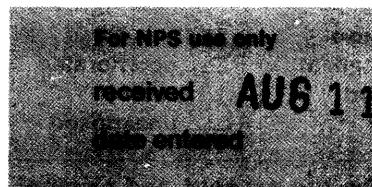


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



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

1. Name

historic George B. Douglas House

and/or common Turner Mortuary East

2. Location

street & number 800 2nd Avenue, S.E. ~~S.E.~~ not for publication

city, town Cedar Rapids vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~ 2

state Iowa code 19 county Linn code 113

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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> N.A. in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Cedar Memorial Funeral Home (David E. Linge, Chairman)

street & number 4200 1st Ave., N.E.

city, town Cedar Rapids vicinity of state Iowa

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds Office

street & number Linn County Courthouse

city, town Cedar Rapids state Iowa

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1982 (Tax Act) federal state county local

depository for survey records N.A.

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Besides its architectural merit as a fine example of Georgian Revival elegance, the George B. Douglas house has several diverse and historically significant associations. Its original owner, George B. Douglas, was an extremely successful and influential businessman, whose company merged to form the Quaker Oats Company. (He later "traded" dwellings with the Sinclair family and spent many years at Bruce more, the National Trust property.) The accompanying carriage house, described on a separate form, was the home and studio of nationally known artist Grant Wood. There he spent his crucial formative years, and there, at #5 Turner Alley, he created such masterpieces as "American Gothic" and "Stone City," works that assured his position in American art.

The setting of the house, a funeral home since 1924, retains some of its original grandeur. A low brick wall punctuated with iron gates surrounds the large lot and fends off the commercial encroachments in this formerly residential area. Second Avenue is now a major thoroughfare in the city. However, the spacious lots and the proximity of such local landmarks as the Masonic Library allows a comfortable transition.

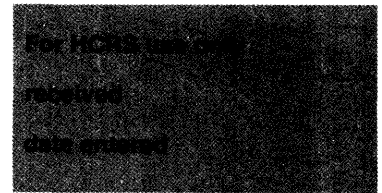
The stone-capped brick wall provides an apt frame for the 2½ story brick Georgian Revival house and carriage house. The brickyard Philip Wolff established in 1883 provided the bricks. (See Belmont Hill National Register application for further information on the brickyard.) Contrasting wood detail highlights large three-part windows on the first floor that are topped with broken pediments. There is also wood detail on the projecting one-story porch. Overall, the house exhibits the late nineteenth century use of historical detail in new ways, and often combined with new motifs. Here, the second story bowed window above the entry has leaded glass windows whose vertical configuration echoes the balustrade beneath. These shapes continued in the dentilled cornice and up to the widow's walk (now removed). Squared pilasters provide a further unifying feature.

The plan of the George B. Douglas house also reflects a Georgian inspiration. It is symmetrical, with rooms opening off a large entrance hall. However, stairs lead up from the hall and split in opposite directions at the former music room on the landing. The music room features a graceful three-arch arcade having smooth Corinthian columns (now enclosed with French doors). Fluted Ionic columns in the entrance hall once supported a dentilled cornice that a simpler cornice has replaced. Intricately turned white balusters, three to a riser, provide an exceptional contrast to the dark wood of the newel post and handrail. Photographs dating from around 1900 show the staircase as having this pleasing contrast.

Many details of the interior remain, as the series of c. 1900 photographs show. Of special note is the music room fireplace, which has a broken-topped pediment reminiscent of the first floor windows. The living room fireplace has not survived intact and has been greatly simplified with the removal of twin niches over the mantel. Despite the conversion of the house to a funeral home in 1924, changes have generally been made with care. The most pronounced change is a large addition on the northeast side, including a bowed window, to accommodate a chapel. However, the addition carries on Georgian features and, although it spoils the symmetry of the original facade, does not violently intrude on the structure's integrity. Grant Wood and local architect Bruce McKay designed

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

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



Continuation sheet Description

Item number 7.

Page 1.

and decorated this addition. Also, Wood is said to have designed the addition's bay windows as well as stained glass windows for the entrance. There have also been rear additions, also in brick.

Newspaper announcements place the construction date as between 1895 and 1897. The earlier item stated that Douglas would begin to build in the fall of that year, but it does not appear that a contract was let until March 1896 and excavation begun until April of 1897.

No architect is mentioned in the brief newspaper announcements, although one former resident believed that Stamford White (sic) was responsible for the design. Records of the sort of McKim, Mead & White show no contract for a house for George B. Douglas in Cedar Rapids. Indeed, the firm undertook very few works west of the Mississippi. Most of the houses they did design were much larger than the Douglas house. With competent local architects, such as Eugene H. Taylor who designed Bruce more, Douglas' later home, it seems unlikely that Douglas would have commissioned Stamford White. On the other hand, Douglas was certainly wealthy and maintained contracts and club memberships in Chicago and elsewhere.

