

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received OCT 14 1987

date entered

NOV 16 1987

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

1. Name

historic A. J. STEPHENS HOUSE

and/or common CARPENTER HOUSE; LUCAS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM

2. Location

street & number 123-17th Street not for publication

city, town Chariton vicinity of

state Iowa code 019 county Lucas code 117

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> educational |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | <input type="checkbox"/> in process | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government |
| | N/A | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> military |
| | | | <input 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 Lucas County Historical Society

street & number 123 - 17th Street

city, town Chariton vicinity of state Iowa 50049

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lucas County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Chariton state Iowa 50049

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Area XV Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records Bureau of Historic Preservation

city, town Des Moines state Iowa

7. Description

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input checked="" 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. J. Stephens House extensively uses hollow concrete block in construction, employs a simple rectangular shape sometimes called American Four-square, and features Neoclassical stylistic details especially on the front porch.

Main block measures 27' x 42' comprising approximately 1,134 square feet on each of the buildings two stories. There is a 10' x 10' open porch at the rear, as well as a 9' x 10' entryway, each one story. North elevation features a 2' x 8' two story bay window. South elevation features a 1' x 10' bay window, two stories and also a 2' x 8' oriel window. Facade (east elevation) has a full-height entry porch with gable roof and also a lower full-width porch which wraps around the south elevation. The lower porch is one story. It is independent of the full-height entry porch. Entry porch measures 17' x 8'. Lower porch measures 34' x 8' on east elevation and 15' x 7' on the south. There is a bay window on the north end of facade which measures 3' x 7' and is one story. Deck of front and back porches is concrete.

Structural system consists of masonry load-bearing walls. Wall material is hollow concrete block with broken ashlar face laid in regular courses. Color is beige. Beige colored brick is used as ornamentation in quoin work, door surrounds, double-string courses on rear entry, and in association with concrete block over doors and windows. Bay and oriel windows are clapboard painted white.

Windows have double-hung sash 1/1 with segmental arches. Most windows employ modern, combination storm windows. Sills are concrete. Front door features an exaggerated brick pediment; back door has segmental arch.

Front entry porch features four columns with composite capitals. Porch supports two story balcony with railing (c. 1976). Entry porch has gable end with plain wood shingles and lunette window with keystone. Lower front porch features five-columns with simple Doric capitals and wide frieze. There is an entry/exit on west elevation of wrap-around as well as on facade.

North elevation has an exterior chimney with side slope on east. Building material is concrete block with brick quoin work. Chimney above roofline is red brick. Original chimney cap is non-extant with shorter replacement. There is an interior chimney at west elevation. The cap, originally brick, has been removed and replaced with metal plate. Original height remains approximately the same.

Roof is hipped, moderately pitched, with ridge running east to west. Front entry porch gable ties into it below the ridge. Secondary hipped roofs cover bay windows on north and south elevations and tie into main roof. Oriel window has hipped roof butting south exterior wall. Rear porch and entryway share hipped roof. Lower front porch has nearly flat roof. Roofing material is asphalt shingle throughout in brick red color. Eaves form a wide overhang and are boxed. Several narrow bands of brick form a simple frieze below them.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Interior-wise, the A. J. Stephens House has a floor plan three rooms deep by two rooms wide on the first floor. Woodwork is mostly oak, original to the house. Dining room features a paneled wainscot and there is an opening between parlor and living room flanked by oak columns. Some of the original doors have been removed from the first floor. Most overhead electric light fixtures are original.

Second floor has five bedrooms arranged along a central hall. The bathroom is at the end of the hall. The basement is divided into two areas by a structural masonry wall running east to west.

Antique photographs show some landscaping on the property (which Stephens' daughter reports he designed) and entryway columns to the drive. The landscaping has been changed over the years and the entryway columns are non-extant.

The A. J. Stephens House sits on a lot approximately 188.43' x 572.88'. At the rear of the house there is the John L. Lewis Historical Building (1976), the Otterbein Church (relocated to site 1976), and Puckerbrush Schoolhouse (relocated to site 1969). The National Register boundary line includes only the A. J. Stephens House and its front and south yards. The boundary excludes other museum buildings located in the backyard areas. The large front and south yards provide a spacious setting for the house. The museum buildings to the rear are not intrusive for this reason. Seventeenth Street slopes moderately steeply to the north in the neighborhood and the A. J. Stephens House gains additional stature from its siting on this hill.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1908 **Builder/Architect** Andrew Jackson Stephens, Builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The A. J. Stephens House is a fine example of a vernacular residence employing hollow concrete block as primary building material. It is the only residential example in Chariton which uses this material exclusively for walls and only one other building; a church, uses it as extensively. The American Four-square is a widely used form in Chariton, but the large scale of the A. J. Stephens House distinguishes it from others using this plan. The scale and stylistic details of the front porch also distinguish the house in the community.

