



**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Domestic/Single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Domestic/Single dwelling

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Shingle Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Wood/Shingles

roof Wood/Shingles

other Platform porch

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Wilson House is a two story frame structure built in 1906-07. It is an excellent example of a Shingle Style house. The main axis of the house runs east and west with a parlor wing to the south, near the front. A large porch was constructed across the front with a narrower portion continuing across the front of the parlor. The second floor of the main house overhangs the front porch. Large amounts of wood are exposed on the interior, expressing the Scandinavian Heritage. Because the building has been subject to few alterations and little deterioration of the original historic fabric has occurred, the property exhibits a high degree of historical and architectural integrity. A certified rehabilitation of the house is currently in progress.

The Wilson House is located on U.S. Highway 81, the main north-south route through the community, and just one block north of the central business district. The structure is a fine example of Shingle Style Architecture for the community of Stromsburg. Many structures in the community have shingled gables or accents but only the Wilson House is 100% shingle sided. The overall design of the house was derived from a number of influences. The mass of the exterior and the generous use of wood as a finish material on the interior are fine examples of the Scandinavian influence from Mr. Wilson's youth. From 1901 to 1905 he lived in Kern County, California and from 1905 to 1906 in Berkeley, which introduced him to a variety of styles such as the Shingle Style, Western Stick Style and the American Bungalow.

The windows of the structure are generally double hung with most being 9 lights over 1, a few are 12 over 1, or 6 over 1. Diamond shaped single sash gable windows are split horizontally at the midpoint with a single light below and divided above with the same size lights as the upper sash members of the double hung windows. The front door is stile and rail construction with 3 small lights across the upper one third of the door. The original hardware and door knocker are still in place. The frame of the door is fitted with a bracketed pediment

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The arrangement of the floor plan is formal with a wide central hall between the formal dining and the parlor. At the west end of the hall, through a colonnade, on a raised landing is the guest bath. On the south side of the upper landing is the stair to second and to the north is the breakfast nook. The kitchen is located west of the breakfast nook and has access to the exterior via the back porch. The stair to the basement is along the south side of the kitchen. A landing five risers down from the kitchen provides access to the laundry room. The laundry room floor is concrete and located at grade.

The interior of the house contains a generous amount of dark finished woodwork in very simple undecorated patterns. In addition to the kitchen, rooms such as the dining room and parlor contain built-in cabinetry and wood wainscots. Structural framing members are exposed in the parlor walls, in the vaulted ceiling and across the flat portion of the ceiling, taking on a somewhat half timber appearance. Large bi-parting wooden doors separate the main entry hall from the parlor and dining rooms. Except for the removal of the south end of the parlor, nearly all of the woodwork exists. Some of the woodwork has been painted, particularly in the kitchen and the front hall.

The parlor was designed to accommodate a billard table and an overhead score counter. The room was fitted with lighting which would be out of the way of pool cues. The wood structural members of the interior were complimented by green felt wall covering. Bookcases flanked each side of the brick fireplace and served to store Mr. Wilson's law library. The bay window on the east was balanced by a projected window with a radiator and seat on the west side. Sometime prior to 1940, for reasons still unknown, approximately 6' of the south end of the parlor was removed including the fireplace. The three windows on the west were reinstalled in the new south end of the parlor. The bay window was disassembled, the large center window was reinstalled on the east side and the two smaller side windows were installed as a pair on the west.

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The formal dining has a 5' high wood wainscot with a small shelf. Above the shelf the walls are presently papered. A built-in buffet was constructed in the west end of the formal dining room. The rear of the buffet exposed in the breakfast nook is finished in the same manor as the dining room wainscot.

The stair to second floor is a switchback design, open to the raised landing in the entry hall and to the corridor on second. The house keeper's bedroom is immediately off the stair landing. On second floor, the master bedroom is located to the front of the structure with a bedroom to west end and smaller third bedroom on the north side adjacent to the master. The bath is located between the second and third bedrooms. A balcony over the rear porch is accessed through the second bedroom. The stair to the attic is quite steep but is open to view in the second floor hallway.

The extensive amount of wood exposed throughout the interior still exists. The massive appearance of the structure which has an approximately a 12/12 pitch is considerably different from the average bungalows of the community. The front porch was constructed as a open wooden terrace similar to what might be constructed in colder, less sunny climates. These design features and the use of shingles throughout the entire exterior all show a strong Scandinavian influence.

The structure has remained intact since the date of construction, except for the remodeling of the parlor and the addition of a porch roof. The original siding shingles are in place across the entire exterior. The original fenestrations exist in the structure in all areas except the parlor where they were altered during the remodeling. The doors and windows have received enough maintenance for virtually all of the original fabric to have survived intact.

## 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)

Politics/Government

Architecture

Period of Significance

1906-1917

Significant Dates

1906-07

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Wilson, Victor E.

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

The Victor E. Wilson House is significant on a local level under Criteria B, in the area of politics, for its association with Victor E. Wilson (1873 to 1944) a prominent political figure who was elected to the state legislature in 1909. It is also significant on a local level under Criteria C, in the area of architecture as an excellent and well preserved example of the Shingle Style. This is the only residence constructed for Mr. Wilson, the son of Swedish Immigrants. The period of significance is derived from the original construction date of the dwelling (1906-07) through 1917, the last year of Wilson's residence in the house, and the year in which he moved from the Stromsburg community.

