

HISTORIC ILLINOIS BUILDINGS SURVEY

HERMAN H. FRANZEN HOUSE

HIBS DU-2023-1

Location: The Franzen House is situated at 125 W. Orchard Street in Itasca, Illinois. The property is comprised of Lots 8 and 9 in Block 15 in the Original Town of Itasca, a Subdivision of the South Half of the Northwest Quarter of Section 8, Township 40 North, Range 11, East of the Third Principal Meridian, according to the Plat Thereof, recorded June 19, 1874, as Document 18384, in Addison Township, DuPage County, Illinois.

USGS Quadrangle: DuPage

Present Owner: Holladay Properties

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: The Herman H. Franzen House, built in 1902, is an excellent example of the Queen Anne style and exhibits many of its hallmarks, including a vertical silhouette, irregular massing, and a steeply pitched, cross-gable roofline with overhanging eaves. The wall planes—sheathed in both wood clapboard and scalloped wood shingles—feature full-height, projecting gable pavilions on three elevations, one of which is graced by a Palladian window. A full-façade, wraparound wood porch with rounded corners and Doric columns contributes to the picturesque appearance of the former residence, as does its polygonal turret with conical roof. Tall one-over-one wood sash windows flood the interior with light. The interior of the Franzen House exemplifies the Queen Anne style in terms of its plan and decorative elements. The residence features a formal entrance hall with a grand oak reverse-flight staircase, wood moldings, wood panel doors, two sets of pocket doors, and a decorative fireplace.

The house was built in 1902 for Herman H. Franzen, a prominent local banker, who lived here with his family, and later, his son Elmer's family, until 1953. It was converted to office use in the 1980s and received a two-story rear addition in 2000.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of construction: 1902¹

2. Architect: Unknown

3. Original plans and construction

The two-story Franzen House was built in 1902 as an excellent example of the Queen Anne style, featuring a steeply pitched, cross-gable roofline with overhanging eaves; asymmetrical massing; and a full-façade, wraparound wood porch with rounded corners and Doric columns. The exterior of the house was sheathed in wood clapboard and scalloped wood shingles. The house had full-height, projecting gable pavilions with attic-level pediments on its east, west, and south sides, and a polygonal turret with conical roof on its southwest corner. Three exterior wood doors were accessed from the wraparound porch. Fenestration was comprised of tall, one-over-one windows that were arranged alone, and all had wood casings. The south (front) façade has a large picture window with leaded glass transom on the first floor and a Palladian window in its gable end.

The interior of the house featured an entrance hall with a grand, reverse-flight oak staircase with square newell posts and incised detailing; wood balustrades with an open lattice-work design; and wood trim featuring a wave-scroll motif. A secondary stairwell with a narrow, wooden stairway was situated near the center of the floor plan and connected the original kitchen with the second-floor hallway. The flooring throughout the house was comprised of wood, and the walls and ceilings were finished with plaster. Rooms featured wood paneled doors with decorative metal hinges, wood baseboards, and crown molding. The front parlor featured a fireplace with marble surround, and oak mantle and Ionic columns. The northernmost room of the house presumably served as the original kitchen. The second floor had an L-shaped hallway opening onto various bedrooms.

4. Alterations and additions

The exterior of the original, 1902 house retains excellent integrity, featuring its original massing, roofline, sheathing of wood clapboard and scalloped

¹ The Village of Itasca does not have an original building permit on file for this house, according to the results of a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. The year of construction was obtained from a book titled, *The Franzen-Mensching Heritage: Itasca History through Audrey's Story* (Privately Published, 2008), by Gerald A. Danzer, a Franzen family descendant, who had access to original family documentation.

wood shingles, full-height, projecting gable pavilions with attic-level pediments, a polygonal turret with conical roof, wraparound wood porch with Doric columns, and door and fenestration pattern.

Interior changes include the removal of all fixtures and cabinets in the original kitchen, alterations of all original bathrooms, removal of all original lighting fixtures, and the installation of baseboard heating units. All wood moldings have been painted white. The striped wood flooring in office 2 appears to be non-original. The second-floor plan has been greatly altered with original bedrooms subdivided into a myriad of offices with partition walls comprised of gypsum board or drywall.

A two-story addition was constructed on the north end of the house in 2000, which was internally connected to the original, 1902 house. The addition is sympathetic to the character of the original house, featuring a similar gable roofline, wood clapboard siding, and similar one-over-one windows with wood casings.

B. Historical Context

1. Overview History of Itasca

Itasca is a village in the Chicago metropolitan area, located approximately 21 miles northwest of downtown Chicago. It is situated in Addison Township, which occupies the northeastern corner of DuPage County near O'Hare International Airport. Itasca is bordered by the villages of Elk Grove Village on the north, Wood Dale on the east, Roselle on the northwest, and by unincorporated DuPage County on the west and south. Irving Park Road and the Metra train tracks bisect the community in a diagonal direction, running southeast-northwest.

Itasca was settled by Boston native and medical doctor Elijah Smith, who arrived in DuPage County in 1841, following a quest to find an appropriate site for his practice, while farming and raising a family. He found rich soil and a tree-lined creek to start his farm. He also became aware that enough settlers had moved into the area to make his medical practice a success. Receiving title to 80 acres of land in 1843 and an additional 80 acres in 1845, Smith built a house and established a dairy business. In 1846 a post office named Bremen was established. Later renamed Pierce, the town became known as Sagone in 1864. In 1873 the name changed again, first in error to Ithica and finally to Itasca.²

² John Fridlund (Ed.). *The History of Itasca: Centennial Edition* (Itasca, Ill.: Itasca Historical Society, 1990) 9-12.

In 1873 the Chicago & Pacific Railroad, later the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul, established a line through Itasca. Smith donated land for the railroad's right-of-way and money to construct the station. Near the station he divided 80 acres of his land into lots. Itasca remained primarily rural and did not incorporate as a Village until 1890. Many early residents were German-speaking and residential development clustered near the depot and the railroad tracks.³

In 1900, the village population stood at 256. More residents began commuting to Chicago in the early twentieth century and subdivisions replaced farms. The dairy industry—including the production of milk, cheese, and butter—remained a large part of the community's economy through the early decades of the twentieth century. In 1940, the population had only increased to 787.⁴

Itasca began to transform as a suburb of Chicago during the 1950s. The village soon expanded its acreage through annexations, and it rezoned agricultural land for commercial and industrial uses, hotels, apartment complexes, and for residential subdivisions filled with ranch and split-level type homes. Its population nearly tripled between 1950 and 1970, rising from 1,274 to 4,638.⁵

Post-World War II development was spurred by the establishment and expansion of O'Hare International Airport, as well as proximity to toll roads and expressways. Itasca and other northwest suburbs became prime job centers, especially for manufacturing and warehousing, as such companies preferred their cheaper land, lower taxes, and easy access to highway interchanges in comparison to the sites in Chicago they had left behind. Rural areas in DuPage County also offered large, undeveloped parcels for the construction of sprawling, one-story factories, and warehouses with room for expansion.

