

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAR 11 1985

date entered APR 11 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic G. W. S. Allen House

and or common

2. Location

street & number 207 E. Henry St. not for publication

city, town Mt. Pleasant vicinity of

state Iowa code 019 county Henry code 087

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	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<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 Ms. Helen Hallowell

street & number 207 E. Henry St.

city, town Mt. Pleasant vicinity of state Iowa 52641

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk's Office

street & number Henry County Courthouse

city, town Mt. Pleasant state Iowa 52641

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Situated in a fine old residential neighbor in close proximity to downtown Mt. Pleasant, the G.W.S. Allen house is probably the most intact and best preserved example of the Queen Anne style, particularly in its late free classic phase, in that county seat town. Constructed in 1900 from mail order plans purchased from George F. Barber and Company, the house's plan is essentially a distillation of two designs offered in that firm's 1899 catalog and further refined and modified by the Allens and their builder. As such, the Allen house illustrates to a remarkable degree the interplay of forces that shaped a significant portion of late 19th and early 20th century domestic architecture.

The Allen house is an irregularly shaped, 2 1/2 story, wood frame edifice that rests on rusticated limestone blocks over a full basement. Exterior walls are sheathed in shite painted wooden clapboards while the upper half-story is clad with wood shingles. Windows are generally of the one-over-one wood sash variety and are set in rectangular surrounds. The house is capped with a hipped roof with lower cross gables that is covered with asbestos shingles and is pierced by two, brick interior chimneys with pilastered caps.

Stylistically, the Allen house can be described as Queen Anne, but it represents the last stage of the style when neoclassical and neocolonial decorative elements were increasingly utilized. Its irregular massing, assymetrical facades, cutaway bay windows, scrolled vergeboard trim, encircling porch and lattice work, and circular tower with conical cap rather typical of the Queen Anne mode. The Doric porch columns, porch pediments, the cornice line dentils on the porches and tower, scalloped eave brackets, recessed panels between the curved glass windows in the tower, and the founded and shouldered architrave window and door trim, however, are neoclassical and neocolonial and give the Allen house a sharply different character than those Queen Anne houses of a few years earlier that utilized Eastlake detailing.

Inside, the Allen house consists of an entry hall, parlor, dining room, sitting room, and kitchen on the first floor; three bedrooms, a servant's room, a sewing room, and a bathroom on the second floor; a fullfloored attic; and a basement area divided into five rooms. There has been no change to the original floor plan over the years, and a substantial amount of the interior fabric remains. This includes woodwork with original grained oak and cypress finishes, delicately turned grille work, parquet floors, wainscoting, radiators, and lighting fixtures.

The Allen house possesses a remarkable degree of exterior and interior integrity. A comparison of the house at present with a 1909 published photograph shows that the only elements that appear to be missing are the roof cresting, a spire that capped the tower, and two wooden finials that capped the two lower front porch newels. A few feet northwest of the house is a one-story garage constructed in 1931 which does not contribute to the historical significance of the property.

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 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 1900 **Builder/Architect** George F. Barber & Co.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The G.W.S. Allen House, situated in a fine old residential neighborhood near downtown Mt. Pleasant, is probably the most intact and best preserved example of the Queen Anne style, particularly in its late free classic phase, in that county seat town. Constructed in 1900 from mail order plans purchased from George F. Barber and Company, the house's plan is essentially a distillation of two designs offered in that firm's 1899 catalog and further refined and modified by the Allens and their builder. As such, the Allen house illustrates to a remarkable degree the interplay of forces that shaped a significant portion of late 19th and early 20th century domestic architecture.

George S.W. Allen, born in Rutland County, Vermont in 1850, came to Iowa with his parents in 1855 and settled in Lee County. By 1862 his family had moved to Salem in Henry County, and a few years later he entered the world of business as a clerk with E.L. Penn and Company in Mt. Pleasant. Eventually he went to work for George H. Spahr, Clothier and worked for him until he established his own clothing business in 1882. Four years later, he married May Whiting, only daughter of John H. Whiting, president of the National State Bank of Mt. Pleasant. In 1893 Whiting gave portions of four lots directly west of his residence at 211 East Henry Street to May Whiting Allen for "love and affection and \$1.00" for her and her husband to build a home. The Allens, however, waited several years before commencing construction, probably because of the Panic of 1893 and its aftermath. The last years of the 19th century saw a surge of prosperity, and it was very likely this economic upturn that spurred the Allens to proceed with their delayed building plans.

Like many upwardly mobile middle and upper class couples of this era, the Allens were attracted by the architectural designs offered by George F. Barber and Company. Barber and his firm in Knoxville, Tennessee conducted a large scale, national mail order architectural practice by advertising widely in carpenters and builders periodicals, women's magazines, and other popular publications. Prospective clients purchased Barber's catalogs and either picked a design directly from the catalog or else developed their own in consultation with Barber and his staff. Once a design decision had been made, clients completed rather detailed questionnaires and sketch sheets which were mailed to Barber with a stated fee, ranging from \$15 to \$224 depending on the size and complexity of the particular house. In return, Barber provided full working drawings and complete specifications, as well as contract blanks, color charts, and price lists of bills of material.