### POLITICS

The property is significant under Criteria B for its association with Victor E. Wilson, in the area of politics. Mr. Wilson was a prominent political figure who was elected to the state legislature in 1909 and was instrumental in drafting an important amendment to the "Daylight Saloon" Bill, passed in 1910. Mr. Wilson's father farmed in the Stromsburg area until he acquired controlling interest in the Farmers and Merchants Bank in 1891 (now the First National Bank of Stromsburg). In 1892, at the age of 19, Victor Wilson was made assistant cashier. Victor Wilson attended Doane College at Crete, completed a Law Degree at the University of Nebraska and practiced law in Omaha before becoming the youngest (age 26) Bank Examiner in the State of Nebraska. In 1901, Victor Wilson moved his family to California. He returned in 1906 to help his brothers with the bank in Stromsburg. While in Stromsburg, he was active in many civic enterprises, assisting in the organization of four banks, one building and loan association, one public sewerage company and an irrigation and dry land improvement company. Public positions he held include City Clerk, City Treasurer, County Attorney and President of the State Association of Community Clubs.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

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 acre

UTM References

A 

|      |         |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 4       | 6 | 1 | 7 | 6        | 7 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 0 |
| Zone | Easting |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

B 

|      |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

C 

|      |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

D 

|      |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Blk. 1, of Headstrom's second addition to Stromsburg, Polk County, Nebraska. Commence at N.E. corner of block 1; thence south 100'; thence west 128'; thence north 100'; thence 128'; to the point of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the parcel that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Jerry L. Berggren, Architect  
organization Berggren & Woll, Architects date March 18, 1988  
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In the fall of 1909, Mr. Wilson a Democrat, ran for and was elected to the State Legislature as the representative from the 39th District. In the first few months of office he became the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee. He immediately established his political skills by attaching an ammendment which limited saloon hours from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. to the bill to close saloons on election day. On April 6th, 1910 Governor Shallenberger signed the "Daylight Saloon" Bill (S.F. 283). Mr. Wilson was also responsible the Guaranty of Bank Deposits and the Building and Loan Association Laws. Mr. Wilson also proposed and had passed by the State Railroad Commission a rate reduction for oil in an effort to attract industry to Nebraska.

Mr. Wilson was an outspoken opponent of the Democratic Candidate for Governor, Mayor James Dahlman of Omaha. His opposition to Dahlman, lead to the skillful planning and stenographic recording of an "impromptu" debate of the Democratic Candidate for the U.S. Senate, Congressman Hitchcock. Following a campaign speech in Stromsburg, Mr. Wilson requested the opportunity to ask questions of the Candidate, who also owned controlling interest in the Omaha World Herald Newspaper. Mr. Wilson's recorded challenge was sent to newspapers throughtout the state and served as a significant tool for Candidate Aldrich to win the Governor's race.

ARCHITECTURE

Under Criteria C, the Wilson house is architecturally significant as an excellent example of a Shingle Style house. The overall design of the house was derived from a number of influences. Victor Wilson lived in "Swede Prairie" (near Galesburg) Illinois from 1873 to 1885 and from 1885 to 1892 in Stromsburg, each provided a strong Scandinavian influence. From 1901 to 1905 he lived in Kern County, California and 1905 to 1906 in Berkeley, which introduced him to a variety of styles such as the Shingle Style, Western Stick Style and the American Bungalow.

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The Shingle Style developed in New England in the 1880's, began a new phase in domestic architecture. Referred to as the "Americanization of Queen Anne," the Shingle Style brought freedom and openness into house design (Whiffen, 1969, p. 128). Characteristics of the style include informal plans, prominent entrance halls, major rooms opening into one another, wood frame construction with shingle siding, horizontal emphasis and limited ornamentation. The Shingle Style experienced only limited popularity in Nebraska with most of the extant examples dating after 1900. Only a small number of houses in Nebraska designed in the Shingle Style of architecture are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Examples include the Carl Morton House, 1901-02, in Nebraska City (see Nebraska City Historic District, entered NRHP 10/29/76) and the Arthur C. Ziemer house, built 1901 - 1910 in Lincoln (entered NRHP 11/23/77) both of which demonstrate fine examples of the Shingle Style.

The Wilson house exhibits the characteristics of the Shingle Style and is the only house in Stromsburg to be entirely sheathed in shingles. It is currently under going a Certified Rehabilitation.



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## BIBLIOGRAPHY of the VICTOR E. WILSON HOUSE

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Craftsman Magazine Volume IV, no. 2 May, 1903

Nicoll, Bruce ed. Nebraska-A Pictorial History, 1967

Sedgwick, T. E. ed. York County Nebraska and Its People, 1921

Stromsburg Headlight, Stromsburg Nebraska, 10 May, 1906; 24 May, 1906; 31 May, 1906; 7 June, 1906; 28 June, 1906; 12 July, 1906; 6 September, 1906; 8 November, 1906; 3 January, 1907; 28 February, 1907

Victor E. Wilson's Scrapbook - Assorted newspaper clipping, publication dates and papers unknown

Westenius, Chattie Coleman ed. History of Stromsburg, its business & its founding in 1872 to its present time, compiled by Chattie Coleman Westenius ed. of the Stromsburg Headlight published in weekly installments, 1931.

Whiffen, Marcus American Architecture Since 1780 A Guide To The Styles, M.I.T. Press, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass., 1969.