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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

MAR 14 1994

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name N/A  
other names/site number Brick Gothic House (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 1.25 mi S of Albia, .75 mi E of IA 5, .5 mi W of T35  N/A  not for publication  
city or town Albia  vicinity  
state Iowa code IA county Monroe code 135 zip code 52531

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

David L... 3/3/94  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
State Historical Society of Iowa  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

for  
Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Date of Action 4-14-94  
**Entered in the National Register**

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

- building(s), district, site, structure, object

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19TH CENTURY/Gothic Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation LIMESTONE

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Name of Property

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
removed from its original location.
a birthplace or grave.
a cemetery.
a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
a commemorative property.
less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1870's

Significant Dates

1870's

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Name of Property \_\_\_\_\_

County and State \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property Less than one acre.

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>115</u>	<u>51165110</u>	<u>45376310</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>

3	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Molly Myers Naumann, Consultant

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date December 1993

street & number 167 West Alta Vista telephone (515) 682-2743

city or town Ottumwa state IA zip code 52501

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional Items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Annette and John Scieszinski

street & number 223 South C telephone (515) 932-7525

city or town Albia state IA zip code 52531

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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NATIONAL  
REGISTER

Section number 7 Page 1

CFN-259-1116

Brick Gothic House  
Monroe County, Iowa

## Description:

This brick Gothic Revival style house from the 1870's is located on the west side of a gravel road approximately one and one-quarter miles south of Albia (the Monroe County seat). This gravel road extends directly south from Main Street in Albia. The one and one-half story gable roof house is T-shaped, with the rear portion of the house forming the top of the T, and the leg of the T pointing east toward the road, creating the primary facade. The house measures 32'3" from north to south, and 33'7" from east to west. The major feature of interest is the use of Gothic (lancet) arched openings on all elevations.

The house sits back from the road approximately 50' and is surrounded on three sides by a row of pine trees. The trees across the front (east) are white pine, while those along the north and south sides are Scotch pine, with an occasional Red Cedar volunteer. These trees form an important landscape element and are considered to be part of the site being nominated. The pattern developed for planting the trees allows the house to be seen through the trees while being protected by them. The two center trees on the east side align with the north and south walls of the dwelling, while the second trees along each side align with the front of the house. No trees were planted along the rear (west) side as a ravine protects the house at that point. The house is built on a slope, with the basement opening at ground level in the rear.

The house rests on a foundation of limestone blocks which vary in size, the average being approximately 9" by 38". The foundation is capped by a watertable of ashlar limestone, the blocks being 10" by 48". The foundation is not continued around the west (rear) elevation where the wall is of brick to ground level. This west wall is the only part of the house which does not feature symmetrical fenestration. Two doors and three windows are located at ground level, with the sequence being window, door, window, window, door. All five openings feature segmental arched tops, the doors with transoms. Above this irregular arrangement are found three symmetrically placed Gothic arched windows.

A total of nine Gothic arched windows are used on the first floor and three on the second. Two windows are located on the end of the north and east wings, with a small Gothic window centered in the gable end above. On the south elevation the small arched window is found in the gable, but the pair of windows has been replaced by a polygonal bay of wood construction (this extends to ground level with a bay in the basement as well). The side walls of the front wing each feature a single Gothic arched window. Windows throughout have 2/2 double hung sash and limestone sills (5" by 41"). The windows on the north, east, and south feature brick patterned hoods formed by three-course rowlock arches, the outer projecting beyond the other two, set on brickwork imposts. The three Gothic windows on the rear (west) do not have these hoods.

The brick used for the house is of rosy-red color, measures 8" by 2 1/2 " by 3 3/4", and is laid in common bond with headers appearing every eighth course. The mortar

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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CFN-259-1116

Brick Gothic House  
Monroe County, Iowa

### Description (continued):

is light gray in color, with joints that are fairly narrow and slightly recessed. Repointing is highly visible in several places due to the color of the replacement mortar and the width of the joints.