A. J. (Andrew Jackson) Stephens built this house around 1908 for himself and his family. Edward Stephens, eldest son of A. J. Stephens, assisted in the construction. A. J. Stephens was a Chariton building contractor. The large scale of his house was intended to showcase masonry products and Stephen's skill in using them. The house was also intended as a statement of social standing according to a local source.

Stephens' middle name was self-styled and indicates pride in being self-made. Born in Indiana, he moved to Lucas County as a youngster and was self-taught in the construction business. He learned carpentry, the laying of brick, stone and concrete, and basic architecture. Stephens worked as an independent building contractor in Chariton, Lucas County, in the state of Iowa and out of the state. Some of his bigger jobs included: Church of the Nazarene (Chariton, IA); Schoolhouse (Prescott, IA); Methodist Church (Corning, IA); Lucas County Jail (Chariton, IA); unidentified building (Pleasantville, IA); Schoolhouse (Julesburg, Swedgwick County, CO); and the A. J. Stephens House (Chariton, IA). Twice during away-from-home work Stephens moved his family, once to Corning and once to Pleasantville. The family usually remained in Chariton when Stephens had out-of-town work.

In later years, Stephens sold the A. J. Stephens House and bought a farm near Chariton. Between about 1923-1928 Stephens lived in Des Moines and worked as a building contractor, he moved subsequently. Stephens died in Claremore, Oklahoma and is buried there.

The primary architectural significance of the A. J. Stephens House is its building material. Hollow concrete block was widely used in the United States during the first years of the Twentieth Century. The 1908 Sears, Roebuck catalogue featured, for example, a concrete building block machine at a reasonable price which could be operated by one workman. Manufacturers of hollow concrete block published pattern books to stimulate interest in the material. (Concrete Country Residences, the Atlas Portland Cement Company, New York, 1909, featured for example, homes of solid concrete block, hollow concrete block, and stucco on metal lath.) Hollow concrete block could thus be made locally by the builder/owner, or could be bought prefabricated.

In Southern Iowa, homes of the period frequently employed hollow concrete block

9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see Section 9, Page 2+.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Chariton

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000.

UTM References

A

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 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

Includes the east 150' of Lot Number Seven in Subdivision of Part of Lot Number One in the Southeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 19, T-72N, R-21W, City of Chariton, Iowa. Includes house, drive and frontage 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 Marita Moir - Clerk Typist III
W. C. Page - Historican (research, nomination, photos)

organization State of Iowa Historical Society
Bureau of Historic Preservation date September 23, 1987

street & number Capitol Complex telephone 5/5/281-4137

city or town Des Moines state Iowa 50913

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 James E. Jacobsen
James E. Jacobsen
title Chief, Bureau of Historic Preservation date October 8, 1987

For NPS use only

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

for Albion Byrum date 11-16-87
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 2

for foundations. The incidence of buildings constructed entirely of them, is, however, relatively low; and the number of residential examples amounts to a scarcity. In Chariton there are only two buildings which use hollow concrete block exclusively for exterior walls: the A. J. Stephens House and the United Presbyterian Church (1908). As a result, these two buildings are rare in the community. Stephens obtained his concrete block ready-made through the Stewart Lumber Yard of Chariton. These blocks measure 5" x 10" x 4". The Presbyterian Church employed the same block.

Charitonians traditionally employed stone for important buildings: Lucas County Courthouse (1893/NRHP); St. Andrew's Episcopal Church (1893/Non-extant); first United Methodist church (1898); Stanton-Ensley-Crocker Block (1901); The new technology of hollow concrete block offered an alternative to the high cost of stone while still conveying a sense of dignity and monumental scale. Still hollow concrete block remained an expensive material compared with wood and had a very limited use in Chariton.

Hollow concrete block has peculiar properties which, like stone, provide the possibilities of its use. In Southern Iowa, hollow concrete block is usually a lead grey color. Buildings constructed entirely of these blocks often appear sombre. the Noble-Kendall House (1907/NRHP) is an example in nearby Albia. The United Presbyterian Church and the A. J. Stephens House, in Chariton, both employed an unusual beige colored block. This light color gives warmth to the building material while maintaining a feeling of dignity.

