



6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic / Single Dwelling

Domestic / Multiple Dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic / Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Weather board

roof Asphalt

other Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Iverson-Johnson House is a Queen Anne residence built in 1898 that sits on a standard-sized residential lot within the city of Stoughton. East Washington Street is a tree-lined street of turn of the century houses about two blocks north of Stoughton's Main Street commercial district. The Iverson-Johnson House has a similar setback to the other houses on the street and has a corner lot.

The house is two stories in height, of frame construction, and has a square plan. Because it was constructed late in the Queen Anne era, it has a somewhat more symmetrical appearance, letting its detail provide the complexity of the style. The house has a hipped roof from which a substantial corbelled cream brick chimney projects. There are four gables that project from the front facade, rear facade, and rear corners of the house. These gables have much of the significant stylistic detail of the house. The house is completely clad in its original clapboards.

Probably the most unusual detail of this house are the tall, narrow dragon heads projecting from the gables of the house. Known locally as "gargoyles" the wooden dragon heads were originally soaked in linseed oil, making them less prone to decay over the years. The dragon heads were said to be good luck charms for Norwegians, but were rarely used on residences as they are in this house. Besides the gargoyles, details on this house include elaborately carved cross pieces in the gables, bargeboard, and two elaborate porches. The porch over the main entrance is a veranda with a round gazebo-like structure at the corner. The porch also has a decorated pediment defining the entrance and a decorative balustrade. A smaller porch sits over the side entrance on the front facade to the right of the main entrance. Another decorative element on the house is a rear, second-story balcony off one of the upper bedrooms. It features bracketed turned posts and a decorative balustrade similar to the one on the front porch. The rear porch is supported by two large brackets at each end.

stone

Projecting from the/foundation at the rear is a octagonal-roofed structure that was originally built as a greenhouse. It is partially roofed with asphalt shingles and partially roofed with fiberglass panels. The fiberglass panels were once glass.

All the openings in this house are original. Most windows are one-over-one double-hung sash windows without trim. However, one east facade window is decorated with a carved wooden panel topped with a pediment cornice with brackets. This elaborately decorated window also has gothic arched leaded glass panes. It is unique to the house. The main entrance is a double wood and glass door. Other doors are simple wood and glass doors. At the side entrance on the front facade is a speaking tube.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Health-Medicine

Period of Significance

1898-1905

Significant Dates

1898<sup>1</sup>

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Iverson, Michael

Architect/Builder

Builder: A. E. Ovren<sup>2</sup>

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Iverson-Johnson House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places because it is locally significant for architecture and history. It is significant for history under criterion B, because it is associated with Michael Iverson, a turn of the century physician who founded the Stoughton Community Hospital. It is significant for architecture under criterion C, because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction--the Queen Anne Style, as expressed in Stoughton, Wisconsin. After a brief historical background, these themes will be developed in detail.

Historical Background

Stoughton is a community in Dane County, Wisconsin with a significant Norwegian-American population. In 1894, Norwegian immigrant Dr. Michael Iverson came to Stoughton after studying medicine in his native land. He soon became known for his medical skill and established a successful practice. In 1898 he decided to replace the house he and his family were living in at 327 E. Washington St. with a new building in the popular style of the day--Queen Anne. Construction was begun around April of 1898 and completed in October of that year. The house was large and elegant, although not extravagantly so. It had a maid's room, a servant's bell system, a speaking tube at the side entrance so that patients could call for his services at night, and a steam-heated greenhouse off the basement. The placement of the unusual dragon heads on the gable peaks made Iverson's house distinctive in the community.<sup>3</sup>

In 1904 Iverson saw a need to provide more specialized medical services to his patients. He founded the Scandinavian-American Hospital, also known as the Stoughton Surgical Hospital in the former Stoughton Academy building (demolished). Iverson put his personal finances into the project and because the project was not an immediate financial success and for reasons of convenience, Iverson decided to move his family to the hospital building in 1905, vacating his house at 327 E. Washington St.<sup>4</sup>

Peter Norman Johnson, another Norwegian immigrant, purchased the house in 1905. It was a retirement home for Johnson, who came to Dane County in 1849 and settled on a farm. Johnson eventually expanded the family holdings to three farms before moving

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

"'Gargoyle House' Unique in Design and History." Stoughton Courier Hub, 15 May 1986, Sec. 2, p. 18.

Neuwirth, Eric. "Dr. Iverson to Enter Hall of Fame." Stoughton Courier Hub, 14 May 1987, SEc. 1, p. 3.

Stoughton Courier, 1 April 1898, p. 5; 21 October 1898, p. 5.

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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

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property less than one

UTM References

A 

1	6
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3	1	9	0	7	0
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4	7	5	3	8	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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B 

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Zone Easting Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 1, Block 28, Original Plat of Stoughton.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the intact portion of the property lot historically associated with the Iverson-Johnson House.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Carol Lohry Cartwright, Historian date August 12, 1987  
organization Consultant telephone (414) 473-6820  
street & number R. 2, 5581A Hackett Rd. city or town Whitewater state WI zip code 53190

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Before the widespread availability of telephones, patients needing the original owner, Dr. Michael Iverson, could come to his home and use this speaking tube. It was connected to his bedroom so he could be called at night.