The Central Manufacturing District established an industrial park on a 400-acre tract on the west side of the village during the 1960s, which was soon filled with national companies such as Continental Can. The Itasca Industrial Park was created on the eastern periphery of the village in 1970, attracting many additional industries. In 1969, Carson Pirie Scott purchased Nordic Hills

³ Ibid, 19-21.

⁴ U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1900 and 1940.

⁵ U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1950 and 1970.

Country Club, located southwest of Itasca, and built two 10-story hotels adjacent to the eighteen-hole golf course. The Carson Inn/Nordic Hills facility was annexed to the village in 1973 and is today known as the Eaglewood Resort. Other large developments of this era included Hamilton Lakes, which by the early 1980s featured a 420-room Stouffer Hotel and a ten-story office building on Itasca's northwestern edge.⁶

Itasca adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 1942, which was amended in 1959, 1979, and 1993. Such plans recognized the importance of preserving green space as the community's fringes filled with industrial and commercial growth. In 1966, the Village purchased 60 acres of land south of Irving Park Road to create a green belt area that became the site of the Spring Brook Nature Center.⁷

Itasca's historic downtown near the Metra station—where the Franzen House is located—has experienced redevelopment since the 1990s. The Village of Itasca's 2015 Comprehensive Plan “establishes a long-range vision for the community to maintain and enhance the existing neighborhoods and commercial areas including Downtown, the Rohlwing Road Corridor and Hamilton Lakes.”⁸ Itasca's population in 2020 stood at 9,543.⁹

2. Original Owner Herman H. Franzen and his son, Elmer Franzen

The Queen Anne style house at 125 W. Orchard Street was commissioned by Herman H. Franzen (1868-1959), a prosperous local banker who was a member of a pioneering family in DuPage County. His grandfather and namesake, Herman Bernard Henrich Franzen (1772-1844), known as Barney, emigrated from Westphalia, a region in Germany, to the United States in 1834. He arrived in Baltimore with his second wife, Fenne (Elfring) Franzen and six children, four boys and two girls. The family soon made their way westward, stopping briefly in Cincinnati where Fenne Frazen died in 1835. Barney Franzen and his children arrived in Chicago later in 1835 and remained until 1837 when Barney had saved enough money to purchase 160 acres in Section 14 of Addison Township in DuPage County from the Government Land Office. He established a farm on his property, which was later bisected by Church Road and located just west of the future town of Bensenville.¹⁰

⁶ Joyce M. Usher, “Itasca,” in: *DuPage Roots*. In: <https://dupagehistory.org/dupage-roots/itasca/>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Village of Itasca. *2015 Comprehensive Plan, Adopted July 7, 2015*: 5.

⁹ U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2020.

¹⁰ Danzer, 1-2.

Barney Franzen died in 1844 and his son, John Henry Franzen (1813-1893), subsequently took over the family farm. In 1847 John Henry started the Franzen flax seed mill, said to be the first in the area.¹¹ John Henry married Anna Catharine Deters (1824-1884), who was also a native of Germany, in the 1840s. An illustration of John H. Franzen's 180-acre farm was included in the 1874 *Combination Atlas Map of DuPage County*, which showed a two-story gable-front house surrounded by a complex of barns and sheds. Three other Franzen family members had farms nearby.¹² John H. Franzen died in 1893 and his farm became part of Bensenville's White Pines Country Club in the early twentieth century.

Herman H. Franzen, the youngest of John and Anna Franzen's 11 children, was educated at the local public schools prior to attending Bryant & Stratton's Business College in Chicago in 1886. The following year he worked at his brother's business, the Franzen Lumber Yard, in Bensenville.¹³

Herman Franzen married Elise Heine (1870-1933) on October 23, 1888.¹⁴ The couple had three sons who lived to adulthood—Elmer H. (1891-1978), Arthur H. (1894-1988), and Raymond A. (1902-1990)—and initially resided in a gable-roof house at W. Irving Park Road in Itasca. In 1890, Herman and two of his brothers organized the Bank of the Franzen Brothers, which later became the Bensenville State Bank.¹⁵

In 1902, Herman Franzen commissioned an unknown architect to design a large, Queen Anne style house on a prominent corner parcel in downtown Itasca, facing the train tracks. The parcel was part of the original Town of Itasca platted in 1873 by Dr. Elijah Smith. Herman and Elise Franzen often hosted large gatherings at their new residence in the ensuing years. In addition to his position as a prominent local banker, Herman served the Village of Itasca in many ways, including 12 years as its president (1905-17).

In 1903, Herman Franzen founded the Roselle State Bank, where his son, Elmer, worked from the time he was 13, figuring out the interest in customer accounts.¹⁶ Herman Franzen established the private Itasca Bank in 1916. The institution did so well during its first few months that it applied for a state charter, which it received the following year. The newly created Itasca State

¹¹ Danzer, 2.

¹² *Combination Atlas Map of DuPage County* (Elgin, Illinois: Thompson Brothers & Burr, 1874).

¹³ Danzer, 7-8.

¹⁴ Illinois, U.S., Marriage Index, 1860-1920. Ancestry.com.

¹⁵ "Herman H. Franzen," *Chicago Tribune* (May 22, 1959).

¹⁶ Danzer, 26.

Bank outgrew its original rented quarters by 1926, when it constructed its own building at 201 N. Walnut Avenue, at a cost of \$45,000.¹⁷

Herman and Elise Franzen's three sons moved out of their parents' house at 125 W. Orchard Street during the 1920s, when they all married. Elise Franzen died in October 1933 at the age of 63. An obituary published in *The Daily Herald* stated:

In the passing of Mrs. H.H. Franzen, the community loses a dear and kind friend. Her winning ways and kind deeds won for her the respect and admiration of all with whom she met. Her acts of kindness and deeds of charity have instilled in the hearts of her acquaintances a memory of love that will continue with them on their pathway of life.

Many friends and relatives not only from Itasca, but from neighboring cities, gathered at the home Tuesday afternoon to show their respect and the many beautiful floral pieces were given in love and admiration.¹⁸

The Elmer Franzen family moved into Elmer's childhood home at 125 W. Orchard Street in 1933, following the death of his mother. They resided with Elmer's widowed father, Herman, who never remarried, and a servant.

