



**CITY OF LA CROSSE  
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Historic Landmark Nomination Form

**1. What is the historic name of the Landmark or Landmark District?**

John Torrance House

**2. What is the current name of the Landmark or Landmark District?(If applicable)**

Same as above

**3. Property Address:** 726 Cameron Avenue

**4. OWNERSHIP**

- a. Owner(s): Matthew & Margaret Dubois  
b. Street: 726 Cameron Avenue  
c. City, State, Zip Code: La Crosse WI 54601 Phone: (608) 387-6611  
d. Email: dubois.marge@iclad.com Parcel ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. NOMINATED BY (If different):**

- a. Name: Same as above  
b. Street: \_\_\_\_\_  
c. City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
d. Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**6. CLASSIFICATION AND USE (Check all that apply):**

**Proposed Designation** (choose one)

☐ Landmark District

☒ Landmark

If it is a Landmark, choose a category (definitions can be found on the instructions page)

☒ Historic Structure

☐ Historic Site

☐ Historic Object

**Present Use**

☐ Agriculture

☐ Industrial

☐ Religious

☐ Commercial

☐ Military

☐ Scientific

☐ Educational

☐ Museum

☐ Transportation

☐ Entertainment

☐ Park

☐ Government

☒ Private Residence(s) ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Condition:**

☒ Excellent                      ☐ Deteriorated  
☐ Good                              ☐ Ruins  
☐ Fair                                ☐ Other

**Has the property been nominated previously?** ☐ Yes ☒ No

When? N/A

What was the outcome? N/A

**Is the proposed Landmark or District on the National Register?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

When? Eligible for National Register

**7. SIGNIFICANCE:**

Section 20.90 of the *Municipal Code of Ordinances* lists 4 criteria that a district, site, structure or object may be designated under.

**Please check one or more of the listed criteria that apply to this Property:**

☒ Associated with events or person(s) who have made a significant contribution to the history, heritage, or culture of the City of La Crosse, the County of La Crosse, the State of Wisconsin, or the United States.

☒ It embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period, style or method of construction or of indigenous material or craftsmanship.

☒ It is representative of the notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual work is significant in the development of the City of La Crosse, the County of La Crosse, the State of Wisconsin, or the United States.

☐ It exemplifies or reflects the broad cultural, political, economic or social history of the nation, state, or community.

**8. HISTORIC OVERVIEW/ANALYSIS** (See attached instructions for analysis outline):

**Please attach the analysis as a separate document containing the following sections:**

**A. Existing Physical Description**

- a. Write a physical description of the nominated property or district in its current state.
- b. If it has been altered over time, indicate the date(s) and nature of the alterations.
- c. Include additional information as applicable.

**B. Narrative History**

- a. Provide a complete narrative history of the district, structure, site, or object.
- b. If known, include the year it was built, the architecture style, and the name of the architect or builder.
- c. Include references to source material that are listed in the bibliography.

**C. Additional Information**

- a. Include any additional information that helps support the claim of criteria (Section 7) made in this document; or is otherwise deemed useful for the purposes of evaluation.

**D. Bibliography**

- a. Include a list of all sources consulted.
- b. Include copies of relevant source materials with the nomination form.

**9. PHOTOGRAPHS:**

Include photos, as applicable, of the nominated district, structure, site, or object as follows:

**A. Current photographs**


- a. Exterior photographs are required.
- b. Interior photographs if available and relevant to its historic significance.

**B. Historic photographs**

- a. Interior and exterior if available.

Each photograph must be labeled with the street address of the building(s) and the month and year the photograph was taken.

Designation of property will require affixing a plaque to said property and that the plaque will be the sole property of the City of La Crosse. Signature of the property owner assures the Heritage Preservation Commission that designation and installation of a plaque are supported.



Signature of Property Owner

1-15-2020

Date

Same as above

Signature of Nominator

Date

When completed, submit application to the City of La Crosse Planning Department, 400 La Crosse Street, La Crosse WI.

