

STATE: Indiana

COUNTY: Vanderburgh

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY DATE: OCT 15 1973

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON: John Augustus Reitz House

AND/OR HISTORIC: same as above

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 224 Southeast First Street

CITY OR TOWN: Evansville CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Eighth

STATE: Indiana CODE: 18 COUNTY: Vanderburgh CODE: 163

3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY (Check One) | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied | Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private | <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied | <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input type="checkbox"/> Both | <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

| | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural | <input type="checkbox"/> Government | <input type="checkbox"/> Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Comments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | | |

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Catholic Diocese of Evansville

STREET AND NUMBER: 219 Northwest Third Street

CITY OR TOWN: Evansville STATE: Indiana CODE: 18

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Pigeon Township Assessor's Office, City-County Building

STREET AND NUMBER: 8th and Main Streets

CITY OR TOWN: Evansville STATE: Indiana CODE: 18

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

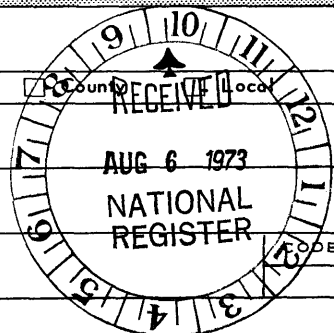
TITLE OF SURVEY: No known existing survey

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE:



STATE: _____

COUNTY: _____

ENTRY NUMBER: _____

DATE: OCT 15 1973

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

2-19-74

10024076

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| (Check One) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
| (Check One) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered |
| (Check One) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moved | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The home was built in 1872. It is constructed of brick with wooden trim. The brick is painted yellow and the trim is brown. There are three floors plus a basement. The mansard roof is pierced by dormer windows which afford a view of the Ohio river. The roof is capped by a cast iron balustrade. The main facade is an L-shape plan with a porch tucked into the L. The surface of this porch as well as the side porch is mosaic tile. The spikes on the iron fence which encircles the house were originally gold leaf.

The ceilings on the first floor are 13½ feet high, elsewhere they are 12 feet high. The ceiling in the living room is an oil painting which was done to match the original oriental carpet. In the study the ceiling is blocks of molded plaster. The one in the dining room is molded plaster with subtle color worked into the design.

The floors in the five main rooms and the hallways on the first floor are hardwood parquet. Each room has a different design.

All of the light fixtures are original and have been converted from gas with the exception of those on the third floor which are still gas. The chandeliers in the living room are gold leaf and were made especially for the room.

There are ten fireplaces. Each mantel is different in design and material. There is a hand-carved walnut one in the dining room, a tiny glazed tile one in the music room, and a cast iron one in a bedroom. The onyx mantel in the living room is twelve feet high and was added in 1893 when it was purchased at the Chicago Exposition. It had been entered as an exhibit by Tiffany's of New York.

Stained glass is used extensively. The inner set of front doors has stained glass panels as do the two doors at the side. The upper section of the bay window and another window in the study plus the windows in the master bedroom are also stained glass. The wood lattices in the archways of the halls have stained glass worked into them.

With the exception of the living room, the cornices on the first floor are hand carved wood in a sphinx-head design. The cornices in the living room as well as the ceiling molding and two 13 foot mirrors are gold leaf.

Some original furniture is still in the home.

There is a large carriage house in the rear.

The home remains today as it was when it was built with only a few minor interior changes. It seems to be in good repair.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The home was built by John Augustus Reitz, Evansville's pioneer lumber king. Mr. Reitz used the finest building materials available in the area in its construction. Mr. Reitz and his son, Francis Joseph, were civic as well as industrial leaders. "Churches, schools, and charitable enterprises have benefited by their gifts of more than \$3,000,000." Two of the city's high schools are named for Francis Joseph.

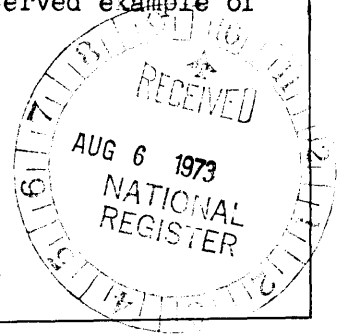
The home was purchased by John Fenderich and his sister Laura Gertrude Fenderich McCarthy, grandchildren of John A. Reitz, and donated to the Daughters of Isabella. When Evansville became a diocese the home was sold to the Diocese and was used as the home of the first Bishop of Evansville until his death in 1972.