The Bensenville State Bank failed during the Great Depression, but the Roselle and Itasca State Banks survived. Herman Franzen was one of the officers who established the Arlington Heights National Bank in 1936, which opened for business the following year. They purchased and remodeled the building formerly occupied by the Peoples State Bank. The new bank was capitalized for \$50,000 with a surplus of \$10,000. It was a member of the Federal Reserve system.¹⁹

Herman Franzen sold his house at 125 W. Orchard Street in 1953 and moved to a considerably smaller one-story house at 316 N. Maple Street in Itasca, while the Elmer Franzen family relocated in that year to a nearby house at 111 W. North Street.

Herman Franzen died on May 20, 1959, at the age of 90. His passing was front page news in the *DuPage County Register*, which eulogized him as "the dean of Illinois bankers."²⁰ All three of his sons pursued successful careers in

¹⁷ Fridlund, 48.

¹⁸ "Elise Franzen," *Daily Herald* (October 6, 1933).

¹⁹ "New Arlington Heights Bank to Open This Month," *Chicago Tribune* (December 13, 1936); "Arlington Heights Glad Glass Strike is Over; Gets New Bank," *Chicago Tribune* (February 10, 1937).

²⁰ "H.H. Franzen Dead," *DuPage County Register*, May 20, 1959.

his footsteps as bankers: Elmer in Itasca and Roselle, Ray in Bensenville, and Arthur in Arlington Heights.

Elmer Franzen

Elmer H. Franzen, the oldest son of Herman and Elise Franzen, was raised in the house at 125 W. Orchard Street and lived there with his own family from 1933 to 1953. Elmer attended Itasca public schools from 1897 to 1907 as well as summer sessions in a German school. He graduated from Elgin Academy in 1911 and from Lake Forest College in 1916, the same year he started his lifelong career in banking, working as an assistant cashier at Itasca State Bank. Earlier, he had worked part-time at the Roselle State Bank.²¹

Elmer Franzen served in the U.S. Navy during World War I (1917-19) and on July 7, 1925, he married Myrtle Mills (1893-1974) in Caldwell, Idaho. A native of Oregon, she attended Pacific College in that state and the College of Idaho in Caldwell prior to receiving her MA degree from Earlham College in Richmond Indiana in 1921. Myrtle served as an English instructor at Penn College in Oskaloosa, Iowa from 1921-25.²²

Elmer and Myrtle Franzen lived in a Craftsman bungalow at 333 S. Maple Street following their marriage and welcomed their only child, Audrey, in 1927. Six years later, the Elmer Franzen family moved to the house at 125 W. Orchard Street, where they lived with Elmer's father, Herman Franzen, who became a widow that year.

Elmer Franzen served as a cashier of the Itasca State Bank in the 1920s and one writer described his informal way of doing business at that time:

Elmer H. Franzen made rounds to pick up deposits from stores and churches; he always carried a gun for fear of holdups. In good weather, his Model T Ford got through all right, but in winter he had to use a horse drawn sleigh because the roads were not sufficiently open. On Sundays and holidays, he accepted deposits at his house. Once he took a deposit and put it in the pocket of his Sunday suit. At the end of the month, when the man came to balance his passbook, a deposit was missing, and there were several anxious minutes before Mr. Franzen realized what must have happened.²³

In 1936, Elmer Franzen was made President and Chairman of the Board of the Roselle State Bank. The original Itasca State Bank moved to Bensenville on

²¹ Danzer, 25-26.

²² Danzer, 33-35.

²³ Fridlund, 49.

January 23, 1948, where there was no banking service since 1933, and it was renamed the Bensenville State Bank. Elmer Franzen founded The Itasca State Bank to replace the old Itasca State Bank, which opened the next morning, January 24, 1948, in the same quarters on Walnut Avenue.²⁴ Elmer Franzen retired as President of this institution in 1955. Three years later, he retired as President and Chairman of the Board of the Roselle State Bank, a position he held for 18 years. In 1968, he was honored for 50 years in banking by the Illinois Bankers Association.²⁵

In addition to his business activities, Elmer Franzen also served as a prominent civic leader in Itasca. He was elected to the Itasca Board of Education in 1933 and served as its president from 1938 to 1946. In this role, he oversaw the construction of a modern elementary school for Itasca on North Street, which became Peacock Middle School. He served as the local chairman of the USO Fund Drive during World War II and oversaw Itasca's home front activities. In 1963, a new elementary school on the north side of Itasca was named the Elmer H. Franzen School in his honor.²⁶ Myrtle Franzen died on October 14, 1974, at the age of 81. Elmer Franzen died on December 4, 1978, at the age of 87.²⁷

Audrey Franzen, who was raised in the house at 125 W. Orchard Street with her parents and grandfather, attended Itasca public schools before graduating from Glenbard Township High School in 1945. She attended Lake Forest College where she met fellow student Glenn Mensching, who was raised in a house at 100 S. Walnut Street in Itasca, next to his parents' general store. Audrey and Glenn Mensching (1924-2004) were married in 1948 following Glenn's service in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Audrey (Franzen) Mensching graduated from Lake Forest College the following year. The couple, who eventually had three sons, moved into their own house on Route 83 in Itasca where Glenn started working for the Roselle State Bank and The Itasca State Bank, which were headed by his father-in-law. He was named president of The Itasca State Bank upon the 1955 retirement of Elmer Franzen from this institution.²⁸

The Franzen House was converted to office use in the 1980s when it was purchased by Better Business Planning, Inc. (BBP), an insurance company. First floor spaces were used as offices and a new kitchen was created in the space directly behind the entrance hall. Second floor bedrooms were

²⁴ Fridlund, 63.

²⁵ Danzer, 26.

²⁶ Fridlund, 108.

²⁷ U.S., Find a Grave Index, 1600s-Current. Ancestry.com.

²⁸ Danzer, 55-56.

subdivided for use as offices. In 2000, a two-story addition designed by T.S. Hatzold & Associates of Itasca was constructed behind, and internally connected to, the original house. The addition was sympathetic in appearance to the original 1902 house in terms of style, materials, and detailing. The 125 W. Orchard Street Building is still (2023) occupied by BBP, Inc.

3. The Queen Anne Style and the Franzen House

The Queen Anne was the dominant style of domestic building in the United States from about 1880 until 1910. An eclectic and picturesque style, it was used for urban, suburban, and rural residences and less frequently for small commercial buildings. The style was named and popularized by a group of nineteenth-century English architects led by Richard Norman Shaw (1831-1912). From the early 1870s in, Shaw's sprawling manor houses were published in the architectural press and thus came to be known, admired, and imitated by American architects. The name is rather inappropriate, for the historical precedents used by Shaw and his followers had little to do with Queen Anne or the formal renaissance architecture that was dominant during her reign (1702-1714). Instead, they borrowed most heavily from late medieval rural models of the preceding Elizabethan and Jacobean eras.²⁹

H.H. Richardson's Watts-Sherman House in Newport, Rhode Island (1874) is generally considered to be the first American example of the style. Richardson followed Shaw very closely in the design for this half-timbered house, while providing a degree of American character by substituting shingles for tiles to sheath its upper walls, and stone for brick as cladding for the ground story.³⁰ A few high-style examples followed in the 1870s, and by 1880 the style was being spread throughout the country by widely circulated pattern books and the first architectural magazine, *The American Architect and Building News*.³¹ The expanding railroad network also helped popularize the style by making pre-cut architectural details conveniently available through much of the nation. Industrialization and advanced manufacturing techniques allowed for the mass production of millwork and extravagant architectural detailing that was previously restricted to expensive, landmark houses.

Queen Anne houses feature asymmetrical facades with an emphasis on verticality. Irregularities in ground plan were facilitated by the widespread adoption of balloon framing techniques in the late nineteenth-century. Wall surfaces typically feature a mixture of cladding materials and textures, such as

²⁹ Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994) 268.

³⁰ Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1988) 117.

³¹ McAlester, 268.

brick or stone on the ground level and upper floors covered with horizontal boards, stucco, or shingles shaped in varying designs. In masonry houses, texture is created through differing patterns of brick courses or the insertion of terra cotta panels. Half-timbering, when used, is typically seen in the roof gables, which also may feature patterned shingles or more elaborate motifs, such as appliques of stylized sunbursts or sunflower motifs.

The Queen Anne style was popular in small towns, suburbs, and cities in Illinois and throughout the United States. In their book, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Virginia and Lee McAlester identified two decorative detailing subtypes that comprise the vast majority of Queen Anne style house: the spindlework and the free classic types.

The American spindlework interpretation became dominant during the 1880s and featured wood detailing that was turned on a lathe and typically displayed on porches. About half of Queen Anne style houses have delicate turned porch supports and spindlework ornamentation, which most commonly occurs in porch balustrades or as a frieze suspended from the porch ceiling. Spindlework detailing is also used in gables and under the wall overhangs left by cutaway bay windows. Lacy, decorative spandrels and knoblike beads are also common ornamental elements of this subtype. Spindlework detailing is sometimes referred to as gingerbread ornamentation, or as Eastlake detailing (after English designer and critic Charles Eastlake, whose taste in ornament was adopted by Americans for exteriors).³²

The free classic adaption of the Queen Anne style became widespread during the decade of the 1890s. This decorative subtype features the use of classical columns, rather than delicate turned posts with spindlework detailing, as porch supports. These columns may be either the full height of the porch or raised on a pedestal to the level of the porch railing; the railings normally lack the delicate, turned balusters of spindlework type of detailing. Porch-support columns are commonly grouped together in units of two or three. Palladian windows, cornice-line dentils, and other classical details are frequent, such as swags and garland applique.³³

The fully developed Queen Anne floor plan moved away from classical symmetry and became much more open, allowing light and air into the rooms from all directions. Sliding pocket doors opened the rooms to each other, creating one large space, or smaller, private room. The dominant interior feature was a large entrance hall, featuring a central circulation space with

³² McAlester, 264.

³³ Ibid.

both fireplace and grand staircase. Walls often featured paneled wainscoting with wallpaper above and fully paneled walls were popular among the well-to-do in the late nineteenth century. Built-in furniture was common and almost every room had baseboard molding. Door and window surrounds—both exterior and interior—tend to be simple in Queen Anne style houses. Fireplaces were important decorative features, and the stylish types were Rococo Revival models in marble and Renaissance Revival design with incised decoration on marble or wood.³⁴

The Herman H. Franzen House, built in 1902, is an excellent example of the Queen Anne style in Itasca featuring the free classic subtype and exhibits many hallmarks of this style. The 2 ½ story house features a vertical silhouette, irregular massing, and a steeply pitched, cross-gable roofline with overhanging eaves. The wall planes are sheathed in both wood clapboard and scalloped wood shingles and feature full-height, projecting gable pavilions on three elevations, two of which have attic level pediments. The third pavilion features unadorned frieze bands and cornice returns on its gable end. The front façade's gable end is graced by a Palladian window. A full-façade, wraparound wood porch with rounded corners and Doric columns contributes to the picturesque appearance of the former residence, as does its polygonal turret with conical roof. Three exterior wood doors with glass panes are accessed from the wraparound porch, all of which are accessed by separate stairs. Tall one-over-one wood sash windows flood the interior with light. All windows and doors have wood casings, many of which feature simple wood entablatures.

The interior of the Franzen House exemplifies the Queen Anne style in terms of its plan and decorative elements. The residence features a formal entrance hall with a grand oak reverse-flight staircase that displays high quality craftsmanship. It features square newell posts with incised ornament, lattice-like balusters, and wood trim with a wave-scroll motif. A series of rooms on the first floor that originally served as parlors/dining room open onto other, as was typical of this style. The use of wood trim was an important element of Queen Anne interiors and the Franzen House features tall baseboard molding, chair rails, and door and window casings, some of which display beaded molding. Wood panel doors are featured throughout the house, including two sets of pocket doors, a must for every grand Queen Anne style house. The Franzen House is also graced by a fireplace in its original front parlor (office 1) that has a marble surround and a wood mantle visually supported by two

³⁴ Stephen Calloway (ed.), *The Elements of Style: An Encyclopedia of Domestic Architectural Detail* (Buffalo, New York: Firefly Books, 2005) 289.

Ionic columns. This room also exhibits a leaded glass transom above its large, south-facing, single-pane window.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

The two-story Franzen House, built in 1902, is an excellent example of the Queen Anne style, featuring a steeply pitched, cross-gable roofline with overhanging eaves; asymmetrical massing; and a full-façade, wraparound wood porch with rounded corners and Doric columns. The exterior of the house has excellent integrity, retaining its original massing, roofline, sheathing of wood clapboard and scalloped wood shingles, and door and fenestration pattern. The house has full-height, projecting gable pavilions with attic-level pediments on its east, west, and south sides, and a polygonal turret with conical roof on its southwest corner. Three exterior wood doors with glass panes are accessed from the wraparound porch. Fenestration is comprised of tall, one-over-one windows that are arranged alone, and all have wood casings. The south (front) façade has a large picture window with leaded glass transom on the first floor and a Palladian window in its gable end.

The interior of the house retains its grand oak staircase in the front entrance hall, a secondary stairway, as well as original wood panels doors, pocket doors, wood moldings, a fireplace detailed with Ionic wood columns, flooring, and finishes. The first-floor plan is largely intact, although no remnants of the original kitchen—which was likely located in present-day office 4—are extant. The second-floor plan has been greatly altered with original bedrooms subdivided into a myriad of offices. All original bathrooms have been altered.

A two-story addition was constructed on the north end of the house in 2000. The description of the house below only pertains to the original, 1902 house, and not the 2000 addition.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Foundation

The house has a raised foundation comprised of regularly laid, rough-cut, stone blocks.