**PLEASE NOTE:** It is the responsibility of the nominator to provide the Heritage Preservation Commission and its Staff with information sufficient to fairly evaluate the nomination. **Incomplete nomination forms will not be accepted.** A fee, in the amount stated in the Schedule of Fees and Licenses table in Section 25.01 of the Municipal Code, must be included.

## City of La Crosse - Heritage Preservation Commission

### Historic Landmark Nomination Form

726 Cameron Avenue - John Torrance House

#### Historic Overview/Analysis

##### **A. Existing Physical Description**

This two-story Queen Ann influenced frame house on a raised stone basement has a hipped roof with a pediment gable broken by a smaller gable extending to the front of the house. A chambered corner, roof dormers, a spindle porch supported by turned posts, stained glass, and stylized floral window aprons contribute to the irregularity of form and surface typically found in the Queen Anne Revival style.

##### **B. Narrative History**

The Intensive Survey Report of August 1984 determined the Torrance House property to have architectural merit and is associated with important La Crosse historic events and figures. Of notable importance associated with the city of La Crosse is John Torrance, who was one of the typical industrialists of La Crosse during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He was employed until 1862 in a local foundry, then began his own foundry business with Archibald Gould. In 1856 his shop burned, and he took positions in several other small foundries until 1876, when he and his son established the Torrance Foundry. John Torrance was the son of William Torrance. William was a man of considerable popularity in La Crosse and had been particularly active in public life. He served La Crosse as an alderman from 1892 to 1898 and as mayor from 1903 to 1907.

Designed by Schnick and Stoltze in the late 1880's and constructed in 1890, the John Torrance House, is one of 93 houses identified as potentially eligible for or listed in the National Register of Historic Places, 18 are Queen Anne styled residences. The most outstanding feature of this house is undoubtedly the elegant woodwork throughout the entire house, which includes the china cabinet, fireplace and stair railings. Hardwood floors (red oak, maple, chestnut and walnut) are throughout the first and second floors. Three grand pocket doors separate three large rooms on the first floor. Other original amenities include an original hand water pump and an old-style icebox.

The Classical Revival influenced porch of this house probably was added in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The current owners of the Torrance House, only the third owners in its entire history, removed the concrete porch floor and replaced it with wood.

### C. Additional Information

In 2016 the Torrance House was twice recognized by the Preservation Alliance of La Crosse (PAL) because of the property's remarkable architectural characteristics and historic significance to the Coulee Region. PAL exists for the purpose of promoting appreciation for and preservation of historically significant places in the heart of Wisconsin along the banks of the Mississippi River in west central Wisconsin.

Each year, PAL presents the prestigious ***Heritage Preservation Award*** to those in our community who have demonstrated exceptional efforts in historic preservation. Recognizing the extensive restorative work done by the current owners on the Torrance House, they were presented the PAL ***Heritage Preservation Award*** in appreciation for exceptional contributions and effort in the recognition, preservation, and use of the La Crosse area's historical and architectural heritage on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016.

Since 2003 PAL has sponsored the ***La Crosse Heritage Home Tour***. This tour provides La Crosse residents and visitors an opportunity to see the interiors of some of La Crosse's most interesting and beautiful old and historic homes. In 2016 the Torrance House was chosen among four homes to be showcased during the Heritage Home Tour because of its historical and architectural significance to the La Crosse area.

### Bibliography

The Torrance House, Historical La Crosse Architecture, by; Robert E. Russ, June 14, 1977

La Crosse Atlas, 1930

La Crosse City Tax Records, 1857-1918

La Crosse City Directory, 1870-1918

La Crosse Fire Insurance Maps, by; Sandorn

History of Wisconsin, volume 5, by; Usher

History of La Crosse County, by; Chicago Western Historical Company

Old Papers owned by; Mrs. Wynonna Murry (once owner)