The double entrance doors lead to a small entry hallway. The main staircase is in this hallway and leads to the second floor. There are also doors off this hallway that lead to the dining room, parlor, and music room. To the right of the entrance hallway is the kitchen. It was remodeled in the 1940s and contains simple wooden cabinets and a tile floor. Off one side of the kitchen is a small room that was Dr. Iverson's office originally. Off the other side of the kitchen is a bathroom and the back staircase. To the east of the kitchen is the dining room that leads to the parlor to the south. The parlor leads into the music room on the east side of the house. All of the woodwork on the first floor is identical. It is painted oak with simple classical detailing. Doors and windows have wide side moldings and cornice moldings. The cornice moldings have a carved egg and dart pattern. This pattern is also found on the fireplace mantel in the parlor. The fireplace is also decorated by two Ionic columns.

The second floor is reached off the main staircase. The staircase has a simple newel post and turned-post balustrade. On the staircase landing is one of the unusual features of the house. It is a window made from half of a church window reportedly from the first church in Norway that used glass windows. It is a plain frosted window with a small pane of stained glass at the bottom and an inscription dated "1700."

The second floor has five rooms and a bathroom off a central hallway. Three of the rooms were original bedrooms and a maid's room. Two bedrooms on the south side of the house are still in original condition. The north bedroom was converted into the living room for an apartment that was made on the second floor in the 1930s. To the west of this living room is a new bedroom, probably constructed from a porch or added on to the second story. At the end of the hallway is the kitchen, once the maid's room. Next to it is the bathroom and the rear staircase.

The house is currently undergoing needed maintenance on its exterior. This includes painting the white clapboards an attractive green and keeping a white trim color. Carpentry repair work is also being done. Overall the quality of maintenance on this home is excellent. It is occupied by the 96-year-old daughter of the second owner of the house. The "gargoyle house," as it is known in the community, is a local landmark.

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into town. The current resident of the house is the daughter of Johnson who married Melvin Teige in 1918. After living for a while in Madison, the Teiges came back to Stoughton and began a successful oil and gasoline station business. In 1930 they purchased the Iverson-Johnson house and lived there ever since. Mrs. Claudine Teige, 96 years old, still occupies the house her family has owned since 1905.<sup>5</sup>

Architectural Significance

The Iverson-Johnson House is a fine and well-preserved example of the late Queen Anne style as seen in Stoughton. It is distinguished by unusual features not seen on other Queen Anne houses in the community, which contains a large concentration of simple Queen Anne houses.

At the time of its construction, 1898, the Queen Anne style was still a popular style in Wisconsin. Although, according to Wisconsin's Cultural Resource Management Plan, architecture chapter, the Queen Anne style in its later period was less exuberant and more symmetrical than in its earlier period. Particularly popular on Queen Anne houses were classical details, and as the early years of the twentieth century progressed, Queen Anne houses became more and more transitional into the emerging Colonial Revival style. The Iverson-Johnson House is typical of this pattern. Its detail is more restrained than on earlier Queen Anne houses, and its interior features simple classical details. Of particular note, the house has an interesting front veranda, with its gazebo-like section at the corner being an outstanding feature. The second story porch at the rear complements the delicately carved decorations in the gable peaks. But what is particularly distinctive about this house are its unusual features, the dragon heads, the old church window, and the greenhouse projecting from the rear of the basement. These features, not seen elsewhere in Stoughton, make this Queen Anne example stand out from the others in the community.

Aside from its fine architectural details, the house has an outstanding level of integrity and high level of preservation. The architectural detail is all intact, including the old speaking tube at the side entrance. The current owner even apologizes for the replacement of the glass panels on the old greenhouse with fiber-glass panels, due to vandalism and liability concerns. Best of all are the original openings that have been maintained and not covered with aluminum storm-screen windows so often seen on older homes. All of these details contribute to the overall charm of the house.

Stoughton has an abundant group of Queen Anne houses within the city limits. While none are particularly outstanding individual examples, together, they indicate a complete development of the style in the community. Most of the Queen Anne houses in Stoughton feature a basic square plan with the asymmetry of the style found in projecting gables, elaborate porches, and stick-work detail. The Ole K. Roe House (405 S. Fifth St., NRHP) is probably the best Queen Anne house in Stoughton and one of the few brick residences in the city. Other prominent Queen Anne houses

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include the residences at 100 S. Van Buren St., 322 Oak St., 117 N. Franklin St., and 118 N. Page St., the only other Queen Anne house to feature a gazebo-like section on the veranda like that of the Iverson-Johnson House. The Iverson-Johnson House is neither more nor less elaborate than most of Stoughton's other fine Queen Anne examples. Most likely these other houses would also meet the criteria for eligibility for the National Register. The Iverson-Johnson House stands out among the group because of its high level of integrity and the unusual features found nowhere else in the city.