A small wooden enclosed porch is located in the corner created by the T shape on the south. The appearance of the original porch has not been determined, but it was probably approximately the same size and shape. The present porch covers the front door which opens into the rear portion of the house. This doorway features a segmental arch. A similar "mock" doorway is located in the north corner. This is a brick filled panel recessed in the wall. There is no indication, on either the exterior or interior, that this north "doorway" was ever an actual opening as the brickwork matches that on the rest of the house. It appears to have been placed there for symmetry. At first glance there appears to be a shadow of a porch roof across the front of the house, at the top of the arches. Closer examination however, reveals this to be the partial repointing of two brick courses and the top of the windows. The shadow does not continue across the facade or wrap around the north side to the "doorway".

The house was reroofed with asphalt shingles about ten years ago. A single chimney is located in the center of the front wing, not far from the intersection with the rear portion of the house. This chimney has been stuccoed. There are no signs of decorative vergeboards on the gable ends.

On the interior there are three rooms on each floor. Centered in the rear section of the house a staircase leads to the second floor, with stairs to the basement located directly below. Most interior walls are presently covered with modern paneling, and ceilings have been covered with acoustical tile. The woodwork is primarily intact although it has been painted. It is very simple and the framing around the Gothic windows is flat without grooves or other designs. First floor doors feature transoms. The entry door has two arched vertical panes and two simple recessed panels. The interior is surprisingly plain when compared to the elegance of the Gothic arched windows. No determination has been made as to the function of any of the individual rooms. It is possible that the kitchen was originally located in the basement since it does have ground level access.

There are two non-contributing structures located on this site. One is a white propane gas tank located on the lawn just north of the house. The other is a wooden platform to the south which holds a water pump and two built-in benches.

The primary alterations to this brick Gothic house include the "new" porch, some repointing, and interior changes such as paneling. The overall integrity of both the house and the site remains at a high level. The present owners plan a sympathetic rehabilitation.

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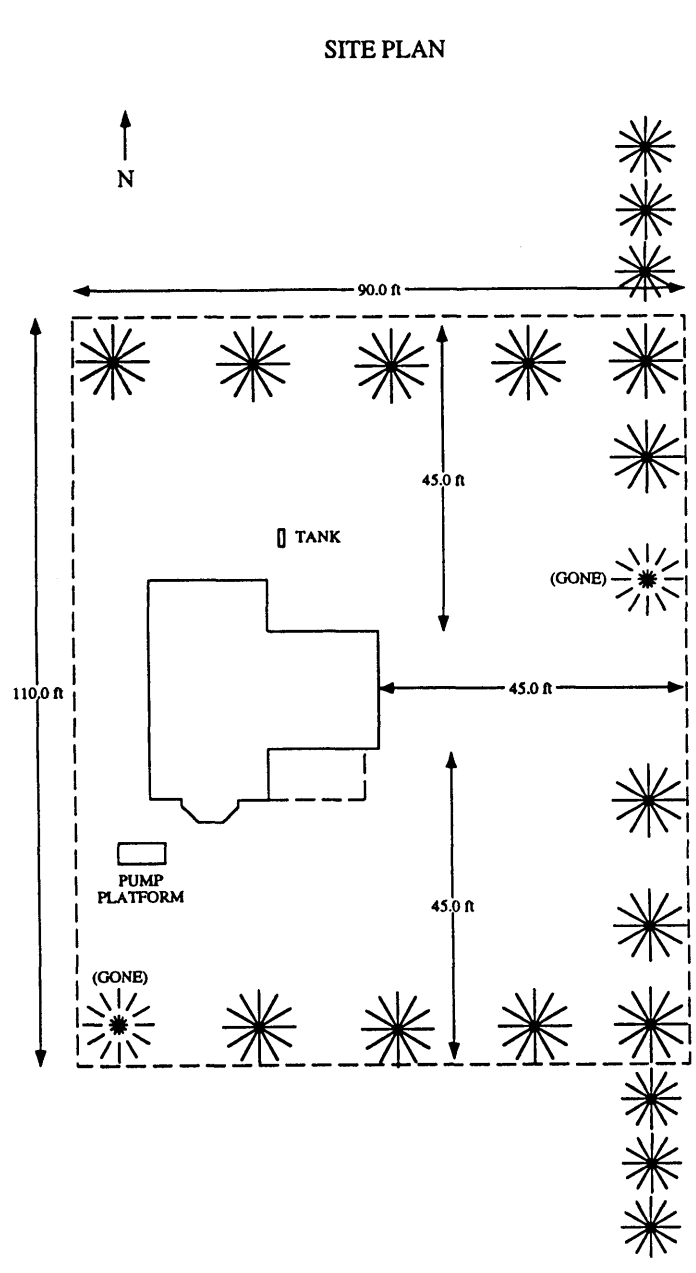
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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Brick Gothic House  
Monroe County, Iowa