2. Walls

The house features full-height, projecting gable pavilions on its east, west, and south sides and a polygonal turret on its southwest corner. The attic level pediments on the east and south facades are sheathed with scalloped wood shingles, the same material that covers the upper level of the corner turret. The

remainder of the house is sheathed with wood clapboard painted the same tan color as the scalloped wood shingles.

All window and door openings have wood casings painted white, many of which have simple wood entablatures. All corners of the house are sheathed with vertical wood boards painted white. The gable end of the west façade's projecting pavilion features unadorned frieze bands and cornice returns painted white.

3. Structural system

Wood frame construction.

4. Openings

a. Doorways and doors

The house has three exterior wood doors: one each on the south, east, and west facades. All three doors are accessed from the wraparound porch. The south (front) door features a large oval glass pane. The east door features a long, rectangular glass pane. The west door has two rectangular wood panels in the lower portion and a rectangular pane of glass in the upper portion.

b. Windows

Fenestration is primarily comprised of tall, one-over-one wood-sash windows that are arranged alone. The south (front) façade has a large picture window on the first floor with a leaded glass transom. This façade also features a single-pane window and a Palladian window in the attic-level pediments. The east façade's full-height gable pavilion has a three-part window group on the first floor comprised of one-over-one windows, and a small, single-pane window in the attic-level pediment. The west façade has one single-pane window on the first floor. The north façade has an oval-shaped window on the second floor and an attic-level opening infilled with louvers.

5. Porches

The front of the house has a full-façade wood porch with rounded corners that wraps around both the east and west facades. The Classically styled porch is accessed via three flights of wood steps—one each on the south, east, and west facades—and features widely spaced Doric columns; squared wood railings; wood flooring; wood ceiling; and a shed roof covered with asphalt shingles.

6. Roof

a. Shape, covering

The house has a steeply pitched, cross-gable roof that is covered with asphalt shingles and has two orange brick chimneys. The soffits of the overhanging eaves are sheathed in wood clapboard. The corner turret has a conical roof covered with asphalt shingles.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans

The first-floor plan of the house consists of a formal entrance hall with a grand, reverse-flight staircase, a kitchen, and two toilet rooms on the west side, and a series of four offices on the east side. A doorway on the south wall of Office 4 opens onto a narrow, secondary staircase that is situated between Office 3 and the kitchen. A doorway on the north wall of Office 4 opens onto the 2000 addition.

The second-floor plan consists of an L-shaped hallway; a toilet room; and a total of eight offices: five on the east side and three on the west side. A doorway on the north wall of Office 12 opens onto the 2000 addition.

2. Stairways

The southwest corner of the house features a front entrance hall with grand, reverse-flight, oak staircase that leads to the second floor. It features two pairs of square newell posts—one each on the first floor and on the first-floor landing—as well as a newell post on the second-floor landing and on the second floor. The pair of newell posts on the first floor have the most elaborate decorative detailing and are incised with vertical lines as well as curvilinear motifs. The stairway's wood balustrades have an open lattice-work design and its wood trim on the stair hall features a wave-scroll motif.

A secondary stairwell with a wall-hung wood handrail is situated near the center of the floor plan and consists of a narrow, straight flight of wooden stairs that connects Office 4 on the first floor to the second floor's north-south hallway.

3. Flooring

The first and second floors of the house feature original hardwood flooring. The striped wood flooring in Office 2 appears to be non-original. The three toilet rooms have ceramic tile flooring. The flooring in the second-floor hallway is covered with wall-to-wall carpeting.

4. Wall and ceiling finish

Ceilings are finished with plaster, as are the walls on the first floor. Walls on the second floor are finished in either plaster or drywall; the latter is used in former bedrooms that have been subdivided into offices.

5. Decorative detailing

All door openings are surrounded by wood casings painted white. Walls are trimmed with unadorned baseboard molding painted white. Offices 1 and 3 have wood chair railings. Most rooms have simple crown ceiling molding painted white. The west wall of Office 1 has an original fireplace with marble surround and an oak mantle visually supported by a pair of oak Ionic columns.

6. Openings

a. Doorways and doors

Typical doors have four wood panels and feature original knobs with decorative metal plates and original decorative hinges. The north and south walls of Office 2 each have a pair of original wood paneled pocket doors.

7. Mechanical equipment

a. Heating

The house has baseboard heating, and several rooms feature original radiators.

b. Lighting

Some of the rooms have can lights in the ceiling or ceiling light fixtures, all of which are non-original.

c. Plumbing

The house has three toilet rooms, each with a single toilet and a sink.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation

The 1902 Herman H. Franzen House is located at 125 W. Orchard Street in the Village of Itasca's historic downtown. It is prominently sited on a corner parcel and is set back about 62 feet from Orchard Street and 32 feet from Maple Avenue. The house—which was converted to commercial use in the 1980s—is surrounded by grassy lawns, and its front entrance is approached from the public sidewalks on both Orchard Street and Maple Avenue via brick-paved walkways. A third brick-paved walkway extends alongside the

east façade of the house and leads to an asphalt-paved parking lot alongside the north side of the building, which is comprised of an addition that was erected in 2000.

The Franzen House faces south toward the Metra train station and tracks, which are located across Orchard Street. It shares a block with three other commercial buildings, one of which is a wood-frame, cross-gable, former house in the Queen Anne style (115 W. Orchard) that is also set back about 60 feet from Orchard Street. The other two commercial buildings on the 100 block of W. Orchard Street are brick and sited adjacent to the public sidewalk. One is a 2 ½ story Tudor Revival style building that dates to the early twentieth century (109 W. Orchard) and the other is a two-story Colonial Revival style building that appears to date to the 1950s (103 W. Orchard).

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography

1. Primary and Unpublished Source Information

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Whiffen, Marcus. *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles*.
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B. Sketch Plans

Sketch floor plans for this house are attached to this report. (See Figures 2 and 3.)

C. Supplemental Material

A location map, sketch floor plans, current exterior and interior photographs of the house, and historic photographs of the H.H. Franzen family are attached to the end of this report.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

A. Research Strategy

The research strategy was to review a variety of primary and secondary sources, including books, newspaper articles, and historic photographs, to develop a thorough history of the Franzen House, placing it within the context of Queen Anne style residential architecture. Site visits to the house were planned to undertake photographic documentation for both the HIBS photographic submittal and use in developing a physical description of the building.

B. Actual Research Process

Research was undertaken at both the Itasca and Bensenville Public Libraries to find information on the Franzen family and the history of Itasca. The newspaper.com and the ancestry.com databases were also reviewed for information on Franzen family members. Books on residential styles were reviewed for historical information on the Queen Anne style and its hallmarks.

