

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received JAN 10 1985
date entered FEB 21 1985

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

1. Name

historic Elmwood
and/or common Williamson House

2. Location

street & number N/A P.O. Box 654 N/A not for publication
city, town Grafton N/A vicinity of
state North Dakota code 38 county Walsh code 099

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
			<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. Luther Williamson
street & number P.O. Box 654
city, town Grafton N/A vicinity of state North Dakota

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Walsh County Courthouse, Register of Deeds
street & number N/A
city, town Grafton state North Dakota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? N/A yes N/A no
date N/A N/A federal N/A state N/A county N/A local
depository for survey records N/A
city, town N/A state N/A

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

Elmwood is a large 1895 dwelling with spacious grounds set in a natural oxbow meander of the Park River. The house combines late Victorian emphasis on elaborate, decorative elements such as ornamental shingles, art glass, and decorative motifs with more sedate twentieth century trends towards a feeling of massiveness and lack of pretentiousness. Elmwood retains a high degree of integrity of construction materials, location and setting, and architectural design elements. Some inevitable alterations, however, have occurred. Exterior alterations to the house include removal of a deteriorated portion of the facade porch, replacement of the rear elevation porch, and alteration of two windows. Interior alterations include kitchen remodeling and removal of partial dividing walls in the living room and master bedroom parlors.

The two and one-half story wood-frame house is sided with narrow wood clapboards, cornerboards, and trimboards. The hipped roof, now covered with asphalt shingles, is pierced on all four elevations by gabled dormers faced with decorative shingles. The east and west gables each surmount a projecting window bay in the middle of the elevation. The facade gable is decorated with scroll-cut ornamental bargeboard. A small eyebrow dormer punctuates the facade roofline. The facade (south) elevation features small, square porches at the ground level and second floor of the western end of the elevation. The first floor porch has tongue-and-groove flooring, beadboard ceiling, turned wooden balustrade, and turned porch posts. It is capped by a pediment decorated with a floral design. The second floor porch has small decorative sections of turned balustrade and an arch over the first floor pediment.

An abundance of art glass highlights Elmwood's fenestration. A palladian-like window arrangement on the west elevation consists of a rectangular, fixed light which is capped by beveled and stained glass transom and flanked by one-over-one double-hung windows. The palladian arrangement is completed with quarter-round and half-round rising sun motifs. A stained glass transom over the facade entrance doors and a small stained glass single-light window in the west elevation light the entrance vestibule. Stained glass transoms are found in the dining room (west elevation) and semi-hexagonal bay of the second floor bedroom (east elevation). A round-arched clear glass window is nestled under the eastern gable peak. Fenestration throughout the rest of the house consists primarily of one-over-one double-hung windows.

In the late 1960's, the original single-story north porch was removed and replaced with a one-story enclosed porch addition sheathed in narrow clapboards to match the house. In addition to casement windows, fenestration in the new porch follows the art glass precedent with two stained glass windows, one over the entrance door and one in the west elevation. As in the original porch, the flat roof of the addition serves as a second-story porch. Access to this porch is through an original door at the north end of the second-floor hallway. A concrete slab and wood-frame carport was constructed at the northeastern corner of the house, also during the 1960's.

The (south) facade first-floor porch originally extended across the entire elevation. By the 1940's, the eastern segment had been partially enclosed. In 1946, this segment was removed completely, due to extreme deterioration. The remaining facade porch has suffered from flood and weather damage. Original steps, step balustrade, and porch skirt are gone, and the floor is supported by concrete block pilings.

(See continuation page)

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Interior spaces of the house remain largely unchanged since time of construction. The interior's most outstanding feature is its original bird's eye maple woodwork with raised rosette motif. The woodwork appears to have its original varnished finish, and the doors retain their original brass hardware. Elmwood's first floor includes entrance vestibule, entrance hall, living room/parlor, study, dining room, kitchen, pantry/laundry room, bathroom, and 1960's porch addition. The entrance vestibule features plaster walls and ceiling, stained glass windows, a pair of solid-core paneled entrance doors with single beveled lights, and ornate brass hardware. A single-light paneled door leads to the entrance hallway. To the right (east), french doors lead to the living room. To the left (west) rises an intricately carved, massive oak stairway with two quarter-turns and landings, leading to the second floor. The dining room includes original plate rail, gasolier brass light fixtures (now converted to electricity), and stained and leaded glass transom. The living room's original features include converted gasolier brass light fixtures, leaded transom (eastern projecting bay), narrow-milled hardwood floors, and working fireplace. The fireplace features an elaborately carved bird's eye maple mantle topped by a beveled glass mirror and carved bird's eye maple surround. The original ceramic tile hearth is intact, but the original firebox has been fitted with a partial modern brick infill.

Access to the first-floor bathroom was changed from the study to the pantry during the 1960's. In the 1950's, the kitchen was remodeled and the pantry was converted into a laundry area. In the late 1940's, two large, fixed-pane picture windows were installed in the living room. These windows replaced a facade "cottage window" with transom and a one-over-one window in the east elevation. The living room, which had been partially divided into two parlors, was converted into one room. The living room's french doors were installed, replacing plywood panels which had replaced the original doors at an unknown early date. Accoustical tile was applied to the living room ceiling during the 1960's.

The second floor is completely divided by a north-south hallway. Three family bedrooms are located at the south end of the house, and two servant's rooms and a bathroom are at the north end. A servants' stairway connects the kitchen with the north end of the second floor. At one time the servants' and the family's quarters were separated by a door, which has been removed (date unknown). The master (south) bedroom once consisted of a partially-divided bedroom and parlor, and is now a single room (converted in the 1940's). This bedroom has a door leading to the second-floor facade porch. The family bedrooms each have hall transoms and hand-grained woodwork in the hallway. The remainder of the woodwork is painted on the second floor. During the 1950's, a corner cabinet was constructed in the hall beside the master bedroom, and linoleum covered the floor's hardwood floors. The two west bedrooms are paneled with modern material.

Elmwood is located at the end of a peninsula formed by an oxbow of the Park River, and faces the city of Grafton across the river to the south. Large expanses of lawn extend from the house to the river banks. Elms, firs, and flowering trees are interspersed through the lawn areas. To the east and northeast of the dwelling is a large wooded area abounding with native flora and fauna; this area is maintained by the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department as a registered natural area, and is not included in this nomination. Access to Elmwood is by a small wooden bridge at the north end of the site. A footbridge which once spanned the river, south to Cooper Avenue, is no longer in existence. The nominated area also includes a small gabled wood-frame garage to the northeast of the dwelling.

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 checked="" 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 1895

Builder/Architect C.A.M. Spencer, builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Elmwood's significance lies primarily in its integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and setting, and also in its distinction as the largest and best-preserved example of a turn-of-the-century "mansion" in Grafton, North Dakota. The prosperity of early Grafton was reflected through the construction of several large and ornate Victorian-era homes. Though no formal architectural survey of Grafton has ever been recorded, personal observation and interviews with several Grafton residents and visitors have determined that few of those homes have survived as unaltered single-family dwellings. Though three other single-family turn-of-the-century Grafton residences retain exterior integrity, their size, grandeur, and physical settings do not equal the splendor of Elmwood. The size, design, and ornate detail of Elmwood and its setting reflect not only the success and social status of builder C.A.M. Spencer, but also the preferred lifestyle of community leaders of Grafton at the close of the nineteenth century. Like many other homes built for socially prominent persons in the region during the post-settlement period, the house combines elements of elaborate Victorian styles with simpler plans and forms of the post-Victorian era. Separate servants' quarters and the spacious grounds are distinctive indications of social and financial status in early Grafton.

The house was built in 1895 by C.A.M. Spencer, North Dakota's second Attorney General. Spencer was born in Mansfield, Ohio, in 1850 and received his A.B. and LL.B. degrees from the University of Michigan. After practicing law in the states of Washington and Iowa, he arrived in Grafton in 1881. He was a prominent member of the bar when North Dakota was admitted to the Union in 1889, and was elected to the office of Attorney General in 1890. Spencer was active in civic and community affairs of Grafton and Walsh County. He served as deputy county treasurer, mayor of Grafton, city attorney, and states attorney for several terms. His private practice was reportedly a large and important one, and he was a pioneer member of the legal fraternity in Walsh County. The house was purchased by William C. Treumann, another early Grafton leader who, in 1888, established Treumann Abstract Company, a firm which continues today. Treumann's most memorable contribution to state and local history was through his distinguished military career. Treumann commanded Company C, North Dakota's first regiment of U.S. Volunteers, serving in the Philippine Islands for one and one-half years during the Spanish American War and the Philippine Insurrection. He continued command of the regiment until 1911 when he was commissioned adjutant-general by the governor. He retired with the rank of brigadier-general. In 1913, Treumann registered the property name "Elmwood" with the Walsh County Register of Deeds.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation page.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property ca. 3 acres

Quadrangle name Grafton Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	4	6	1	8	0	0	0	5	3	6	4	2	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

Lots 8 to 19 inclusive, Block 79, and lots 1 to 10 inclusive, Block 80, First Addition to Grafton.

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Patricia Jessen, Research Associate

organization Cultural Research & Management, Inc. date May 30, 1984

street & number P.O. Box 2154 telephone 701-258-1215

city or town Bismarck state North Dakota 58502

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 *Chris E. ...*

title State Historic Preservation Officer (North Dakota) date 12/27/84

For NPS use only

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

J. Beth Broome date 9/21/85
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

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Grafton News and Times:

September 27, 1890--page 2

May 17, 1894--page 4

May 9, 1895--page 3

September 22, 1895--page 3

October 17, 1895--page 3.