Description (continued):



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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

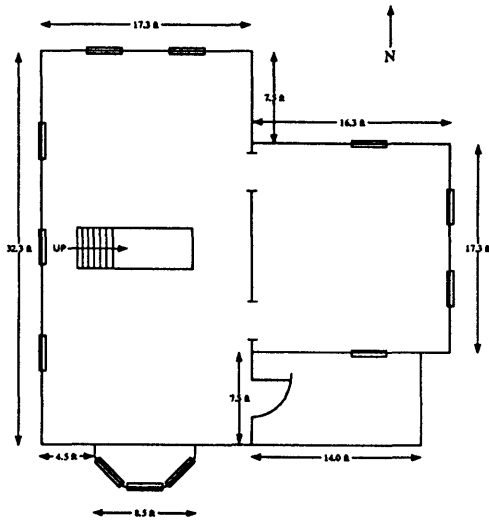
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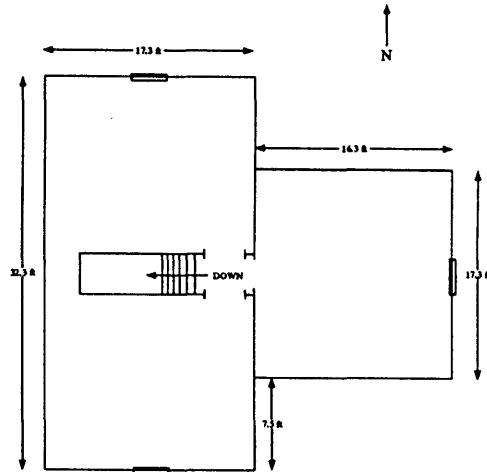
Brick Gothic House  
Monroe County, Iowa

Description (continued):

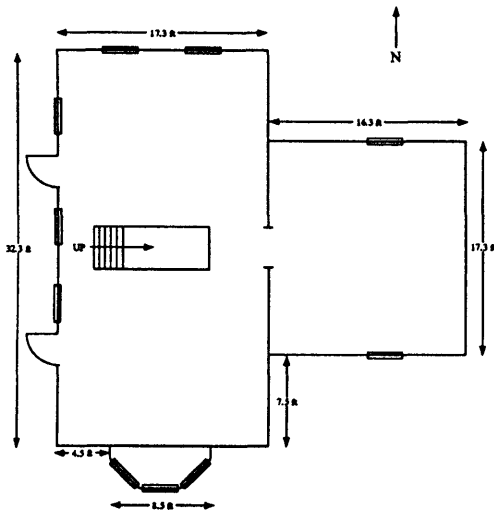
FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



BASEMENT





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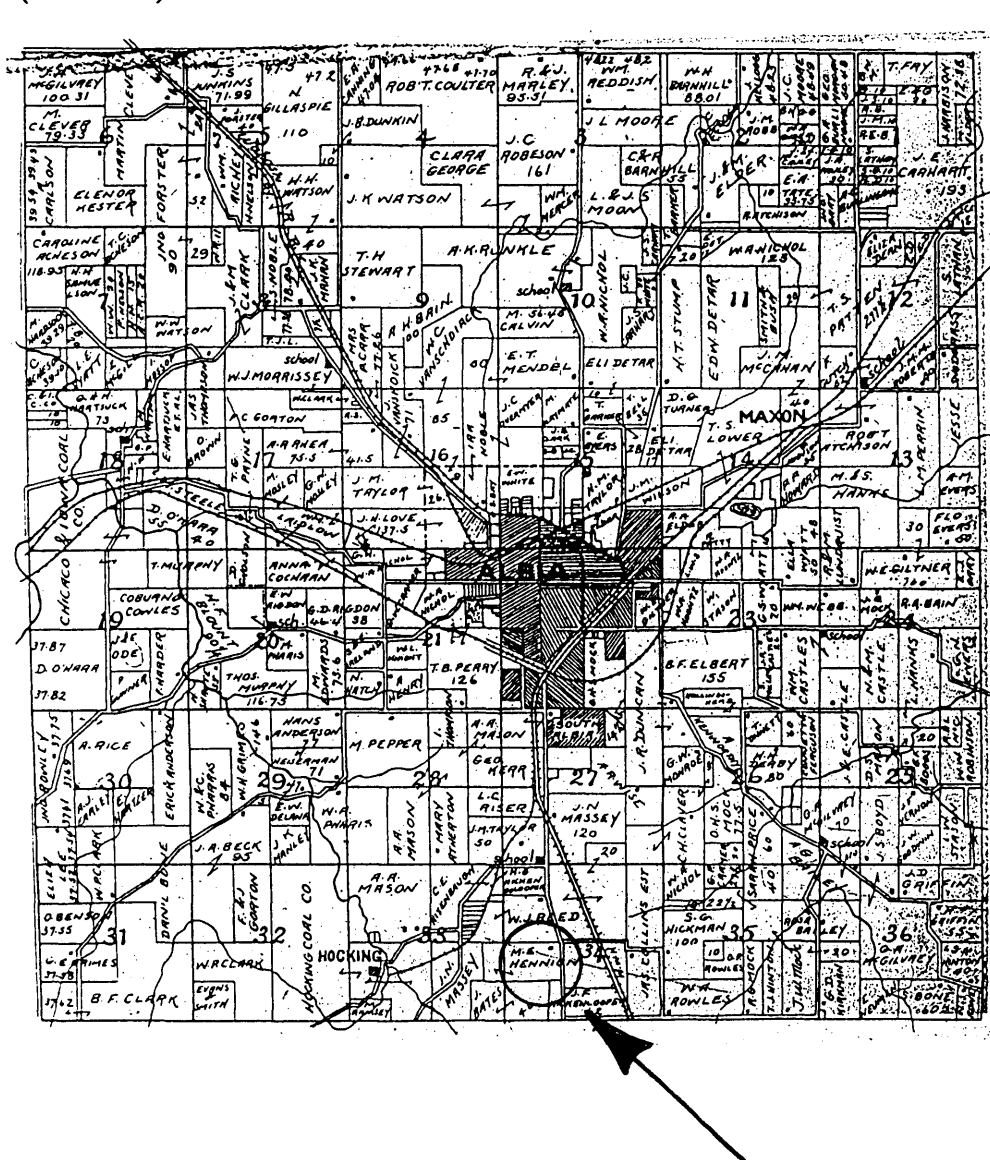
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Brick Gothic House  
Monroe County, Iowa

Description (continued):



Map of Troy Twp. showing location of the Brick Gothic House.

From the 1902 Monroe County Atlas.

