

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:
Wisconsin

COUNTY:
Walworth

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY DATE
MAY 3 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:
Round House

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Elderkin, Edward House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
127 South Lincoln

CITY OR TOWN:
Elkhorn

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
First

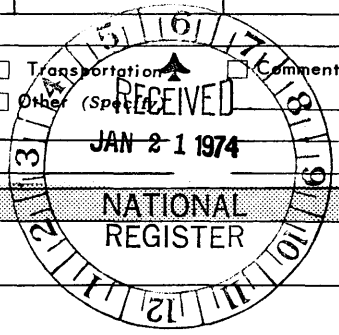
STATE: **Wisconsin** CODE: **55** COUNTY: **Walworth** CODE: **127**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		



4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Leonard Gubrud

STREET AND NUMBER:
127 South Lincoln

CITY OR TOWN:
Elkhorn

STATE:
Wisconsin

CODE:
55

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Register of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:
Walworth County Court House

CITY OR TOWN:
Elkhorn

STATE:
Wisconsin

CODE:
55

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Wisconsin Historical Preservation Plan Volume II: The Inventory

DATE OF SURVEY: **1973** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

STREET AND NUMBER:
816 State Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Madison

STATE:
Wisconsin

CODE:
55

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

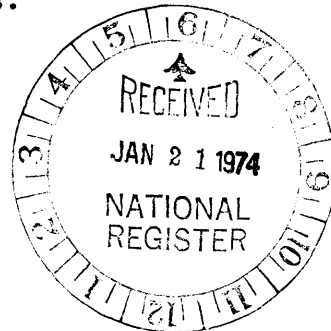
The "Round House" in Elkhorn, Wisconsin was built by Edward Elderkin. Construction began in mid-1856 but was not completed until mid-1857 presumably because the local artisans were not totally familiar with this type of structure.

It is a two-story buff and pink brick house with a full ground floor level below the first floor and with a cupola. The solid brick walls are sixteen inches thick up to the first floor porch and twelve inches thick up to the roof. The one-story porch, completely encircling the house, is six feet wide, covering a moat of the same width and four feet deep. Hence, the floor of the basement is flush with the bottom of the moat.

The elaborate porch design includes a railing with a double loop motif and a dropped circle design at the edge of the porch roof. The three entrances include one on the basement level and two on the porch level. Double windows appear on each face of the octagon on each story, although some of the second story windows are false with only a brick wall behind the wooden shutters. These were added for exterior symmetry without interfering with interior space.

There is a wide cornice with four brackets on each side and a railing above. The roof has a very flat pitch topped by an unusually elaborate cupola. The sixteen-foot glazed cupola has a cornice similar to the main one but smaller in scale, having only two brackets on each side. The huge four-flue brick chimney is centrally placed, passing from the ground floor through the cupola. Originally it provided two fireplaces for each story. In addition, each room was provided with a circular vent for a heating stove. The cupola as well as the roof framing, displays hand-hewn timber secured with wooden pegs.

The exterior of the house is very close to the original state and the interior has undergone various modernizations.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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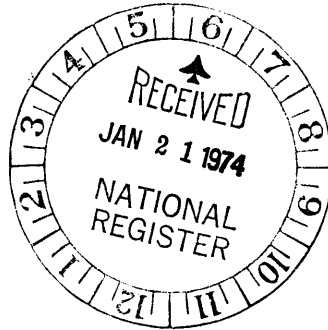
(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Wisconsin	
COUNTY	
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	MAY 3 1974

(Number all entries)

ROUND HOUSE (Elderkin, Edw., House)

6. Historic American Buildings Survey
1936 Federal
Library of Congress
Washington District of Columbia Code: 11



4. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1856-1857**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The Elderkin "Round House" exemplifies the very popular mid-nineteenth century fad of octagon houses. Wisconsin is particularly rich in centric structures and according to recent estimates is exceeded only by Massachusetts and New York. The Elderkin house is particularly outstanding because it was built during the peak of the **movement** and follows quite faithfully "Howland's Octagonal Plan" found in the 1854 printing of A Home For All by Orson S. Fowler, the popularizer of the style. Despite the similarity to the Fowler plan, the Elderkin house also incorporates a number of individual design elements.

Fowler espoused the octagonal residence as the radical solution to cheaper housing while not sacrificing function or esthetics. Repulsed by the developing Victorian modes and intrigued with the new materials and mechanics, Fowler sought to construct the design for the "perfect home" of beauty, utility and comfort. The notoriety of these ideas, already popular in Wisconsin, influenced Edward Elderkin to build this type of home.

