



Name of Property: Henry Gerber House
City, State: Chicago, Illinois
Period of Significance: 1924-1925
NHL Criteria: 1 and 2
NHL Theme: II. Creating Social Institutions and Movements
2. Reform movements
Previous Recognition: 1984 National Register of Historic Places (contributing resource to Old Town Triangle Historic District)
National Historic Context: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Heritage Initiative

NHL Significance:

- The Henry Gerber House is nationally significant under NHL Criterion 1 for its association with the founding of the first chartered organization in the United States dedicated to advocating for the rights of homosexuals, the Society for Human Rights (1924-1925).
- Henry Gerber was living at this property as a boarder when he founded the Society and filed for its incorporation. He managed the organization from this location and most likely wrote the Society’s newsletter, *Friendship and Freedom*, while living here; this is the first known publication of a homosexual organization in the United States.
- Gerber was unjustifiably arrested and had his personal property confiscated from his room, marking the earliest documented efforts toward homosexual rights in America and the pervasive trend of discrimination against, and persecution of, homosexuals in the



twentieth century.

- The Henry Gerber House is nationally significant under NHL Criterion 2 for its association with Henry Gerber, founder of the Society for Human Rights and recognized as a critically-important advocate for the civil rights of homosexuals.

Integrity:

- The property retains a high degree of historic physical integrity. The masonry exterior retains high integrity and its fenestration is intact. Only a deck on the rear of the house has been added.
- The interior also maintains a high degree of integrity. Changes include the addition of a bathroom to the basement, a skylight in the roof, and the re-routing of an upstairs bathroom entryway to the master bedroom.
- The smaller bedrooms in the upstairs hallway have not been spatially altered, illustrating how the property was used as a boarding house.

Owner of Property: Shirley and Norman Baugher

Acreeage of Property: Less than one acre.

Origins of Nomination: The property was identified through the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Heritage Initiative. In collaboration with the National Historic Landmarks (NHL) Program and through the University of Michigan Public History Initiative, the nomination was written as part of a graduate-level course. The nomination is part of an ongoing partnership between the NHL Program and the University of Michigan.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:

- Designation of the Henry Gerber House would bring recognition to a theme that is little represented in the NHL Program. Currently, the program only has one NHL representing LGBTQ history, Stonewall in New York City.
- The theme study has attracted positive attention from the general public. Designation of the Gerber House should bring the same attention and positive public feedback.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known.

Landmarks Committee Comments:

Landmarks Committee Recommendation: Designation. Dr. Chen moved, Dr. Stevens seconded; unanimous approval.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of 02/05/15):
Shirley and Norman Baugher, Chicago, Illinois (owners)

Advisory Board Recommendation: