

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAR 26 1986

date entered APR 25 1986

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic A.B. Seelye House

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number 1105 N. Buckeye not for publication

city, town Abilene vicinity of

state Kansas code 020 county Dickinson code 041

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Terry and Jerry Tietjens

street & number 1105 N. Buckeye

city, town Abilene vicinity of state Kansas 67410

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dickinson County Courthouse

street & number Courthouse Square

city, town Abilene state Kansas 67410

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Kansas Inventory of Historic Sites

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1971 federal state county local

depository for survey records Kansas State Historical Society, 120 West 10th

city, town Topeka state Kansas 66612

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The A.B. Seelye House (ca. 1905-1906) is located at 1105 North Buckeye in Abilene, Dickinson County, Kansas (pop. 6,572). The twenty-five room Georgian Revival style residence was the most elaborate house built in Abilene at the time of its construction and remains as one of the community's most architecturally significant structures. The house has had virtually no alterations although a 1982 fire damaged its northeast corner and caused smoke and water damage throughout the structure. The house has been restored in accordance with the original blueprints and maintains a high degree of architectural integrity.

The A.B. Seelye House is a white, two and a half story, clapboard sheathed, frame structure which rests on a rusticated and coursed limestone foundation. It is a rectangular structure with an ell projection from the rear. Oriented to the west, the building's facade is symmetrically composed. A central two and a half story, three bay projecting pedimented portico is flanked by two story, one bay wings on each side. A balustraded truncated hipped roof with asphalt shingles covers the main body of the house. The central projecting pediment and the various dormers that pierce the roof on the north and south sides are gable roofed and covered with cedar shingles. Interior chimneys rise from the north and south sides of the house and from the rear of the ell.

The massive pedimented portico is supported by four large, fluted Ionic columns, grouped in pairs to offset the center hall entries on the first and second floors. An undecorated architrave, a frieze, and a dentilled cornice with modillion blocks compose the portico's entablature. This entablature is employed throughout the building. A raking cornice exhibiting the same cornice treatment as used on the entablature decorates the pediment. A palladian window marks the pediment's center. Its treatment is elaborate, exhibiting a moulded surround, dentil courses above the sidelights, and a keystone above the arched window.

The portico frames the semi-elliptical recession of the porch space. A balustraded walkway outlines the entire facade on the second story, curving to conform to the ellipse. Balustrades also outline the porch space fronting the wings which flank the portico. Two small, unfluted Doric columns support the second story walkway at the north and south corners of the porch. These capitals were once Ionic.

Fluted Ionic pilasters accentuate the facade corners on each of the flanking wings. Bowed windows project from the center of each wing, each grouping having a center front, stationary leaded glass window flanked by two 12/1 double hung windows. Two, one story fluted Ionic pilasters decorate the outer edges of the bay windows, encased between the window projections and the corner pilasters.

Within the recessed porch space are two center entries. The first floor doorway is flanked by two three-quarter length leaded glass sidelights. The door surround is classically derived; Ionic pilasters flank the sidelights, supporting an entablature. Recessed panels stand beneath the sidelights. The door itself is a wide component with a three-quarter length bevelled glass light. A second story door rests directly above this, flanked on each side by a set of 12/1 and 16/1 double hung windows, the wider windows abutting the doorway. Within the curves of the semi-ellipse on either side of the doorways stand a 20/1 double hung window on the first floor and an arched 1/1 double hung window on the second floor.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates ca. 1905-1906

Builder/Architect

Jacob L. Krueger-Builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The A.B. Seelye House (ca. 1905-1906) is being nominated to the National Register under criteria A and C for its historical association with Alfred Barnes Seelye, the founder of the A.B. Seelye Medicine Company, and for its architectural significance. Alfred Barnes Seelye (1870-1948) developed one of the leading patent medicine companies in the Midwest, making his fortune between the mid-1890s and the mid-1920s. The imposing twenty-five room Georgian Revival mansion that Seelye built in 1904-1905 stands as a tribute to his good fortune, costing over \$40,000 to construct.

Seelye's interest in pharmacology stemmed from the paternal teachings of his Illinois youth and from his college education. In 1888 Seelye enrolled in the first year's curriculum of "materia medica and chemistry" at the Chicago College of Physicians and Surgeons, which later became part of Northwestern University. He subsequently spent a year studying literature at the University of Michigan.

Seelye settled in Abilene in 1890 and began producing such imaginative and marketable products as "Wasa-Tusa" (ca. 1890), "Ner-Vana" (n.d.), and "Fro-Zona" (ca. 1913). The A.B. Seelye Medicine Company also manufactured cures for horses and chickens, perfumes, extracts, and spices. Most of Seelye's products were sold door to door by wagon driving peddlers or through the mail. These medicines and cures were trademarked by the A.B. Seelye Medicine Company but not legally patented by the U.S. Patent Office. Between 1902 and 1913 Seelye published Seelye's Almanac: Health Guide and Cook Book, which proved to be a very successful advertisement for his products.