The Village of Itasca does not have an original building permit on file for the 125 W. Orchard Street house, according to the results of a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. The year of construction was obtained from a book titled, *The Franzen-Mensching Heritage: Itasca History through Audrey's Story* (Privately Published, 2008), by Gerald A. Danzer, a Franzen family descendant, who had access to original family documentation. Historic photographs included at the end of this report were taken from this book.

- C. Archives and Repositories Used
Itasca Public Library in Itasca, Illinois and the Bensenville Public Library in Bensenville, Illinois.
- D. Project Team
1. Supervision
All aspects of this project were supervised and assembled by Jean L. Guarino, Ph.D., Principal of Guarino Historic Resources Documentation, Oak Park, Illinois. Dr. Guarino also served as project historian for this report and undertook digital field photography.
 2. HIBS photographer
All black and white HIBS photography was undertaken by Leslie Schwartz, Leslie Schwartz Photography, Chicago.

This HIBS documentation project was undertaken to mitigate the adverse effects of a proposed project by Holladay Properties to raze this building and redevelop its site. The terms of the mitigation were agreed upon and executed to ensure compliance with the Illinois State Agency Historic Resources Preservation Act (20 ILCS 3420).

INDEX TO BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS

Leslie Schwartz, photographer, March 2023

- DU-2023-1.1 Front (south) façade, view north.
- DU-2023-1.2 Detail of front (south) façade, view northwest.
- DU-2023-1.3 Detail of wraparound front porch, view east.
- DU-2023-1.4 West façade with 1980s addition on the left, view east.
- DU-2023-1.5 South and west facades, view southeast.
- DU-2023-1.6 Detail of east façade, view west.
- DU-2023-1.7 South and east facades, view northwest.
- DU-2023-1.8 Front entrance hall, view south.
- DU-2023-1.9 Detail of carved wood newell posts in front entrance hall.
- DU-2023-1.10 Fireplace in office 1.
- DU-2023-1.11 Pocket doors in office 2.
- DU-2023-1.12 View from office 3, looking southeast toward office 2.
- DU-2023-1.13 Detail of wood latticework on balustrade of main staircase at second floor level.
- DU-2023-1.14 Second floor hallway, view north.



DU-2023-1.1



DU-2023-1.2



DU-2023-1.3



DU-2023-1.4



DU-2023-1.5



DU-2023-1.6



DU-2023-1.7



DU-2023-1.8



DU-2023-1.9



DU-2023-1.10



DU-2023-1.11



DU-2023-1.12



DU-2023-1.13



DU-2023-1.14

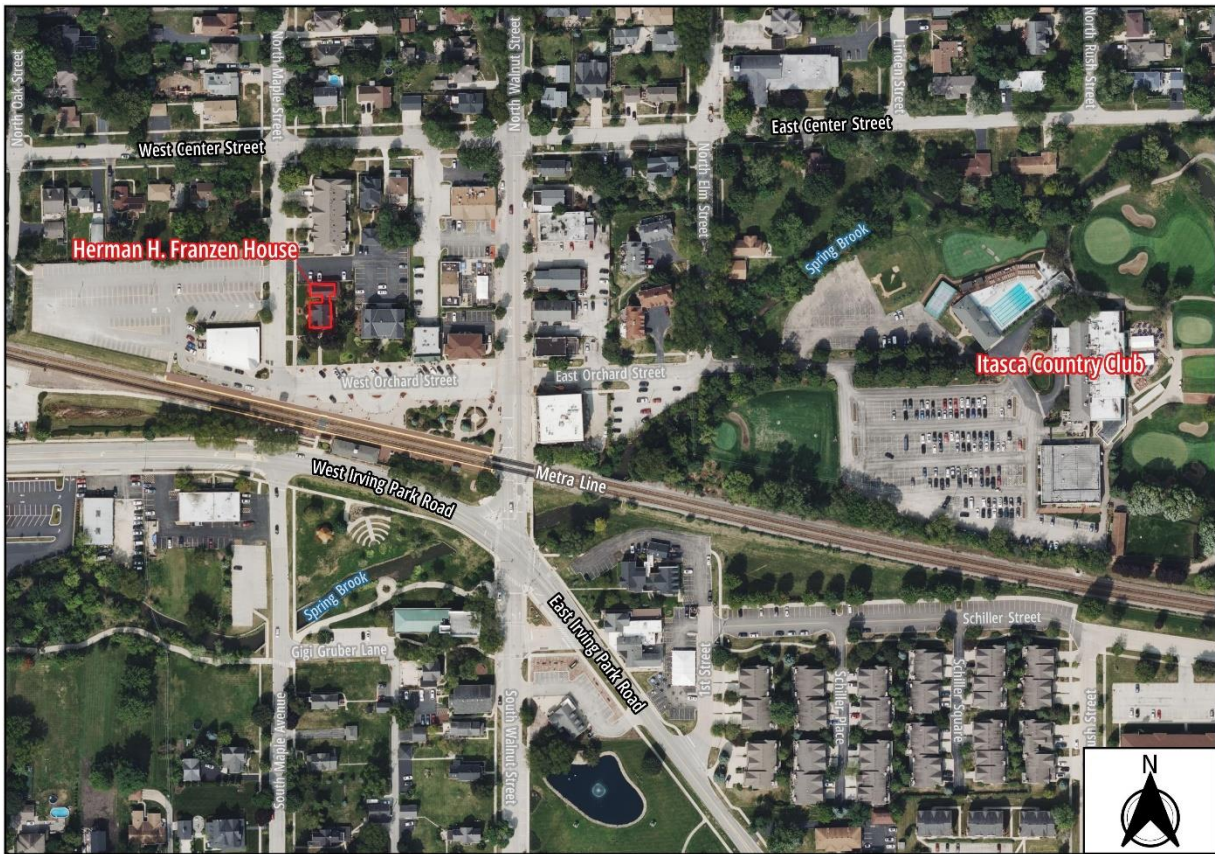


Figure 1: Map showing location of the Franzen House in outlined in red.

