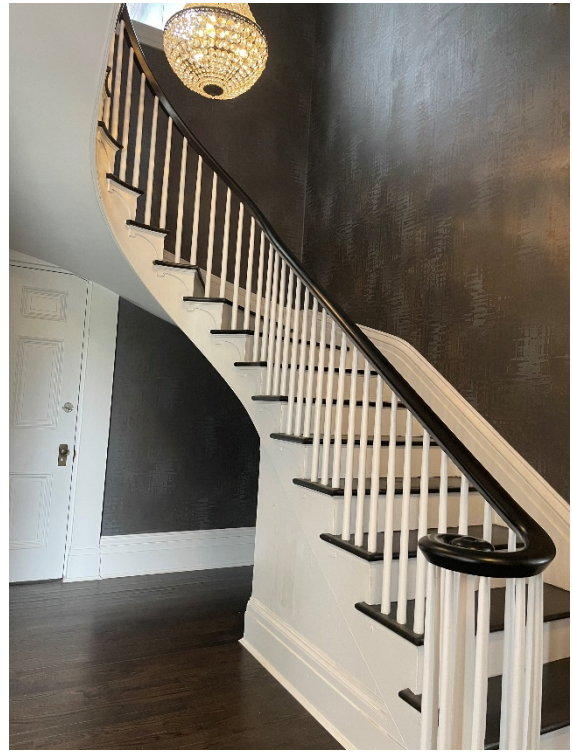
The National Register of Historic Places, Volume 2. Berkeley: United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, 1976.

Recent Interior and Exterior Renovations

Exterior Remodeled in 2020



Original Staircase in foyer



Courtyard (East Facing)



Exterior Rear Entrance



Upstairs room with original fireplace and support beams.



Original hardwood floors restored in upstairs room, currently serves as guest lounge and co-working space for residents.



Original fireplace restored and redesigned in guest lounge.





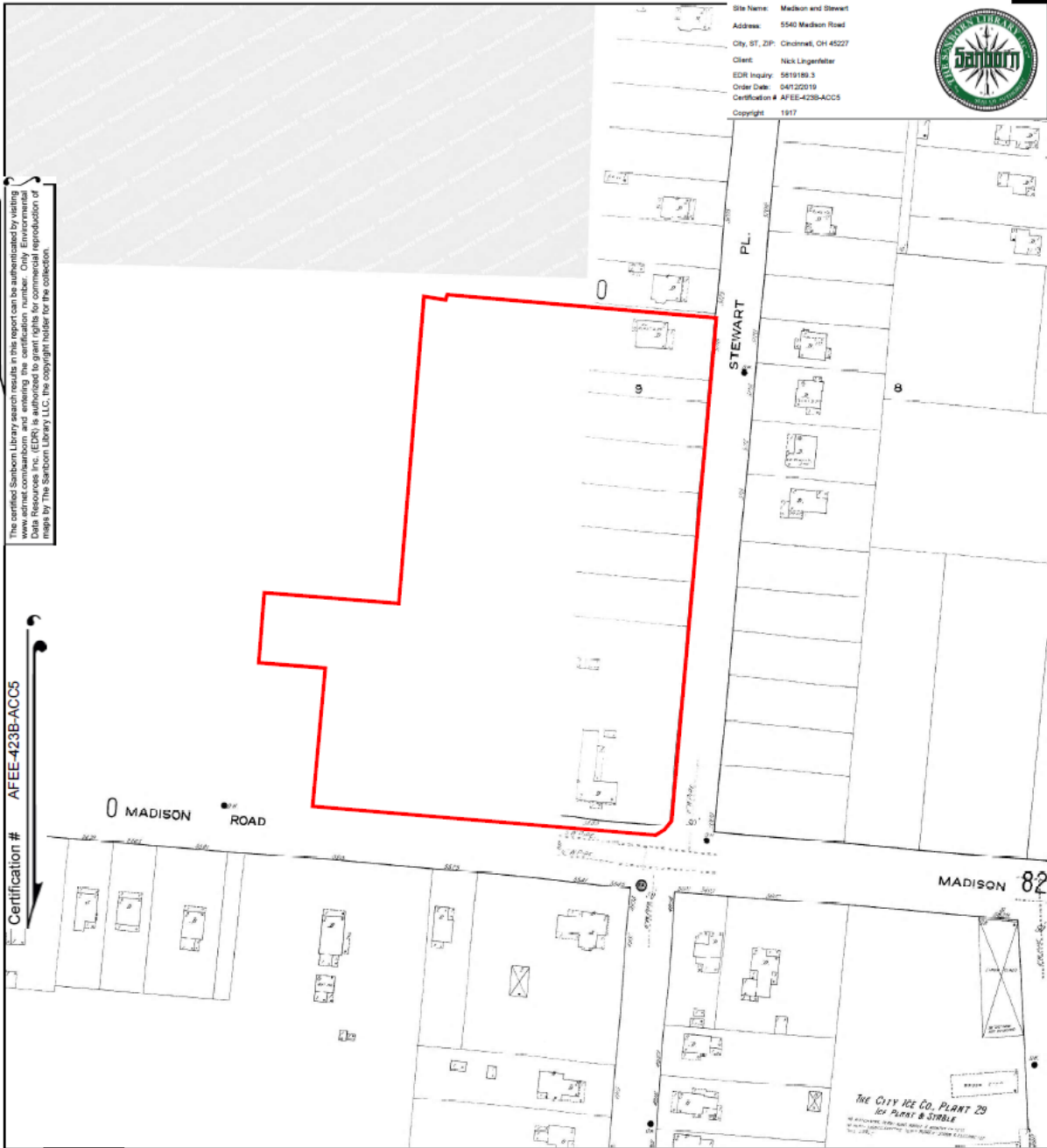
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1917