The house is located two blocks from the Ohio River in an area of historic homes. This was the finest residential area of early Evansville. The residents were responsible for establishing the business and civic institutions of the town. They were also involved in state and national affairs. A Governor of Indiana lived there as well as a U. S. Secretary of State, two U.S. Ambassadors, some U.S. Congressmen and state representatives. The Area Plan Commission of Evansville is, at this time, drawing up an ordinance setting aside the area as a historic district. The Junior League of Evansville is working to get the entire area listed on the National Register. Walking tours in the area are popular with residents and visitors. It displays most of the architectural styles popular in the Midwest from 1860 to 1920. The home is located within walking distance of the downtown hotels where conventions are held, the museum and three buildings already listed on the National Register. The Delta Queen docks about four blocks from the house and passengers often walk through the area.

The home, which is going to be for sale in the near future, is being considered for restoration and establishment as a living museum. Many of the original furnishings will be returned to it.

The house is significant as the residence of three prominent Evansville citizens. It is most significant, however, as a well-preserved example of mid-American Nineteenth Century architecture.

¹ Morlock, James E. The Evansville Story. (1956), p. 64.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Morlock, James E. The Evansville story. 1956

Peat, Wilbur D. Indiana Houses of the Nineteenth Century. Indianapolis Indiana Historical Society, 1962.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY | | | O R | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES | | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------|---|-------------------------|--|
| CORNER | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | |
| | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | |
| NW | ° ' " | ° ' " | | 37° 58' 03" | 87° 34' 21" | |
| NE | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |
| SE | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |
| SW | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |

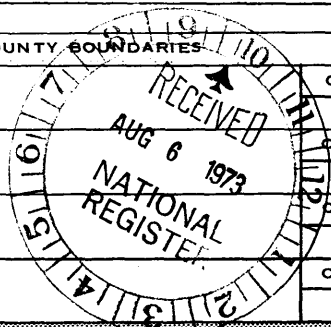
UTM
16/449720
4202170

CD

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/2 acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|--------|------|---------|------|
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Mrs. Richard Snodgrass, Chairman of Historic Preservation Committee

ORGANIZATION: Junior League of Evansville

DATE: August 1, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER:
1113 Greenfield Road

CITY OR TOWN: Evansville

STATE: Indiana

CODE: 18

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: Joseph Poland

Title: Indiana State Liaison Officer

Date: July 31, 1973

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Ernest A. Connolly
~~Ernest A. Connolly, Associate Director, Professional Services~~
Associate Director, Professional Services
OCT 15 1973

Date: _____

ATTEST: Joseph Poland
Keeper of The National Register

Date: 10-15-73



1. 420 S. E. Riverside Dr. - 1869 - Hughes-Eberhart House - Bought by Reuben Hughes in 1896 and remodeled in 1910 under the supervision of Manson Gilbert. House was designed by Henry Mursinna, architect, who also designed Trinity Methodist Church and old St. Mary's Hospital. The house is Italianate in design with a campanile-like tower. It has been recently restored and divided into two apartments.

2. 414 S. E. Riverside Dr. - c. 1865 Rudd-Miller House - the original owner was Capt. Jack Grammer, who married the daughter of W. F. Nisbet, wealthy Evansville merchant. The house was purposely built three stories high to overshadow the Viele-Koch mansion, at that time its next door neighbor. The porches have lovely wrought iron trim.

3. 400 S. E. Riverside Dr. - 1854 - Viele-Koch House - Altered to French Imperial style in 1872 by adding a third story which consisted of a lavish ballroom papered in gold-leaf and capable of seating 60 people for dining. Jenny Lind sang here and P. T. Barnum danced in the ballroom. Quoins on corner of house are of sheet metal made to simulate stone.

4. 216 S. E. Riverside Dr. - c. 1865-70 Dr. Robert Ziss - Style: Early Federal. Building is on lots 1 and 2 of Hugh McGary's original plot of ground (McGary is founder of Evansville.) Present owner has added wrought iron trim and pillars.

5. 214 S. E. First St. - 1850 - Thomas Garvin Home - Modeled after Greek temple with French overtones. Has cast-iron Regency balconies and door and window frames. Mr. Garvin was brother-in-law and law partner of Conrad Baker, later governor of Indiana, and was also the founder of the present National City Bank.

6. 224 S. E. First St. - Francis Joseph Reitz House - Date: 1871 - French Mansard Style. Built by one of Evansville's leading philanthropists. All first floor ceilings were canvassed and hand-painted to match the rugs. Main parlor has onyx and gold-plated mantel. All the heating units were turned on their sides under the flooring so that the radiators wouldn't show.

7. 225 S. E. First St. - Mrs. George Eggers House - Frame - built in 1871. Mrs. Eggers' father rented a room from the original owners when he first came to this country from Germany. Mrs. Eggers has occupied the house since 1911.