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National Park Service

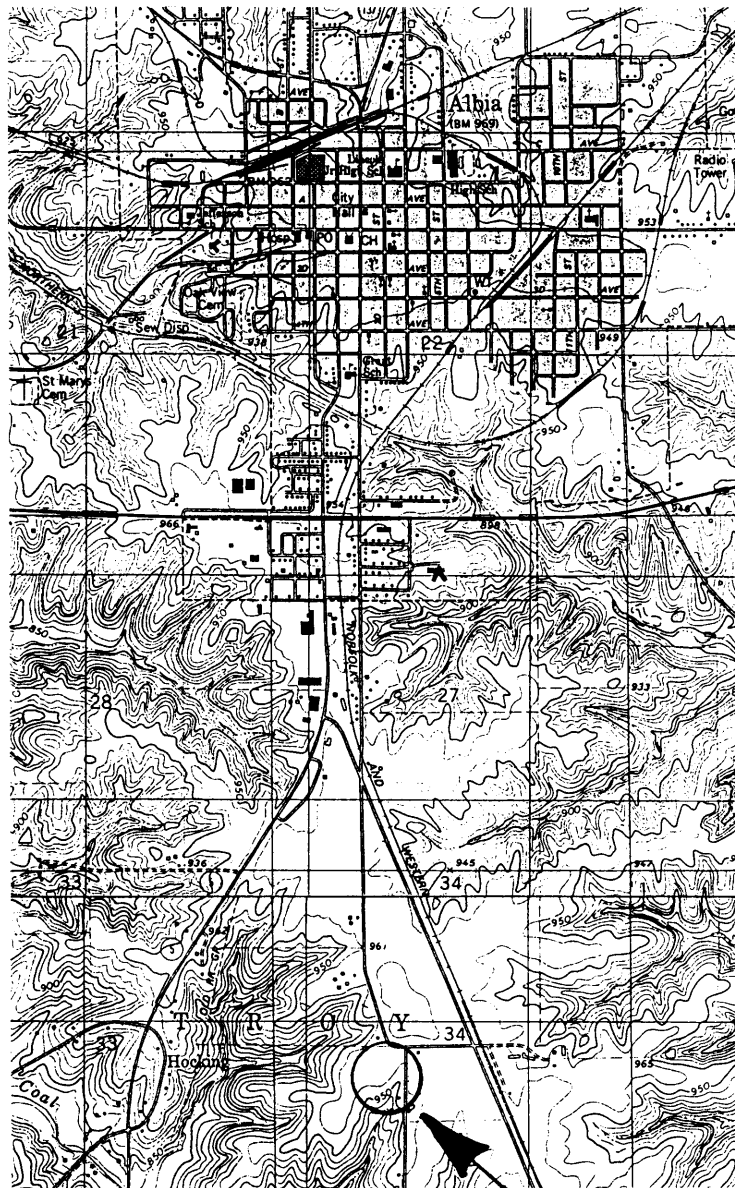
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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CFN-259-1116

Brick Gothic House  
Monroe County, Iowa

Description (continued):



U.S.G.S 7.5 Minute Map showing location of Brick Gothic House  
Albia & Moravia Quads combined (reduced to 70%)

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

CFN-259-1116

Brick Gothic House  
Monroe County, Iowa

### Statement of Significance:

This one and one-half story house from the 1870's is locally significant under Criterion C as a good example of the popular Gothic Revival style executed in brick by a local builder. It is a somewhat rare example of a truly rural Gothic house, being located on a farm. It features a number of characteristics associated with this romantic style that was popularized by A.J. Downing in the 1840's and '50s. The period of significance reflects the estimated date of construction based on land and census records.

Like other 19th century romantic styles, Gothic Revival had its beginnings in England. Although A.J. Downing was not the first to promote the style in this country, he is the person who popularized it in his books, Cottage Residences (1842) and The Architecture of Country Houses (1850). These books contained not only plans and drawings of house designs, they also included information on materials and colors to be used (he was diametrically opposed to pure white and bright green), furnishings, and landscaping the property. Downing went into great detail on the types of flowers, shrubs, vines, fruits, vegetables, and trees that were appropriate for different styles and different locations. Diagrams were provided for different types of gardens and plantings. His designs were for "rural" residences. That is, not those being built in the center of an eastern city. It is safe to assume that most of the 19th century communities in Iowa would have met his definition of "rural". Throughout his books he stressed that small houses did not have to be plain little boxes. The Gothic Revival style was one that he recommended for modest size dwellings. The style, loosely based on the vertical elements of the Gothic churches of Europe, featured a steeply pitched gable roof, often with one or more projecting gables or dormers. Windows with pointed (Gothic) arched tops were characteristic, sometimes all of the windows featured this arch, and other times a single Gothic window would be used. The gables were often trimmed with decorative vergeboards, pendants, and finials. The pointed arch was sometimes repeated in the design of the single story porch or veranda. The McAlesters note that 80% of the Gothic Revival houses featured a single story porch originally. Although Downing felt that such houses should ideally be built of stone, he was willing to concede that brick (preferably with a stuccoed surface) might be substituted, and if absolutely necessary, wood could be used as the building material. Many of the wooden examples feature vertical board and batten construction. The style was popular primarily from c.1840 to c.1870. Downing's pattern books were widely published, with many editions over the years (editions of Cottage Residences were published in 1842, 1844, 1847, 1852, 1853, 1856, 1860, 1863, and 1873). Because the popularity of the books spanned several decades, Gothic Revival houses were built here in Iowa during the 1860s and '70s.