Grant Wood Studio
#5 Turner Alley
800 2nd Avenue S.E.
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

The modified carriage house known as #5 Turner Alley served as the dwelling for Grant Wood and his mother and also as his artist's studio between 1924 and 1933. During this formative period Wood developed his distinctive style and came to concentrate on regional subjects. He became famous, subject to both high praise and criticism, during his stay in the carriage house. Since he designed and worked on the modifications of the structure, these changes are in themselves of art historical interest.

Built around 1895-97, the brick carriage house was a simpler version of the main house. Where the main house had a dentilled cornice, this one is smooth. The principle ornament is an elaborate octagonal wood cupola, having small windows, a delicate finial and iron outlines to highlight the roof angles.

Several modifications to the exterior date from Wood's conversion of the building. A rectangular room was added on to the northeast corner of the second floor loft and a utility room added at grade to the east. In addition, a window was changed to become a door having a small flat porch over it. A circular interior staircase was also removed. Inside, Wood devised special niches for display and custom-designed storage units. Of special note is the fireplace. A circular arch of brick outlines a simple metal bushel basket used as a fireplace hood. The care Wood lavished on his studio reflected his intense interest in his surroundings and displayed some of his decorating skills.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1895-97/1924-1933 **Builder/Architect** ~~xxxxxx~~ Geroge B. Douglas

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The George B. Douglas house has important national historical significance in two disparate areas, in two different centuries. George B. Douglas, the original owner, participated in the establishment of industries vital to the continued strength of Cedar Rapids' economy, notably what eventually came to be known as the Quaker Company.

David Turner purchased the house and converted it into a funeral home. Grant Wood, the noted regional artist, helped design and decorate the house and also renovated the former carriage house for his use as a studio. With Turner as a patron, Wood lived in and painted at #5 Turner Alley during the formative years of his career and created such classics as "American Gothic" and "Stone City" in the former carriage house.

George B. Douglas owed some of his success to the farsightedness of his Scotch father, George Douglas. Following a financially successful career building stone bridges for the railroads, the elder Douglas settled in Cedar Rapids in 1868. While traveling with the railroad construction, Douglas had acquired considerable farmland cheaply and he was a wealthy man. In 1873 he met Robert Stuart, also of Scotch descent, at the Presbyterian Church. Impressed with Stuart's business acumen, Douglas not only invested in Stuart's proposed oatmeal factory, Douglas & Stuart, but also introduced him to his niece. Thus, the Stuart and Douglas families were united by marriage and by investment. Stuart later broadened the cereal venture to include Chicago and participated in several attempts to corner the oatmeal market. These byzantine efforts culminated in 1891 with the creation of a joint stock corporation, the American Cereal Company. The Stuart contingent, including George B. Douglas, held but 12% of the stock, reportedly worth \$500,000 at that time. Following a bitter proxy fight the contingent led by financial wizard Stuart, advertising innovator Henry Crowell and master millers James Andrews and Geroge Cormack, emerged in control. The company then proceeded to use exclusively the Quaker Oats trademark that Crowell had conceived of and marketed so cleverly. Though not the leader of these financial dealings, Douglas did play a key role during the proxy fight when in 1899 he bought 600 shares for \$25,000 from a source in the enemy Ferdinand Schumacher camp. This sellout irreparably broke the other side's position.

Douglas was a valued stockholder in Quaker Oats Company, but he was also active in other manufacturing. In 1894 he, with others, organized a company to manufacture linseed oil, later selling it to a larger concern. In 1903 he opened a factory, reportedly the largest west of the Mississippi, for the manufacture of corn starch.

Douglas was socially prominent, a trustee in the First Presbyterian Church and of Coe College. By 1911 he had moved to Bruce more and its original owners, the Thomas M. Sinclair family of meatpacking wealth, had bought this house. A golfer, Douglas belonged to country clubs in Cedar Rapids, Chicago, Santa Barbara and near his summer home in Michigan.

9. Major Bibliographical References

see continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property about one acre

Quadrangle name Cedar Rapids South Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000

UMT References

A

1	5	6	1	0	9	4	0	4	6	4	8	4	5	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 20, 21, 22 of plat of the subdivision of out lot three of the original town of Cedar Rapids, Linn County, Iowa.