Financial difficulties and changing times effected the A.B. Seelye Medicine Company's decline in the late 1920s. Despite its economic reversals, the company continued to operate its laboratory from its Abilene base until 1959. Reed Products of St. Louis, Missouri purchased the firm in 1960 but terminated the agreement the following year, returning all samples, bottles, and book formulas. The company, although no longer operational is held by the present owners of the A.B. Seelye House.

The Georgian Revival styling of the Seelye residence was the result of designs Alfred and his wife Jennie (? - 1952) had seen at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair and also from a standard format plan published in a home improvement magazine of the period. Several minor changes were made to this standard format plan by the Topeka architectural firm of Holland and Squires, who were active in Kansas from 1903 until around 1910. The actual building was constructed by Jacob L. Krueger, an Abilene contractor responsible for many of the community's early Twentieth Century residences, commercial, and public structures, including the Old Belle Springs Creamery and Produce Building (ca. 1902-1909, NR 1982) and the Abilene Carnegie Library (ca. 1905-1908).

The A.B. Seelye House is architecturally and historically significant in the context of its Abilene location and maintains a high degree of architectural integrity.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Attached Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.6 acres

Quadrangle name Abilene

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	1 4	6 5 4 9 4 0	4 3 0 9 9 4 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

D			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

E			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

F			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

G			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

H			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is a rectangle measuring 1.6 acres. It is bounded by North Buckeye on the west, 12th street on the north, 11th street on the south, and adjacent property lines on the east.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
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state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Martha Gray Hagedorn, Architectural Historian

organization Kansas State Historical Society date 1/15/86

street & number 120 West Tenth telephone 913-296-5264

city or town Topeka state Kansas 66612

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Executive Director,
title Kansas State Historical Society

date Jan. 30, 1986

For NPS use only

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

Entered in
National Register

date 4-25-86

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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The window surrounds for the rectangular double hung windows are plain, with a single beaded moulding capping each architrave.

The treatment of the north and south sides and the eastern rear of the house echoes the facade. A semi-circular two-story bow projects from the center of the three-bayed south side. Of the three bays, the eastern bay is slightly recessed. Fluted Ionic pilasters mark the corners of the two bay segment while a smaller Doric pilaster marks the corner of the recessed segment. A pedimented gable roofed dormer with two 9/1 double hung windows pierces the roof above the center bow projection. A pedimented gable roofed dormer with one 9/1 double hung window pierces the roof above the western bay. A raking cornice distinguishes the classically treated pediments. 12/1 double hung windows comprise the fenestration of the two bay body of the south side. A curved bank of three windows fills out most of the bow on each level. A single window is used for each floor on the western bay, placed in line below the dormer. One 9/1 double hung window is used on each floor of the eastern recessed portion, above them one 6/1 double hung window that peaks out from an exposed portion on the third floor where the roof line changes. Basement windows pierce the stone foundation below the first floor windows.

The treatment of the north side of the house is identical to that of the south side but for a three bay flush extension to the eastern section. 9/1 double hung windows are employed for this portion and there is a door located near to where the extension or ell begins.

The rear of the house exhibits eight bays with irregular window placement at three levels. A porch runs along the rear to the ell, supported by Doric columns. A porte-cochère projects at a 45 degree angle from the porch's southern corner. It is approached by a circular drive from the east. A centrally located door provides access to the main body and there is a door centrally placed in the gable end of the ell. A fanlight sits above the porte-cochère on the second story landing.

The landscaping, which was once extensive, has deteriorated. An eight-sided wooden post gazebo with an eight-sided bellowed tin roof with a conical apex is the only vestige of the once prolific plantings and paths. It stands southeast of the house. The grounds are being re-landscaped according to the 1905 Reinisch site plan.

The interior of the house exhibits high Georgian Revival styling in its elaborate mantles, imposing staircases, beamed and plaster floral swagged ceilings, oak and pine flooring, panelling, and moulding. All of the light fixtures are original. When constructed, the telephone and electric lines feeding the house were placed underground. The massing and room variety, including a third floor ballroom and a basement bowling alley also mark this house as unusual for its time. Eleven of the twenty-five rooms are bedrooms and there are six bathrooms.

The A.B. Seelye House is architecturally and historically significant in the context of its Abilene location and maintains a high degree of architectural integrity.

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Reinisch, A. Blueprints Pavilion. January 1905.

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Wedel, James. "A.B. Seelye: Patent Medicine Man." (Bethel College, unpublished
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