

MEMORANDUM

To: Historic District Commissioners

From: Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

Date: October 1, 2012

Re: Historic Plaque for 1709 Pontiac Trail

This month staff received one application for a historic building plaque for the house at 1709 Pontiac Street. The Josiah Beckley House at 1709 Pontiac Trail is estimated to have been built between 1834 and 1836, although it is possible that it was constructed even earlier. Josiah Beckley, his wife, Minerva, and two sons moved to Ann Arbor in 1827 and soon after purchased seventy-three acres of land, including the parcel where the house is currently located. Josiah Beckley died in 1843, and Minerva and their sons continued to live there for several years. The house was sold in 1847 to Warren Millard and remained in the Millard family for nearly 100 years.

The Josiah Beckley House is not currently in a historic district. However, it was included in the former Individual Historic Properties District as being significant for its history.

The two-story brick house features an entry in the center of the front façade, brick end chimneys, and metal stars on the exterior that cap the end of tie rods. There is a large addition and garage located at the rear of the house, but the front and side elevations of the 1830s-era house appear to remain largely intact and unchanged, with the possible exception of the front entryway.

Staff feels that a historic plaque is appropriate for the Josiah Beckley House, located at 1709 Pontiac Street, based on the age of the house, the house's history, and the relatively unaltered appearance of the character-defining front elevation.

Sample Motion

I move that the c.1834 Josiah Beckley House at 1709 Pontiac Trail meets the criteria for a City of Ann Arbor Historic Building marker based on its age, historic and architectural significance, and contribution to the history of Ann Arbor.

**ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
APPLICATION for HISTORIC MARKER**

100 N. Fifth Avenue Ann Arbor, MI 48104 (734)794-6265 x42608 Fax: (734) 994-8312
Historic District Coordinator Email: jthacher@a2gov.org www.a2gov.org

Section 1: Applicant Information

Name of Property Owner: Ariella & Sergey Shikanov
Address of Owner: 1709 Pontiac trail, Ann Arbor, MI 48105
Daytime Phone: (505) 205-0076
Fax: ()
Email: sergeyshikanov@gmail.com
Signature of owner: *Sergey Shikanov* date: 9-11-2012

Section 2: Historical Information (attach additional sheets as necessary)

Address of Property: 1709 Pontiac trail, Ann Arbor, MI 48105
Name of Historic District, if applicable: _____
Name of First Owner of building: Josiah Beckley
Bibliographic Source: _____
Date of Construction: circa 1834
Bibliographic Source: <http://www.a2gov.org/government/communityservices/planninganddevelopment/historicpreservation/hdsurveys/Documents/history.PDF>
Additional history of the property—including ownership, evolution of the building and its use:

(continue on reverse or on additional sheets)

Section 3: Photographs (attach or submit electronic copy of a photo of the building)

Staff Use Only

Date Submitted: _____ Date of completed application: _____
Staff Reviewer & Date: _____ Date of HDC Action: _____
Staff signature: _____ Action: _____ HDC Approval _____ HDC Denial _____
Comments: _____

INDIVIDUAL HISTORIC PROPERTY DOCUMENTATION FORM 09/12/94

Address: 1709 PONTIAC

Historic Name: Josiah Beckley House
Date Built: 1834-6

Category of Significance: HISTORY

Architectural Style: Greek Revival

Number of Stories: 2

Building Material: Solid Brick

Window Type: Double-hung
Window Panes: Sandwich

Plan Shape: Rectangular

Roof Shape: Side Gable with returns
Roof Material: Asphalt
Dormer Type: None

Porch Type: Stoop
Porch Posts: N/A
Porch Railings: N/A

Historic Use: Residential/SF/owner occ
Current Use: Residential/SF/owner occupied

Special Features: 5-bay center entry, end chimneys, starr shaped tie rod ends, brick jack arches throughout

First Map: 1856 County map
First City Directory: 1878
Architect: Unknown
Builder: Josiah Beckley
Notes: Historic Buildings page 149

Photo Date: 06/01/92 Roll: -0- Frame: -0 By: Kip Miller Collection

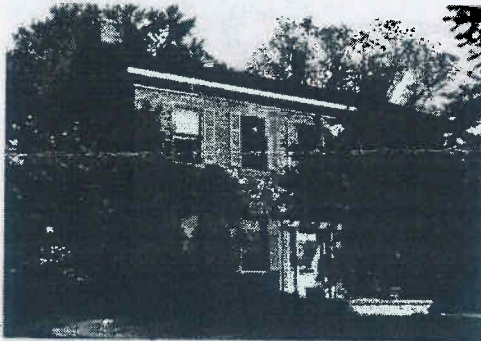


1709 Pontiac Trail

Josiah Beckley House

133

Circa 1834



Josiah Beckley and his family were members of that intrepid group of early settlers who left New England for the Michigan Territory just after the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825. Beckley arrived in Ann Arbor in 1827 with his wife Minerva, a son Luke and an infant Charles. In October of that year, he purchased 73 acres

from Isaac Hull in what was then Ann Arbor Township. According to the family's history, the house was built either in 1834 or 1836, though it could be even older.

Josiah's large brick house has two stories and a classical center entry, and in form resembles a New England house. It has brick end chimneys and an elaborate doorway (not original) with no portico, which is probably how it originally looked. The current windows in the house were added in the 1980s. The black metal stars on the exterior signal the presence of tie rods — iron rods that span the width of the building and help hold it together.

It is not surprising that Beckley built his house of brick, for an 1835 newspaper advertisement indicates he was in the brick business: "Brick! Brick!! Brick!!! Brown and Co. having made an arrangement with Josiah Beckley for brick we are prepared to supply their customers and all others who may wish, with any quantity of the article on reasonable terms. (Signed) Ann Arbor, (on the Huron), April 20, 1835."

Josiah Beckley died in September of 1843 at the age of 53. His wife Minerva and their children continued to live in the house for a few more years but it appears that the house had to be sold to pay Josiah's debts. In 1847 Warren Millard purchased the house and his descendants lived there for almost 100 years.

Today the house remains on its large lot, surrounded by mature trees and looking almost as it did when Ann Arbor was just emerging from the wilderness of the early Michigan Territory.