



City of Geneva, Illinois

Local Historic District & Landmarks
Property Inventory Survey

GENERAL PROPERTY INFORMATION:

HISTORIC NAME: Nelson House

COMMON NAME: n/a

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1929

SIGNIFICANT ALTERATION DATES: n/a

ARCHITECT: Tom Bassett-Dilly (2010 Renovation)

BUILDER: T. W. Gibbs

WILSON BROTHERS: ☐ AUGUST ☐ OSCAR ☐ BOTH

ARCHITECTURAL DATA:

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: Tudor Revival

OVERALL PLAN SHAPE: T-Plan

NUMBER OF STORIES: 1.5

FOUNDATION MATERIAL: Poured Concrete

PRIMARY WALL MATERIAL(S): Brick, Limestone

FRONT PORCH: No

VISIBLE SIDE PORCH: No

ENTRY DOOR(S): Historic

WINDOW MATERIAL: Wood

WINDOW STYLE: Double-hung (6/6)

PRIMARY ROOF FORM: Cross Gable

PRIMARY ROOF MATERIAL: Asphalt

VISIBLE CHIMNEY: Yes

CHIMNEY MATERIAL: Brick

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES:

Original windows and entry door; skintled brickwork with limestone accents; garden gateway, squinch oriel window.

PROPERTY ADDRESS:

405 South First Street

PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (PIN):

12-10-226-002



LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE RATING:

- ☐ Significant
- ☒ Contributing
- ☐ Non-Contributing – Built After 1987
- ☐ Non-Contributing – Reversible Alterations
- ☐ Non-Contributing – Irreversible Alterations

HISTORIC DISTRICT LOCATION:

- ☒ Central Geneva NRHD
- ☐ North Geneva NRHD
- ☒ Local Geneva HD
- ☐ Not in HD / Individual Historic Landmark

NR DISTRICT SIGNIFICANCE RATING:

- ☒ Contributing
- ☐ Non-Contributing
- ☐ Not Applicable / Not in NR District



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ADDITIONAL PROPERTY INFORMATION:

BRIEF HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION:

The house was built between 1929 and 1930 and retains a high degree of integrity as one of the few Tudor Revival style houses in Geneva, Illinois.

A newspaper account stated that Taylor W. "T. W." Gibbs (a building contractor from La Fox, Illinois who built many buildings in Geneva), was "making rapid progress on construction of new house for Ernest (Louise) Nelson of Batavia. Brick veneer inset with quarry stone. Interior plan is unusual" (19 July 1929 Geneva Republican). Ernest Nelsen was an employee of the Chicago and North Western Railroad.

The building is an excellent example of the Tudor Revival style of domestic architecture that includes a prominent street-facing gable that continues to form a garden gate; a steeply-gabled roof with shed roof dormers, and minimalist eaves. The skintled brick walls are accentuated with random, limestone surrounds that complement the arched entry, squinch oriel window, and attic louver.

Skintled brick was a style of brickwork developed in Chicago, Illinois and surrounding suburban communities during the 1920s. This brickwork style was first described by William Carver, an architect, writing in 1925 for a 15-page pamphlet, produced for The Common Brick Manufacturers' Association of America of Cleveland, Ohio. Carter defined skintled brickwork as, "setting the [Chicago Common Bricks] roughly at different angles, projecting and recessing them beyond the wall line and even permitting the squeezed out mortar to remain in place; with strong and striking effect." The popularity of the brick pattern led to the re-publishing of Carver's pamphlet as a featured article in the premiere issue of "Brickwork – Working Details" (1927), also produced for The Common Brick Manufacturers' Association of America in Cleveland, Ohio. The Chicago Tribune (30 December 1928) noted that the Chicago-based popularity of skintled brickwork became a coast-to-coast trend in architecture and was incorporated into "over fifteen hundred large homes on the North Shore of Chicago."

The property was sold numerous times between 1942 and 1951. In 2010 — after falling into disrepair — the house was rehabilitated to repair structural damage to the masonry bearing walls and enlarged with a sizable addition to the rear. The new addition eliminated the original, basement-level, single-bay garage that was accessed from the rear elevation. However, other original architectural features remained following the extensive renovation, including six-over-six, true divided light, double-hung, wood windows; the preservation and replication of the original weeping mortar and brick walls; a shingle-sided dormer, and; the second-story, squinch, oriel window on the front facade. The interior renovation preserved plaster surfaces, wood trim, a "Juliet balcony", and an interior window between a hallway and bedroom.

The completed renovation project was granted a Tax Assessment Freeze by the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office.

The property is notable for its association with methods of construction (skintled brickwork), architecture—specifically for the Tudor Revival style—and one or more significant persons—specifically T. W. Gibbs.

SOURCES:

GHPC Case Studies; GHM Archives; 2016 Central Geneva NRHP Update; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps; Kane County Recorder's Office Land Records



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CONTRIBUTING ACCESSORY STRUCTURES:

AS1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

n/a

AS2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

n/a

CONTRIBUTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES:

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The sloping terrain of the property permits an exposed basement level at the rear of the home.

HPC ACTION:

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Demolition Approved: n/a

Other HPC Action:

1.19.99 Roof Renovation; 12.15.09 Add'n



1999