Fowler argued that the octagonal structure allowed more floor space for wall construction and suggested using the economical grout wall, which had been rediscovered in the 1840's by Joseph Goodrich of Milton, Wisconsin. Considering grout to be nature's building material, Fowler claimed wood was too difficult to maintain and decayed too rapidly while brick was usually too expensive. Elderkin elected to use brick from the local kilns making his house one of the earliest brick buildings in the community.

The Fowler and Elderkin designs are similar in most other aspects, being basically very simple, unadorned buildings. Both have a raised foundation, minimum desired depth of two or three feet according to Fowler (actually four feet in the Elderkin house) with a moat if possible. This would facilitate lighting and ventilation for a completely usable suite of rooms on the lower level. According to Fowler, this would also prevent any vermin or decay from emitting poisonous gases in to the living quarters.

The piazzas which appear on most structures, the Elderkin included, were for promenading and conversation while the cupola was to aid in viewing the countryside. The nearly flat roof was preferred because it avoided unusable space while providing sufficient room for rain water storage tanks and insulation for upper stories against noise and heat.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Brownell, Hiram George, A Tale of an Old House, Elkhorn, Wisconsin, 1944.

Creese, Walter, "Fowler and the Domestic Octagon," Art Bulletin, 28:89-102, June, 1946.

Fowler, Orson S., A Home For All, New York, 1854.

Perrin, Richard W. E., The Architecture of Wisconsin, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 1967, pp. 33-43.

See continuation sheet.

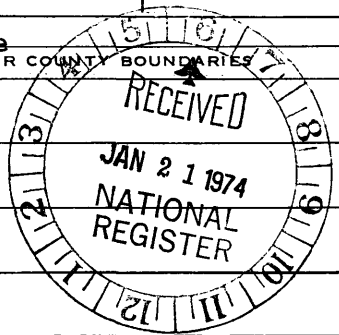
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	N42°	40'	06"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	W88°	32'	24"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Joyce Ksicinski, 1973 Summer Survey Team

ORGANIZATION: State Historical Society of Wisconsin DATE: August 8, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER:
816 State Street

CITY OR TOWN: Madison STATE: Wisconsin CODE: 55

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name James Morton Smith
James Morton Smith

Title State Historic Preservation Officer

Date January 11, 1974

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

W.R. Montrose
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 5/3/74

ATTEST:

Wm. J. Smith
Keeper of The National Register

Date 6.2.74

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8. Significance continued.

The irregular geometric shape of the house could result in peculiarly shaped rooms and present problems in room arrangement. The larger rooms were made basically rectangular in shape by utilizing the most acute corner spaces as triangular storage areas. Thus the floor plan became a more compact design and created fluid traffic patterns between rooms and floors. The Elderkin floor plan is nearly duplicate of the "Howlands Octagonal Plan" and is reproduced in Walter Creese's article "Fowler and the Domestic Octagon."

Like other octagonal houses, the Elderkin has various household gadgets and appliances which Fowler felt improved life and comfort. Such experimental things as water closets, speaking tubes, dumb waiters, rumpus rooms, ventilating tubes, hot air systems and hot water coils were common. It is not known for certain that the Elderkin house had all of these new mechanical inventions but there certainly were at least speaking tubes and rain water cisterns.

The octagonal house of Fowler and its adapted version by Elderkin is a product of a search for a thoroughly modern house using the latest discoveries of construction and objects for daily living. Guided by what Fowler claimed were common sense principles, these octagonal houses remain a distinctive nineteenth century architectural statement. The Elderkin house is a fine example of that style and has already been well published as such.

Edward Elderkin was one of the leading citizens of Elkhorn in its early history. Arriving from New York in 1839, the young lawyer quickly established himself as one of the more capable and progressive members of the community. His prosperity is evidenced by the construction of his remarkable octagonal house built shortly after his marriage.

¹Orson S. Fowler, A House For All, p. 32.



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(Number all entries)

9. Major Bibliographical References continued.

Perrin, Richard W. E., Historic Wisconsin Buildings, Milwaukee Public Museum, 1962, pp. 64-7.

Schmidt, Carl F., The Octagon Fad, Published by author, New York, 1958, p. 119.

Whyte, Bertha K., Wisconsin Heritage, Charles T. Branford Co., Boston, 1954, pp. 111-14.

*W. S. ...
1780 - ...
1880 - ...
1980 - ...*