Little is known about the builder, A. E. Ovren. Apparently he constructed a large, late Queen Anne house at 224 S. Van Buren St., now covered with artificial siding and with considerable loss of integrity. There are no other houses in Stoughton that are known Ovren-constructed residences. The unusual details of the Iverson-Johnson House are probably from the mind of its original owner, Dr. Michael Iverson, and do not necessarily represent the ideas of the builder. However, the fine quality of construction and attention to detail on the house indicates that Ovren had some skill as a builder. A more complete uncovering of his works might shed more light on his significance to the physical development of the community.

Because the Iverson-Johnson House is a fine example of a type or period of construction, the Queen Anne Style, and because it features unusual details and a high level of integrity in the community, it meets the eligibility criteria for the National Register of Historic Places. But even more significantly, as the famed "gargoyle house" in Stoughton, it stands as an architectural landmark within the city.

Historical Significance - Health/Medicine - Association with Significant Person

The Iverson-Johnson House is significant for local history because it is the main historic resource remaining in the community associated with the founder of the Stoughton Community Hospital, Dr. Michael Iverson. According to Wisconsin's Cultural Resource Management Plan, the development of community hospitals in the early twentieth century was a significant event in the history of health services in Wisconsin. The plan indicates that before 1900 there were few hospitals of any kind in the state. Hospitals increased dramatically during the twentieth century, as medical science made surgery common and many severe illnesses treatable. Of particular note was the development of community hospitals, meant to serve the entire community. Often, community hospitals were affiliated with religious orders, but were public in nature.<sup>6</sup>

The development of the Stoughton Community Hospital was typical of the development of these hospitals in the state. It began with the medical career of Dr. Michael Iverson. Iverson was born in 1861 near Bergen, Norway. After a classical education, Iverson studied medicine with some of the noted physicians of Germany between 1886 and 1889. He returned to Norway and graduated with a medical degree from the Royal University at Christiania in 1890. He came to America in 1891 and settled in Stoughton. He established a successful practice, being particularly noted for eye and ear problems and surgery.<sup>7</sup>

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In 1898 Iverson built the impressive Queen Anne house at 327 E. Washington St. The house reflected Iverson's personality and love of his native land. The dragon heads, said to be a good luck charm, were prominent on his residence, and the old church window added to the house represented his appreciation of his heritage. The greenhouse also represented his outside interest in gardening year around. In 1904 he determined that his surgical practice could improve with the establishment of a hospital. He established such a facility in the old Stoughton Academy and named it the Scandinavian-American Hospital, reflecting the dominance of Norwegians in the community. Also known as the Stoughton Surgical Hospital, the facility was equipped with the most modern medical furnishings. In the basement was the kitchen, dining room, laundry and bathrooms. The first floor had wards and offices. The second floor had special eye disease wards, children's ward, and an operating room. The hospital had a capacity of 60 patients. Iverson moved his family to the hospital in 1905. In 1925, Iverson's health began to fail and he sold the hospital to the Stoughton Hospital Association. An addition was added to the old building in 1939, but the old structure was demolished in 1956 and replaced with a modern building, added to in 1974. Iverson died in 1929 and was lauded for his service to the community.<sup>7</sup>

The establishment of a hospital in a community was a significant historical event and the persons responsible are significant to the history of the community. If the old hospital building that was taken over by Iverson still existed it would be the most significant resource associated with him in the community and would best represent this historical event. However, it does not exist, and Iverson's house, where he lived when he founded the hospital, is the best remaining resource in the community that represents Iverson's distinguished medical career. Because of the house's fine level of preservation, it has almost the identical appearance it did when Iverson built it.

The hospital that Iverson founded grew into the Stoughton Community Hospital, one of the most important health resources in the city today. In fact, the Stoughton Hospital is the only hospital in Dane County outside of the city of Madison. It serves the city and surrounding area, providing a high level of health care to Dane County residents. It exists in large part because of Michael Iverson, whose memory is still alive today in his house at 327 E. Washington St.

Notes:

<sup>1</sup>Stoughton Courier, 1 April 1898, p. 5; 21 October 1898, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.; "Gargoyle House" Unique in Design and History," Stoughton Courier Hub, 15 May 1986, SEc. 2, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup>Eric Neuwirth, "Dr. Iverson to Enter hall of Fame," Stoughton Courier Hub, 14 May 1987, Sec. 1, p. 3, 8.

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<sup>5</sup>"Gargoyle House," p. 18.

<sup>6</sup>Barbara Wyatt, ed., Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Vol. 3,  
Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986, pp. Social and Political  
Movements 6-1--6-4.

<sup>7</sup>Neuwirth, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 3 and 8.

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Property Owners:

Official Owner: Peter N. and Barbara K. Teige, Trustees  
566 Sand Hill Circle  
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Local owner: Mrs. Claudine Teige  
327 E. Washington St.  
Stoughton, WI 53589

Also Notify: Mrs. Chris Owens  
Stoughton Landmarks Commission  
511 S. Page St.  
Stoughton, WI 53589