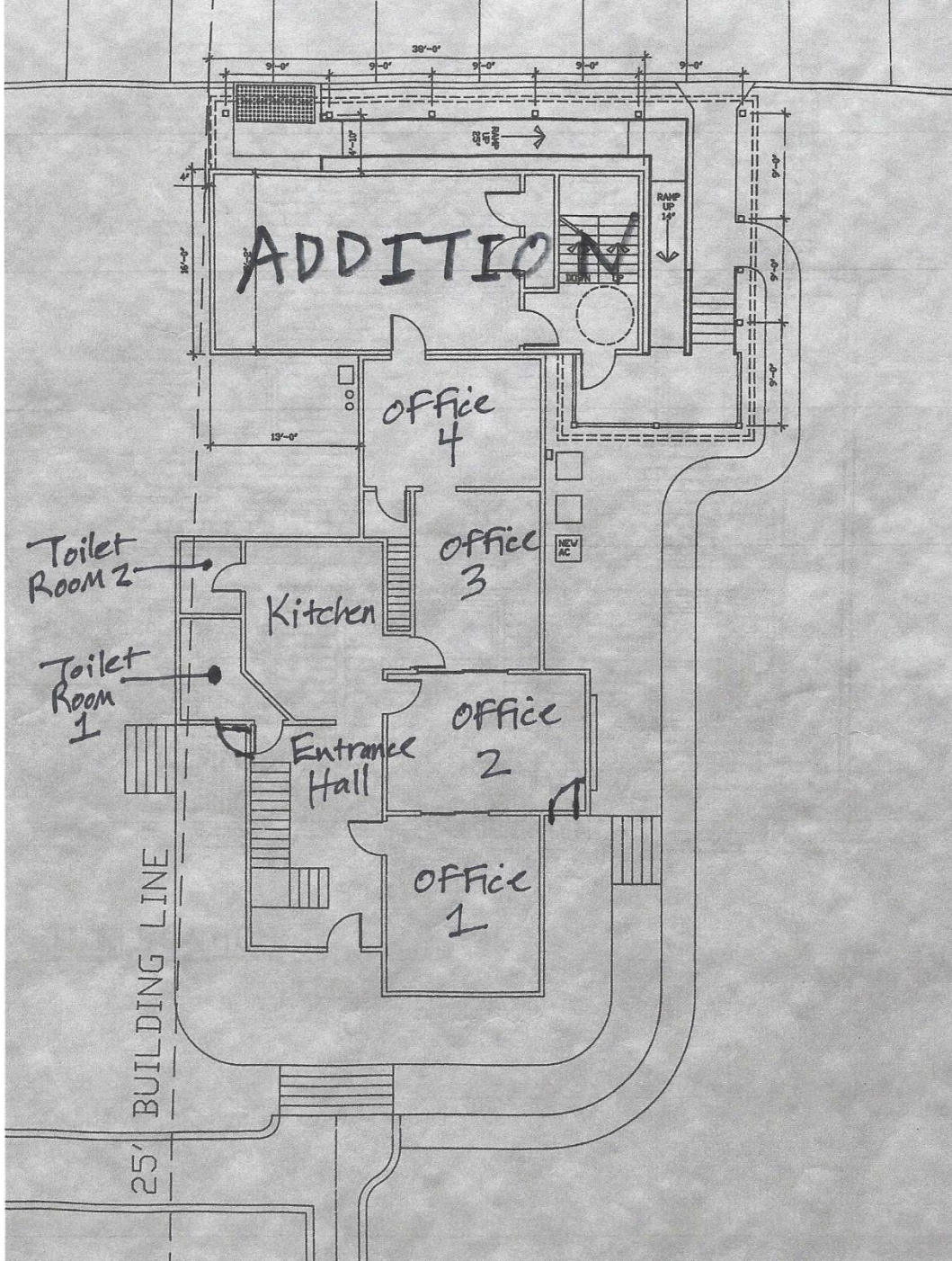


Figure 2: Current (2023) First Floor Plan of the Franzen House.

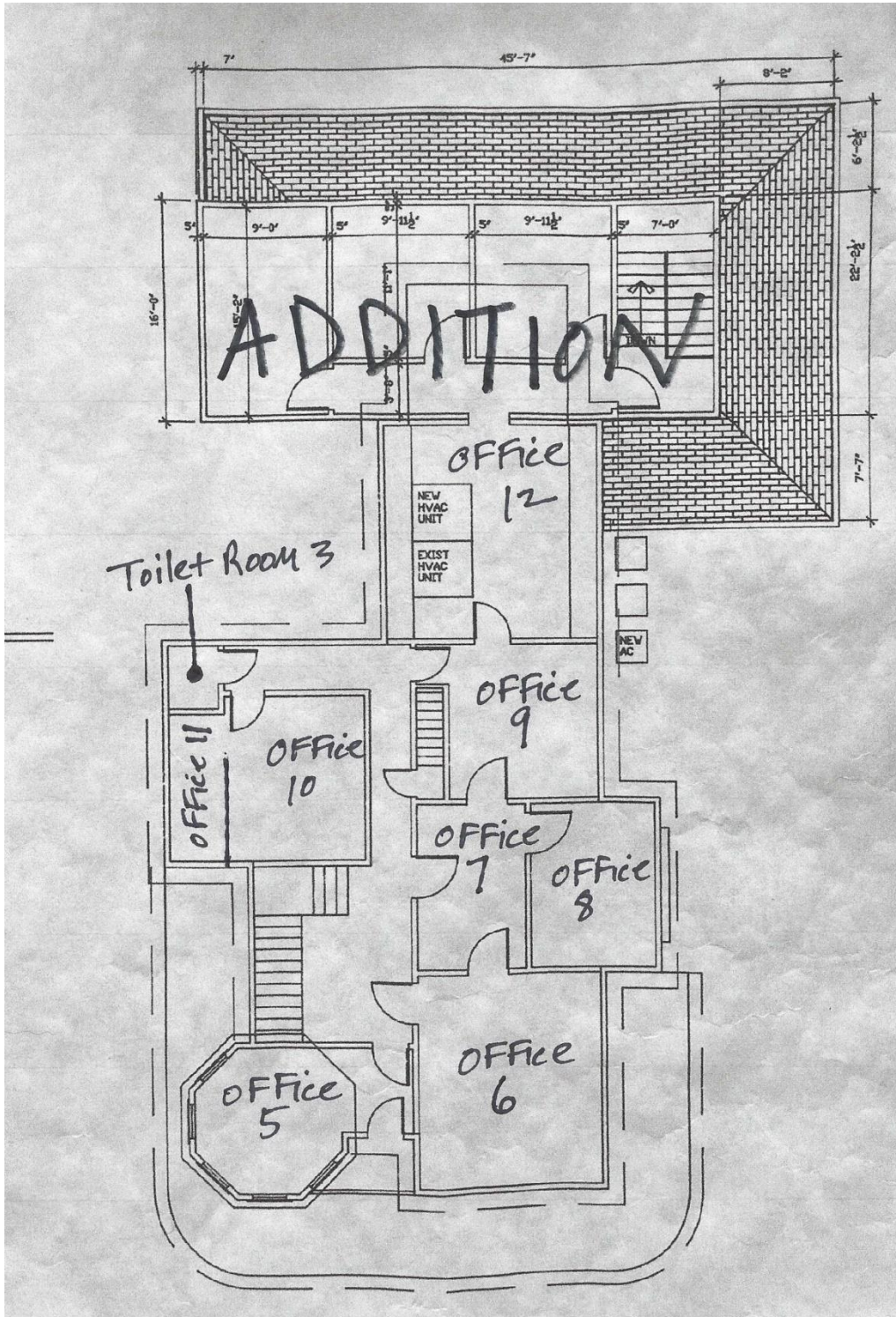


Figure 3: Current (2023) Second Floor Plan for the Franzen House.



