

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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

For NCRS use only

received JAN 15 1982

date entered FEB 11 1982

1. Name

historic JOHN N. BENSEN HOUSE

and/or common Witt House

2. Location

street & number 402 6th Avenue South _____ not for publication

city, town St. Cloud _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district 6th

state Minnesota code 22 county Stearns code 145

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 type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
		<input checked="" 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 Blair M. Witt

street & number 402 6th Avenue South

city, town St. Cloud _____ vicinity of _____ state Minnesota 56301

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Stearns County Courthouse

street & number

city, town St. Cloud _____ state Minnesota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Survey of Historic Resources _____ has this property been determined eligible? _____ yes no

date 1980 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Minnesota Historical Society -- 240 Summit Avenue

city, town St. Paul _____ state Minnesota

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

The John N. Bensen House is a two-and-a-half story red brick Queen Anne style house. The full basement foundation is constructed of rock-faced granite as are the window sills. A wide verandah extends across the front of the house and encircles an octagonal tower located on the northwest corner. At the southeast corner a frame porch encloses the rear entrance. A hipped roof is marked by dormers on the west, north, and east sides. On the south side a center gable extends over a full two-story bay. Queen Anne details include a recessed porch on the second floor, fish scale shingles in the south gable, and decorative brickwork on the tower walls. The interior retains its integrity. A built-in buffet, interior columns and scrollwork, and decorative moldings in oak and maple highlight the house. Stained and leaded glass windows are found throughout the first floor. A barn-like carriage house is located on the alley behind the residence. It too is of red brick construction, with a cross-gable gambrel roof.

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 type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" 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 1904 **Builder/Architect** Samuel H. Haas

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The John N. Bensen House is significant for its architectural design and integrity and for its association with John Bensen, its first owner. The May 19, 1903 St. Cloud Daily Times described the house as "a handsome design of the late style of architecture." The red brick dwelling is one of St. Cloud's finest examples of the Queen Anne style. The interior integrity and large carriage house add to the architectural significance. John Bensen migrated to St. Cloud from Germany by way of Brooklyn and St. Paul. With experience as a grocer, he opened a grocery business with his brother in 1872. (The grocery and an additional commercial building built by the Bensens stand on Fifth Avenue South.) In 1903, John Bensen entered the real estate business. From 1905 to 1906 he served as mayor of St. Cloud, and in 1908 he became president of the Merchants Bank of St. Cloud. The house at 402 Sixth Avenue South attests to his success and importance in the commercial development of St. Cloud.

9. Major Bibliographical References

"A Brief Early History of Stearns County, 1853-1930." Stearns County Historical Society, St. Cloud, [1976?]
 Mitchell, William B. History of Stearns County, Minnesota. H.C. Cooper & Co., Chicago. 1915.

UTM NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one acre.

Quadrangle name St. Cloud, MN

Quadrangle scale 7.5

UMT References

A

1	5	4	0	9	8	1	0	5	0	4	5	1	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 7 and 8, Block 39, Curtis Survey Addition to St. Cloud.

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

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Thomas Harvey/Research Historian

organization Minnesota Historical Society date September 1980

street & number 240 Summit Avenue telephone 296-9072

city or town St. Paul state Minnesota

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Tussell W. Fridley*

title _____ date 12/18/81

For HCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
 Entered in the National Register date 2/11/82
for factory *Delores Byers*
 Keeper of the National Register
 Attest: _____ date _____
 Chief of Registration