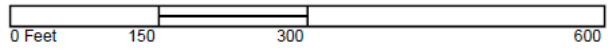
Site Name: Madison and Stewart
 Address: 5540 Madison Road
 City, ST, ZIP: Cincinnati, OH 45227
 Client: Nick Lingerfeller
 EDR Inquiry: 5619180.3
 Order Date: 04/22/2019
 Certification # AFEE-423B-ACC5
 Copyright: 1917



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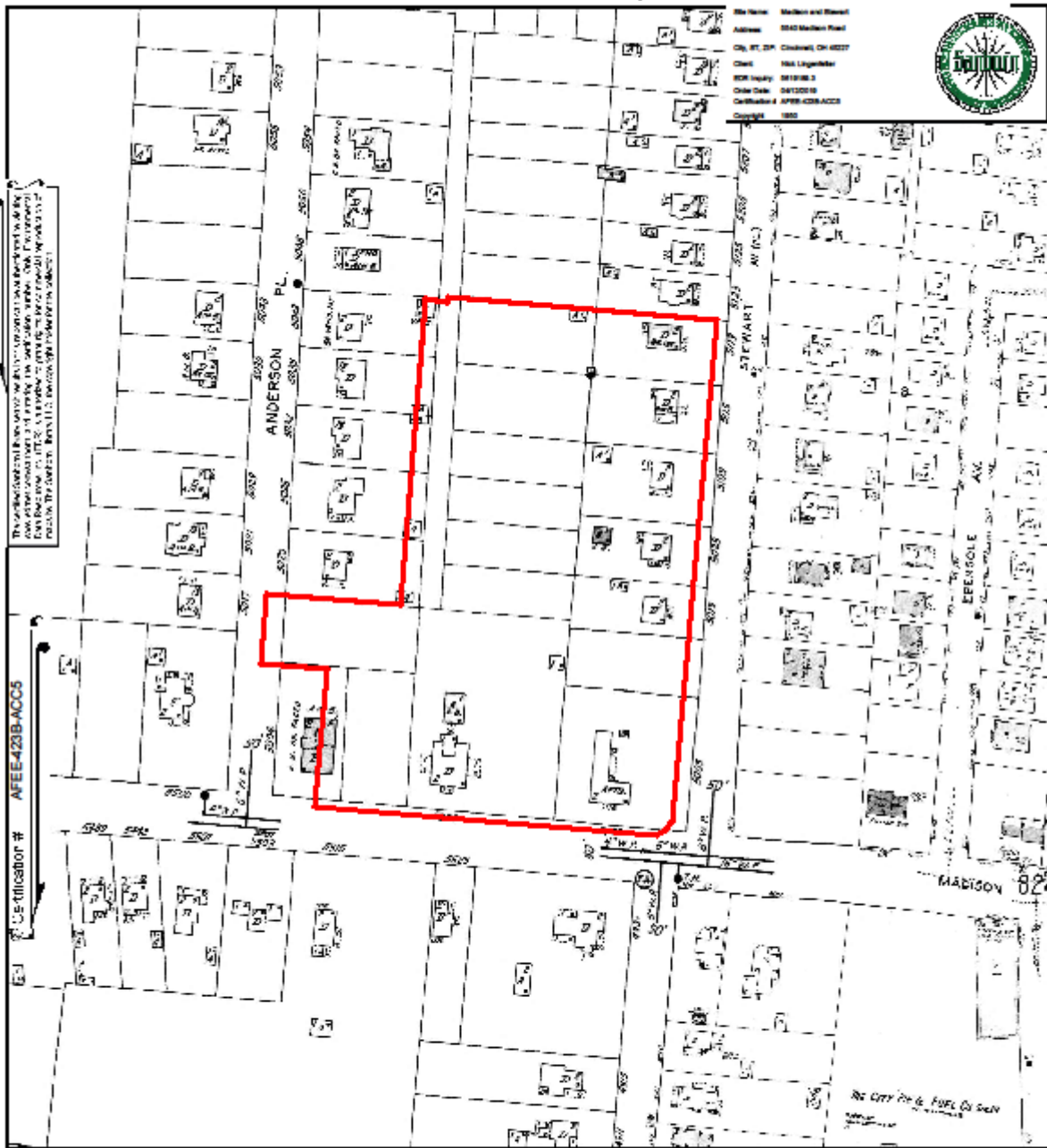
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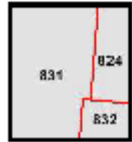