Figure 4: Front façade showing wraparound porch and polygonal tower, view north.



Figure 5: Detail of front façade's second floor, view north.



Figure 6: Front door, view north.



Figure 7: Front porch with Doric columns, view east.



Figure 8: Front with Doric columns, view west.



Figure 9: Detail of gable with wood shingles on front facade.



Figure 10: View northeast showing polygonal corner tower with conical roof.



Figure 11: Gable pavilion on west façade showing wood frieze band and cornice returns.



Figure 12: West façade entrance on wraparound porch.



Figure 13: West façade of original house with 2.5- story addition built in 2000 on the left.



Figure 14: North (left) and west facades of the original house, view southeast.



Figure 15: One-story “hyphen” that was part of the original house and likely served as the kitchen, view east.



Figure 16: Front (south) and east facades, showing wraparound porch, view northwest.



Figure 17: Detail of gable pavilion with bay window on east façade, view west.



Figure 18: East façade porch entrance, view north.



Figure 19: East façade, view west.



Figure 20: Entrance Hall, view south toward front door.



Figure 21: Detail of carved wood newell posts on main staircase.



Figure 22: Main staircase, looking down to front door.



Figure 23: Office 1 (original front parlor), showing original fireplace, view west.



Figure 24: Pocket doors between Offices 2 and 3, view northeast.



Figure 25: Office 2 with exterior door to wraparound porch, view east.



Figure 26: Pocket doors separating Offices 2 and 3, view southeast.



Figure 27: Typical original doorknob.



Figure 28: Typical original door hinge.



Figure 29: First floor kitchen, view northwest.



Figure 30: Office 4, view southwest toward doorway to secondary staircase on the right.



Figure 31: Secondary staircase.



Figure 32: Second floor hallway with doorway to secondary staircase on the left.



Figure 33: Second floor hallway showing wood railings and newell post of main staircase.



Figure 34: Office 6 on second floor, view north.



Figure 35: Office 5 located in the second-floor turret, view southwest.



Figure 36: Second floor hallway, view northeast.



Figure 37: Office 7 on second floor, view northeast toward Offices 8 and 9.



Figure 38: Office 8 on second floor, view southeast.



Figure 39: Office 9 on second floor, view north.



Figure 40: Second floor hallway, view west toward Toilet Room 3.

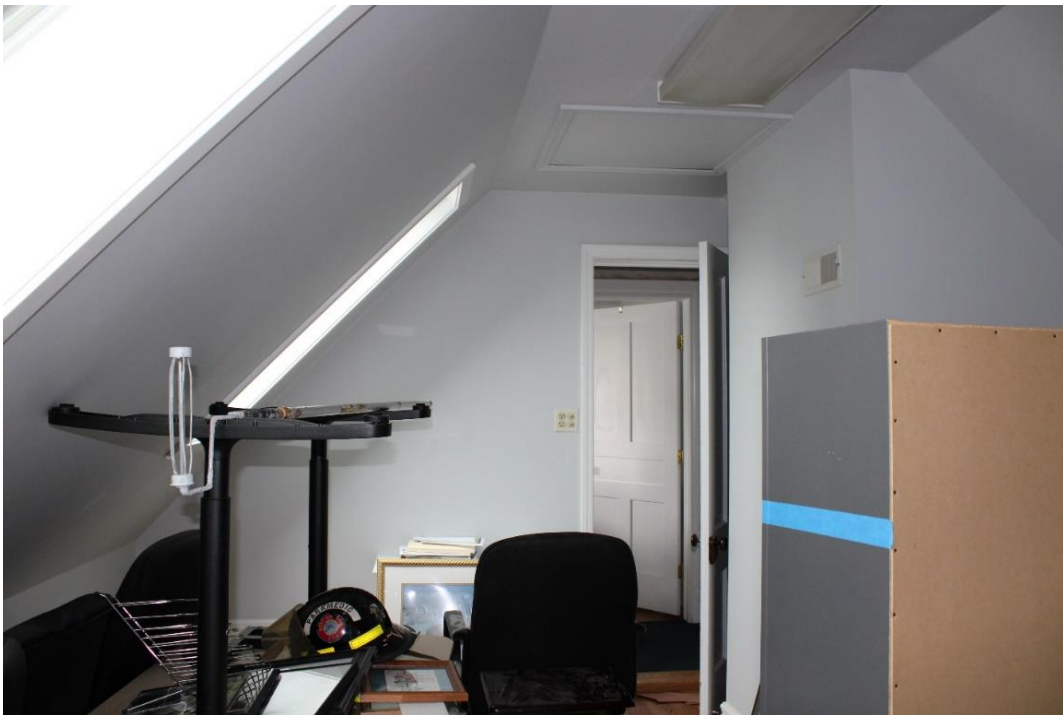


Figure 41: Office 12, view south.



Figure 42: The H.H. Franzen family, c. 1904. This photograph shows Herman H. Franzen, his wife, Elise, and their three sons, from left to right: Arthur, Elmer, and Ray.

Source: Gerald A. Danzer. *The Franzen-Mensching Heritage: Itasca History through Audrey's Story*. Itasca, Illinois: Privately Published, 2008.



Figure 43: Undated photograph of the Franzen House when it was used as a residence.
Source: Gerald A. Danzer. *The Franzen-Mensching Heritage: Itasca History through Audrey's Story*. Itasca, Illinois: Privately Published, 2008.



Figure 44: Franzen House in winter, ca. 1910s. A driver pauses to show off his fine team of horses using the Franzen House as a backdrop. As the photograph was taken from a Franzen family photo album, the driver may have been H.H. Franzen himself.

Source: Gerald A. Danzer. *The Franzen-Mensching Heritage: Itasca History through Audrey's Story*. Itasca, Illinois: Privately Published, 2008.



Figure 45: Audrey Franzen with her parents, Elmer and Myrtle Franzen, and grandfather, Herman H. Franzen. The Elmer Franzen family moved into the house at 125 W. Orchard Street to live with Herman H. Franzen in 1933, after the death of his wife, Elise.
Source: Gerald A. Danzer. *The Franzen-Mensching Heritage: Itasca History through Audrey's Story*. Itasca, Illinois: Privately Published, 2008.



Figure 46: Audrey Franzen c. 1950 on the front steps of the Franzen House at 125 W. Orchard St. Source: Gerald A. Danzer. *The Franzen-Mensching Heritage: Itasca History through Audrey's Story*. Itasca, Illinois: Privately Published, 2008.