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 Barbara Beving Long and Ralph J. Christian, Architectural Historians

organization Division of Historic Preservation date July 1982

street & number East 12th and Grand Avenue telephone 515/281-5111

city or town Des Moines state Iowa

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 *John A. Anderson*

title Director date July 21, 1982

For NPS use only

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

John B. ... 9/9/82

Keeper of the National Register

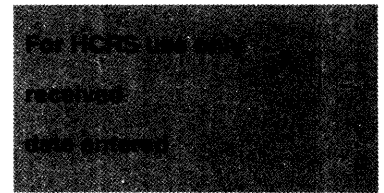
date

Chief of Registration

date

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

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



Continuation sheet Significance, continued. Item number 8.

Page 1.

In many ways the art historical associations of the Douglas house and carriage house (#5 Turner Alley) are more significant and distinctive. Mortuary owner David Turner acted as a local patron for Grant Wood in the pivotal period of his career. He provided lodging for Grant Wood and his mother, helped the forgetful Wood with overdue bills, and displayed and later purchased forty of Wood's paintings in his mortuary.

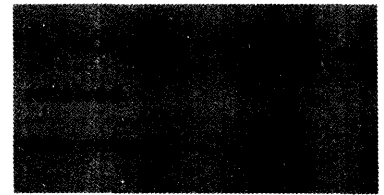
Anamosa-born Grant Wood moved to Cedar Rapids in 1901 when he was ten after his father died. He was a man of many interests, boundless enthusiasm and a certain simplicity. During his stay at #5 Turner Alley, Wood worked as a decorator. Probably with architect Bruce McKay, he helped Turner convert the home to a mortuary. Wood reportedly designed and executed two stained glass windows that flank the mortuary's main entrance as well as three bay windows, part of the east addition.

During this period, Wood visited Europe several times. In 1928 he went to Munich to supervise the making of an immense stained glass window he had designed for the Cedar Rapids Veterans Memorial Building. There he saw many late Gothic and Northern Renaissance German paintings, and at least one art historian credits this exposure to the development of Wood's mature, familiar style. In 1930 he painted "American Gothic" and was on the route to artistic acclaim. In 1932 and 1933, while still maintaining residency at #5 Turner Alley, Wood organized the summer artists' colony at Stone City. In 1935 Wood married, moved to Iowa City to become an associate professor of art at the University of Iowa. In that year he also had his first one man show in New York. His death in 1942 at the age of 51 tragically cut short his career. Time magazine extolled his "unabashed simplicity and dignified realism."

Art historians and critics are not always kind to regional artists, and the final verdict on Wood's work is not complete. But few works are more well known and more copied than "American Gothic." David Turner clearly admired Wood's work. During the artist's lean years, he bought all forty of the paintings hanging in his mortuary. The motives behind this purchase are unclear: some say it was to relieve Wood's financial debts while the less kind ascribe a more acquisitive intent. Over the years, he and his son John Turner acquired more of Wood's work, and in 1976 John Turner donated around one hundred paintings and lithographs to the Cedar Rapids' art center for all to see.

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

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



Continuation sheet Bibliography

Item number 9.

Page 1.

History of Linn County, Iowa, 2 vols. (Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1878), 2: 660.

History of Linn County, Iowa, 2 vols. (Chicago: Pioneer Publishing Co., 1911), 2: 36 and 368-371.

*Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette, 7 and 31 August 1895, 23 March 1896, 16 April and 15 June 1897, and 13 April 1898.

A Monograph of the Works of McKim, Mead & White, 1879-1915, 4 vols. (New York: 1914-1915; reprint ed., New York: Benjamin Blom, 1973), passim.

Arthur F. Marquette, Brands, Trademarks and Good Will. The Story of the Quaker Oats Company (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967), pp. 37-47 and 61-76.

Charles C. Baldwin, Stanford White (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1931), pp. 316-326.

**Hazel E. Brown, Grant Wood and Marvin Cone. Artists of an Era (Ames: ISU Press, 1972), passim.

**James M. Dennis, Grant Wood. A Study in American Art and Culture (New York: Viking Press, 1975), pp. 28, 68 and 101.

Interview with Mrs. Howard Hall, Bruce more, Cedar Rapids.

Interview with John Turner, Turner Mortuary East, Cedar Rapids from memory and records in their files.

"George W. Matsell," Palimpsest 7 (July 1924): 237-248.

George Matsell was Chief of Police in New York City from 1845 to 1857 and in 1872. Although affiliated with Tammany Hall, he supposedly imposed order and efficiency on the police force. Later he retired to Iowa and built a large country house. Upon the death of his last surviving son, Mrs. David Turner and Grant Wood purchased the family's furniture, which is now for the most part in the Entrance Hall and Reception Room of the mortuary.