Certified Sanborn® Map

1950

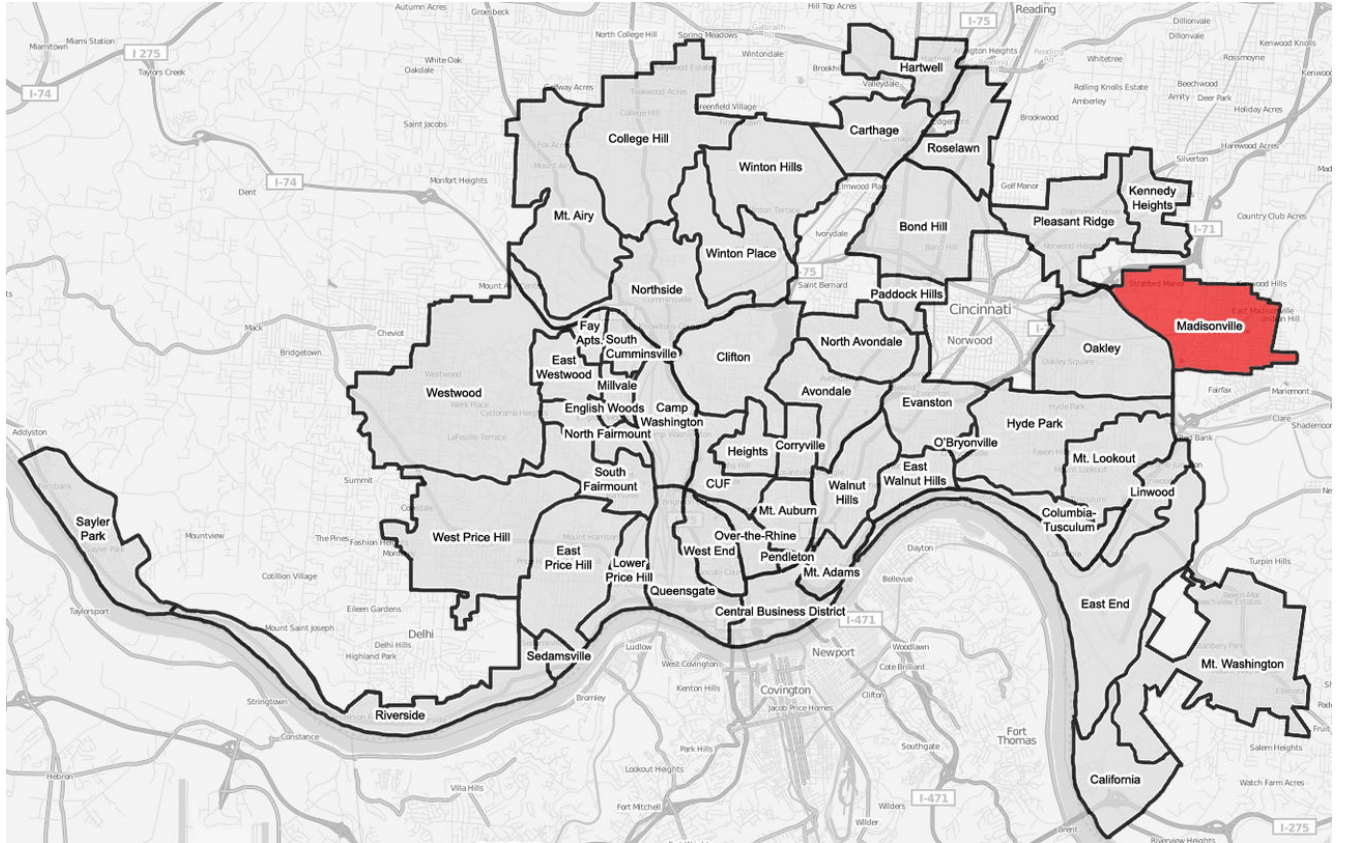


This Certified Sanborn Map combines the following sheets.
 Outlined areas indicate map sheets within the collection.



Volume 9, Sheet 832
 Volume 9, Sheet 831
 Volume 9, Sheet 824

Neighborhood of Madisonville, Cincinnati, OH



Madison-Stewart Historic District

Benjamin Stewart home located at 5540 Madison Road

Latitude 39° 09' 40", Longitude 84° 23' 52"