Gothic Revival was never as popular in Iowa as the Italianate style, but examples can be found across the state. One of the finest examples is "Rose Villa" (1856) located at 710 N. 7th Street in Keokuk. This is a textbook example of the style, complete with elaborate front Gothic window, vergeboard, arched porch design, and octagonal chimney

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Brick Gothic House  
Monroe County, Iowa

## Statement of Significance (continued):

pots. Rose Villa was either architect designed or carefully crafted from a pattern book. The majority of Gothic houses in Iowa were not this "high style". The two story brick James B. Weaver House (NHL) in Bloomfield (Davis County) dates from 1865 and features Gothic arched windows with brick patterned hood molds throughout the house, but does not have vergeboards, pendants or finials. The Gleckler House in Farmington (Van Buren County) from c.1865-70 is a simple brick rectangle with projecting front gable. A triple arched Gothic window is located in the front gable, and a single Gothic window is located in each gable end. A lithograph in the 1875 Andreas Atlas shows the house in much its present condition, without vergeboards. The 1858 Stratton House (NRHP) in Centerville (Appanoose County) is one of the earliest examples of the style in this area. It too is a simple brick rectangle with projecting front gable. However, none of the windows feature a pointed arched top. Decorative vergeboards are located on the front and end gables. The most famous of the Gothic Revival houses in southeastern Iowa is the Dibble House in Eldon (Wapello County) from 1881. This residence is listed on the NRHP not so much as a good example of the style, but because it served as the model for Grant Wood's painting "American Gothic". It exemplifies the majority of the so-called Gothic houses, with a simple pointed arched window located in the front gable (and a duplicate window in the rear gable). The Dibble House also illustrates the use of board and batten construction.

The houses noted above are not the only examples of Gothic Revival design in southeastern Iowa, but there are relatively few others. The Area XV Cultural Resources Surveys (1979-84) identified less than a dozen in the ten county area, and most of those were in Van Buren County. The City of Albia can boast of a fine wood frame example at 204 B Ave West. This two story house is L-shaped and features Gothic arched windows on both floors, decorative vergeboards, a two story polygonal bay, and a graceful single story porch inset in the corner. This is said to have been built in 1867. The only other example so far identified in Monroe County is the brick Gothic house that is the subject of this nomination.

This brick house in Sec 34, Troy Twp. is unusual as it is located in a truly rural setting, having been built as a farmhouse. Major characteristics of the style include the rather steeply pitched gable roof and Gothic arched windows. The polygonal bay is typical of both Italianate and Gothic houses of the period. While most of the architect designed Gothic houses which are T-shaped have the entry located in the top of the T, with the leg of the T forming a rear wing, this house is reversed. It does retain the idea of a single story porch tucked into an inside corner. The lavish use of pointed arched windows and the relatively expensive building material make this an unusual example of a farmhouse. Added to this is the arrangement of pine trees along the perimeter. While Downing stressed coordinating the house and grounds through careful planning, he also favored informal, non-geometric, plans for gardens and grounds. This particular house utilizes half

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

CFN-259-1116

Gothic Brick House  
Monroe County, Iowa

### Statement of Significance (continued):

of his ideas: the pines were carefully selected to enhance the appearance, but then they were planted in rigid rows aligned with the cardinal points. It is a curious blending of the romantic concept, Gothic arches and what Downing called "melancholy pines". The owner of this house at the time of construction must have been aware of Downing's writings and adapted them to suit his needs.