8. 301 S. E. First St. - Gothic Style, built in 1885. Chapel is copied from an original in England. Looking down Chestnut St. toward Third one can see Trinity Methodist Church, also Gothic, built in 1866.

9. 304 S. E. First St. - Date: 1889 - North Storms House - Good example of the Victorian Gothic style of architecture.

10. 310 S. E. First St. - Nisbet-Koch House - 1875 - Very ornate and full of

unexpected design. Has hand-carved walnut staircase. Kitchen was in basement and food was brought up by dumb-waiter, which goes to third floor. House was built by W. F. Nisbet who had the first home telephone in town in 1882.

11. 313-315 S. E. First St. - Date: 1840 - This double house is the sole surviving example of early Federal style. It is flush with the street, which is typical of Eastern seaboard houses.

12. 408 S. E. First St. - Warren-Wood House - c. 1865-68. Both house and carriage house have been converted into apartments.

13. 414 S. E. First St. - Original owner, William Neff, 1838-1850. This Victorian residence has many fireplaces, ornamental plaster, fine woodwork and silver and crystal chandeliers.

14. 420 S. E. First St. - Sherwood-Mudd House - Date: c. 1860 - Tall columned portico added in 1909. Style Greek Revival. The original owner was the proprietor of the "Sherwood House", the city's finest hotel until eclipsed by the St. George Hotel in 1874 (later the McCurdy). Rooms have 15 ft. ceilings and parquet floors.

15. 18 Oak Street - Former carriage house of the Rosenkrantz-Boetticher house (facing First St.) has been charmingly converted into apartments with an enclosed courtyard with fountain and decorative statuary.

16. 506 S. E. First St. - Date: c. 1847 - owned by the Babcock family from 1864-1936. House is Federal in style with 13 ft. ceilings on first floor and 10 ft. ceilings on upper floor. Three of the original six fireplaces are in operation. All interior woodwork is black walnut.

17. 606 S. E. First St. - Mark Gross House - Date: 1895 - Architect: Frank Schlotter. Style: Very mixed Victorian with circular, rectangular, oval and horseshoe windows. Brick, wood, stone and terra cotta have been used.

18. 615 S. E. First St. - Johnson-Maier House - Date: 1867 - Built by

Alvah Johnson; walls of double parlor were frescoed and the ceilings done in gold leaf. The wrought iron grill-work was added in about 1873.

19. 620 S. E. First St. - Gross-Decker House - Date: 1882 - Surrounding fence was once part of the Vanderburgh County Courthouse.

20. 706 S. E. First St. - Gillett-Newman House - Date: 1860 Style: French Mansard. House was built by Wm. Lowry, founder of the Citizens Bank, who made two trips by flatboat down the river to New Orleans and walked back. It is thought that New Orleans may have influenced his choice of architecture in this house. It contains several marble mantels above one of which is a large gold-leafed mirror extending to the 12 ft. ceiling.

21. 726 S. E. First St. - Sonntag-Bayard-Kiechle House - Date: 1863. This house, built by George Sonntag, was later occupied by Samuel Bayard, the founder of our library system. Bayard Park was named for him. He was an associate in the banking business with W. J. Lowry, who built the house at 706 First, and he married the daughter of Samuel Orr. The house is a superb example of an Italian Villa with a tower and has beautiful natural finish woodwork.

22. 827 S. E. First St. - John Fendrich Residence, built in 1920



when Mr. Fendrich was head of Fendrich Cigar Co., and still occupied by his widow.

23. 813 S. E. First St. - Bosse-Dodd House, built in 1914 during Benjamin Bosse's first term as mayor of Evansville. It was called the city's first "California bungalow". Bosse Field and Bosse High School are both named for the mayor.

24. 605 S. E. Riverside Drive - Morgan Manor - Date: 1853. House was built by William Preston and sold in 1864 to J. H. Morgan. House is Georgian in style and was built with a long central hall with a lengthy drawing-room on one side balanced by library and dining room on the other. The gardens covered all the land between Riverside Drive and the River. The house was the center of gay fashionable young society in Evansville from 1870-1890.

25. 500 S. E. Riverside Drive - Babcock-Hammond House - Date: 1848. Style Georgian. The mansard roof was added shortly after the house was built to give additional bedroom space. Porch on second floor was added by present owner. House has cherry parquet floors, gold-leaf cornices and mirrors. It was built by Henry Babcock, whose daughter, Lucy, married James Walker. She was born in the house and lived there all her life.



Walking Tour of Old Evansville

"Evansville is rich in admirable examples of 19th Century American Architecture. It may safely be stated that although the buildings of Evansville have until only quite recently remained overlooked by students of architectural history, the many examples available for study cover... every major 19th Century style which appeared on the American scene." (Architectural Heritage of Evansville)