The A. J. Stephens House employs a number of pleasing and successful ideas in the use of hollow concrete block. The house has a simple, rectangular shape, appropriate for the material. Architectural details, like the porches and bay and oriel windows, are equally bold and complement the angular geometry of the main block. The round porch columns provide a soft contrast.

The concrete block and the wood details also act against one another in visual tension. The eye perceives the concrete block as massive and immovable. At the same time, the vertical feeling of the entry porch, the bay and the oriel windows and the horizontal feeling of the lower front porch, contradict by conveying a sense of movement. The wide overhang at the eaves boldly calls attention to the roof, which holds the composition together.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3

The source of Stephen's design for this house is unknown. It follows standard designs of the period which integrated Neoclassical porch details into American Four-square shapes. The A. J. Stephens House and the Presbyterian Church impressed Chariton: "Such buildings show that in the future concrete will be largely used in most buildings. It seems probable that the day is not far distant when concrete, glass and iron will be largely used in the construction of houses of all kinds."¹

¹Stuart, Theodore M., Past and Present of Lucas and Wayne Counties, Iowa; Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1913, Two vols., Vol 1, p. 53.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

Abstract of Title. Property Lucas County Historical Society, Inc.

Concrete Country Residences. New York: The Atlas Portland Cement Company, 5th edition. 1909. 168 pp. with illustrations of solid concrete block, hollow concrete block, and stucco on metal lath construction.

Sears, Roebuck and Company Catalogue. Number 117. 1908. Chicago: The Gun Digest Company. (reprinted edition). pp. 574-576, 581. "The Wizard Concrete building Block Machines." Advertisements and data concerning this machine and its attachments.

Antique Images: Black and white photographs: six snapshots 2 1/4" x 4". Picture of house looking southwest, northwest, facade head-on, north, and two others looking northwest which show south entry drive to grounds. Images date circa 1917. Large size 13" x 16" shows house looking NNW. Circa 1917.

"Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps". New York City: 1907, 1913, 1927. None of these maps show the 17th Street area/neighborhood. Fire maps are unavailable for the A. J. Stephens House.

"Des Moines, Iowa, City Directories"; 1920-1931, 1935, 1940, 1944.

Stuart, Theodore M. Past and Present of Lucas and Wayne Counties, Iowa, Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1913. 2 vols. Vol. 1, p. 53.

Secondary

Tuttle, Elizabeth. To Get A Prairie Chicken, "Stories of those who created a new life in Mid-America". Chariton. 1973. Chariton Newspapers, pp. 21-22.

Cotton, J. Randall, "Ornamental Concrete Block House". The Old House Journal. October, 1984. Vol. XII, No. 8, pp. 165, 180-183. Feature article of issue. Gives history of concrete, concrete block use, and block making technique.

Informant Interview: Mrs. Floyd Starr, nee Fern Stephens. 502 South San Juan, Buena Vista, CO 81211; (303) 395-2067. Telephone conversation with W. C. Page; January 1987. Mrs. Starr remains the only surviving child of A. J. Stephens. Born in 1898, she was married in the A. J. Stephens House in 1919.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 3

Informant Interview: Mr. Robert L. Piper. 703 North 8th, Chariton, IA 50049; (515) 774-4951. Interview with W. C. Page; August 1986. Mr. Piper is a long-time observer of Chariton life.

History of Lucas County, Iowa. Lucas County Genealogical Society. Marceline, MO: Walsworth Publishing Co., Inc. 1976. pp. 77-78.

Lucas County Iowa Cemetery Records. Lucas County Genealogical Society. Marceline, MO: Walsworth Publishing Co., Inc. 1981.

Marriage Records of Lucas County Iowa 1849-1918; Lucas County Historical Society; Marceline, MO: Walsworth Publishing Co., Inc. 1983

Informant Interview: Mrs. Charles Carpenter, nee Helen Brewer. Des Moines, IA. Mrs. Carpenter's father-in-law was Sam Carpenter who, for many years, lived in the A. J. Stephens House. Interview unconsumated due to inability to trace informant's present whereabouts.

Gottfried, Herbert & Jennings, Jan. American Vernacular Design 1870-1940. New York. Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1985. pp. 16, 32-33, 202, 237.

Naumann, Molly Myers. "Lucas County Historical Museum 'A. J. Stephens Residence;'" Iowa Site Inventory Form; Architectural Survey of Chariton, Iowa; Area XV Regional Planning Commission. Ottumwa, IA.

Page, W. C., "A. J. Stephens House;" Iowa Site Inventory Form; Historical Survey of Appanoose, Lucas, Monroe and Wayne Counties, Iowa; Area XV Regional Planning Commission; Ottumwa, IA; July 1985