Unfortunately, none of the correspondence between the Allens and Barber has survived. While it is possible they contacted Barber in response to one of his advertisements in one of the leading periodicals of the day, it is more likely they utilized his services because of a testimonial from a friend or neighbor in Mt. Pleasant. A pictorial guide to the town, Mt. Pleasant Beautiful, published in 1909, has photographs of six houses, including the Allens, that appear in Barber's 1893 and 1899 catalogs, and there are several others in this local publication that may be Barber's work.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Refer to Continuation Sheet 9-2.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Mt. Pleasant

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000

UTM References

A

1	5
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 Zone

6	2	2	0	0	0
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 Easting

4	5	3	6	0	9	0
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 Northing

B

--	--

 Zone

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 Easting

--	--	--	--	--	--

 Northing

C

--	--

 Zone

--	--	--	--	--	--

 Easting

--	--	--	--	--	--

 Northing

D

--	--

 Zone

--	--	--	--

 Easting

--	--	--	--	--	--

 Northing

E

--	--

 Zone

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 Easting

--	--	--	--	--	--

 Northing

F

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

G

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

H

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification East ninety feet of Lots 8, 9, 10 and the southern three fourths of Lot 7 in Block 41 in the Original Plat of Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, plus a five foot wide adjoining strip on the east boundary, the latter being located in Outlot #1, Original Plat of Mt. Pleasant. Contains house and garage only.

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

state n/a code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Text: Ralph C. Christian
Form: James E. Jacobsen, National Register Coordinator

organization Iowa HPO date 14 February 1985

street & number E. 12th & Grand Ave. telephone 515-281-4137

city or town Des Moines state Iowa 50319

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

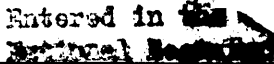
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Adrian A. Anderson

title Executive Director Iowa State Historical Department date 28 February, 1985

For NPS use only

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



Delores Byer
Keeper of the National Register

date 4/11/85

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation sheet

Significance

Item number 8

Page 2

The Allens probably contacted Barber in 1899 and received a copy of his newest catalog, Modern Dwellings and Their Proper Construction. In this publication Barber urged prospective clients to "make up your sketch and send us your wants" on a specially prepared blank enclosed in the catalog and "we will then be able to demonstrate what our artists can do. It costs you nothing if we do not please you--we take all the risk." It appears the Allens took Barber at his word, because the plans they received in 1900 are a distillation of two designs in the 1899 catalog with a few added touches.

The Allen house appears to be based on Designs 32 and 42 from Modern Dwellings. The floor plan is almost identical to that shown for Design 32, which was based on a house Barber designed in Tottenville, New York that could be constructed for \$2,400 to \$2,600. With the exception of the tower and partial wrap-around porch, few of the exterior features of Design 32 appear in the Allen house. The exterior to a large degree is based on Design 42, which was called the "Klondike" and could be built for \$2,300 to \$2,500. The porch design is more difficult to pin down, but several similar ones appear in the 1899 catalog. Barber's stated fee for Design 32 was \$45 and \$32 for Design 42, and it appears most likely that the Allens, because of the numerous changes they requested, paid at a minimum the fee for the former design.

After receiving plans and specifications from Barber, the Allens in consultation with their builder made several changes while the house was under construction. The east side of the wrap-around veranda was enclosed to provide a sleeping porch for the Allen's daughter, who suffered from tuberculosis. The other major design change was to eliminate the palladian window that was to be in the upper front gable and simply leave a round arch sash window in its place. The reason for this change is unknown, but most likely it was a cost cutting measure.

The Allens owned and occupied the house until 1920 when it was sold to Horace C. Putnam and his wife Louise. In 1926 the parents of the present owner purchased the property, and she has lived in the house since January 23 of that year.

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Continuation sheet Bibliography

Item number 9

Page 2

Barber, George F., Modern Dwellings and Their Proper Construction (Knoxville, Tenn S.B. Newman & Company, 1899).

_____, "Residence for G.F.S. Allen, Esq., Mt. Pleasant, Iowa," original architectural drawings in possession of Helen Hallowell, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, copy in Office of Historic Preservation files.

_____, The Cottage Souvenir No. 2 (Watkins Glen, N.Y.: American Life Foundation, 1982 with introduction by Michael A. Tomlan). Originally published in 1892.

Mt. Pleasant Beautiful (Mt. Pleasant: University Press, 1909).

Portrait and Biographical Album of Henry County, Iowa (Charman Brothers, 1885).

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1899, 1909, and 1920/31.