It has proven impossible to determine an absolute date of construction or even who the original owner was. Research into the land records shows that this property was purchased, along with other partial sections, by Andrew Elswick in 1846. Elswick was originally from Virginia, and the 1850 census shows him living on this land with his wife and eight children. By 1860 census figures show that he owned real estate valued at \$6,000. The 1870 census shows his real estate valued at \$12,100 but does not list how much land is involved. Elswick died in 1875 at the age of 75. Deed records show that this part of his property was purchased from his heirs in 1878 by Marcus E. Hennion for \$6,120. The 1878 History of Monroe County says that Hennion was a farmer who owned 860 acres in the county and "removed to his present farm in 1877." The map shows the "present farm" is the site of the brick Gothic house. The discrepancy between the two sources on when Hennion occupied and actually became owner of the property has not been clarified. It is possible that he moved to the property prior to the completion of the sale. Hennion sold this property in 1887 to Stephen and Charles Ames for \$9,000, and repurchased it in 1892 for \$10,000. From that time until his death in 1910 the land on which the house is located stayed in his ownership, although he sold other sections of the farm to his two sons. He moved into Albia in 1897, building the Hennion Block at the southwest corner of the Public Square about that time. The Hennion Block is a contributing structure in the Albia Square and Central Commercial District, NRHP.

None of this land and census research provides a firm date of construction. Utilizing other information, the white pine and Scotch pine are not native to this area and would have to have been shipped in. This did not become a common practice until the arrival of the railroad. The lavish use of pointed arched double hung windows would seem to indicate that these were mass produced, and would have been brought in by rail. The railroad did not arrive in Albia until after the Civil War, in 1866. The 1867 date for the Gothic Revival house in Albia indicates a period when the style was locally popular. The source of the brick has not been determined, but these are similar to the ones used in the Elbert-Bates House (NRHP) from c.1875, and would seem to indicate that the owner of the house was fairly prosperous. For these reasons the date of construction has been estimated as sometime in the 1870s. It appears probable that it was Marcus Hennion rather than Andrew Elswick who had the house built, but this has not been proven. Because of this the house is referred to as the "Brick Gothic House" and not identified by owner.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 & 10 Page 10

CFN-259-1116

Brick Gothic House  
Monroe County, Iowa

### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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- Area XV Cultural Resources Survey Reports. 1979-1984.
- Deed Records for T72N R17W Sec 34 NE 1/4 SW 1/4. County Recorder's Office, Monroe County Courthouse, Albia, IA.
- Downing, A.J. The Architecture of Country Houses. New York: Dover Publications, 1969 (reprint of original published in 1850 by D. Appleton & Co.).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Victorian Cottage Residences. New York: Dover Publications, 1981 (reprint of the 1873 edition published by John Wiley & Son of New York, first published in 1842).
- Garrison, Raymond E. Tales of Early Keokuk Houses. Hamilton, IL: The Hamilton Press, 1959, p. 109.
- Hickenlooper, Frank. An Illustrated History of Monroe County, Iowa. Albia, IA: 1896.
- History of Monroe County, Iowa. Chicago: Western Historical Press, 1878.
- McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.
- State Historical Society of Iowa, Historic Preservation Bureau Files, Des Moines, IA.  
National Register forms for the Dibble ("American Gothic") House, Eldon, IA;  
Stratton House, Centerville, IA; and, James B. Weaver House, Bloomfield, IA.  
Information submitted by Alfred M. Pabst concerning the house at 204 B Ave West, Albia, IA.
- United States Bureau of the Census, Seventh through Tenth, and Twelfth Enumerations, (1850-1880, 1900).

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

A parcel of land located approximately 1.25 miles south of the City of Albia, .75 mile east of Iowa 5, and .5 mile west of County Road T35 in T72N R17W, Sec 34 NE 1/4 SW 1/4 (Troy Twp., Monroe County, IA). The parcel is rectangular in shape, measuring 90' by 110' with a N/S axis, centering on the brick house in question. The boundary extends just beyond the trunks of the pine trees on the north, east, and south sides, and on the west it follows a line due south from the northwest corner.

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

This is the area historically associated with this resource, and includes not only the house, but the pine trees which were planted as part of the overall site design.