

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

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

received JAN 24 1985
date entered FEB 21 1985

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

1. Name

historic Meyer House

and or common

2. Location

street & number 1136 East Bay Drive _____ not for publication

city, town Olympia _____ vicinity of

state Washington code 053 county Thurston code 067

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 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 checked="" 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"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name David and Emma Mathes

street & number 1136 East Bay Drive

city, town Olympia _____ vicinity of state Washington 98506

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Thurston County Courthouse

street & number 2000 Lakeridge Drive

city, town Olympia _____ state Washington 98502

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date _____ federal _____ state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records

city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Victor E. Meyer House is a large two story building impressively sited on the eastern slope of Olympia's Budd Inlet, the southern extremity of Puget Sound. It is noteworthy for its concrete block construction as well as the monumental columns flanking the entry and rising to support a balcony at the eave line.

The house is rectangular in plan with a full basement rising to a hipped roof; it is oriented to the west. It has a poured concrete foundation and basement, and its two stories are constructed from artistic concrete block, or concrete block manufactured to imitate building stone. Darker block forms a belt course along the top and bottom of the window openings on the first and second floors, and forms quoins contrasting with the lighter concrete of the main structure. The stone is also used in a checkerboard type pattern alternating the dark and light blocks with open spaces on the balustrade of the verandah which extends around the side of the house to the south. The second floor balcony is set off by a balustrade marked by ornamented square piers rising above the slender turned columns which rest upon the first floor balustrade. Rounded stairs lead to the centrally placed entry which has a rounded portico supported by columns; it engages the second floor balcony. The doorway is topped by a transom. Larger columns flanking the front entry reach to the third floor balcony which is fitted with a balustrade featuring ornamentation similar to that on the second floor.

Pedimented gables top single dormers on each side of the roof with a double window on the main facade. Each has a sunburst design in the pediment, sash windows, and fish-scale shingles on the sides. The only major exterior alteration is the extension of the front dormer across the roofline. The date of the modification is unknown.

Interior woodwork includes oak room dividers, pocket doors, and a fir stair baluster. The kitchen and pantry area has been renovated and windows filled at the rear of the first floor. Some other interior elements such as a built-in buffet have been removed. Main level floors have an interesting arrangement with sides of maple and a center, which would have been covered by a rug, of fir. An art glass window lights the landing between the first and second floors. Major renovations on the interior include the installation of bathrooms, closets, and room dividers in the ten rooms of the upper two floors.

The house has a unique water system which was in operation until city water was supplied in the early 1970's. An artesian well on the hillside above the house drains into a corner of the basement and is transported through a cement viaduct into a storage pool equipped with a pump. Extensive drain fields are under the basement and water still flows freely through its viaduct.

A puzzling feature of the house is a tunnel which leads from the bank above East Bay Drive into the basement of the house. Many theories for the existence of the concrete-lined tunnel have been advanced from coal chute to boat storage but none satisfactorily explains its installation. Given the steeply sloping site and lack of access to the rear of the house, it may have been built to provide service entrance.

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 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 1910 **Builder/Architect** Victor Meyer

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Victor E. Meyer House is significant for its use of artistic concrete block as a building material. Although widely used in other parts of the state, the Meyer House is the sole example of artistic concrete block construction in Olympia. The house is notable for its eclectic architectural quality and unusual access tunnel and water system.

The house was built in 1910 by Victor E. Meyer, a plumber, contractor, and machinist. Meyer lived in the house with his wife Lena and their two sons, a civil engineer and a plumber. This range of expertise is evident in the construction of the house. The elder Meyers came from Germany in the 19th century to Olympia by way of Nebraska. The Meyers left Olympia and in 1924 Emma Riddle opened a massage and treatment center there called the "Riddle Nerve Sanitarium" or "Nervatorium," and creating a boarding house arrangement on the upper two floors. In later years the house has been used by a number of transients until the present owners began a revitalization.

The construction of the house is unique in Olympia and represents a distinct phase in the history of concrete technology before the material was considered a valid architectural element. Artistic concrete block as in the Meyer House was used from 1870 to about 1920 with most of its popularity coming in the 1900-1910 period. Its low cost and imitative qualities appealed to builders who sought the elegance of stone at a price within reach of many.

The block was made in a mould by a dry tamp process in which a relatively dry mix was put into the mould machine and rammed down as it was filled. The face of the block was given its cut masonry quality from either a side face or down face system which produced the simulated stone surface. These machines were available from a number of companies, including Sears and Roebuck.

The material produced a convincing stone imitation and after 1910 the shift was toward dressed stone rather than the pitched face exemplified in the Meyer House. Faced block was later made of two different materials. The decline in the use of artificial stone although refined to include a number of surfaces, was accompanied by the use of concrete as an architectural material in its own right. Concrete no longer had to appear as stone to be accepted.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Ann Gillespie, "Early Development of the Artistic Concrete Block: the Case of the Boyd Brothers," Association for Preservation Technology, Vol. XI No. 2, 1979, pp. 30-52.
 Alice Watts, "Green Mansion," Daily Olympia, May 19, 1973, "Month" Magazine Section.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one
 Quadrangle name Tumwater Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	1 0	5 0 8 2 2 0	5 2 1 1 0 3 0	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 1 and 2 in Block 2 of Simenson's Subdivision as recorded in Volume 5 of plats, page 39 and that part of the Hale Donation Claim Number 2, Township 18 North, Range 2 West, W.M., Line south of Simenson's Subdivision as recorded in Volume 5 of plats, page 39,

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

state	n/a	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Shanna Stevenson

organization n/a date September 1984

street & number 3032 South Lybarger telephone (206) 943-4212

city or town Olympia state Washington 98501

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 *Jacob E. Shea*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date December 17, 1984

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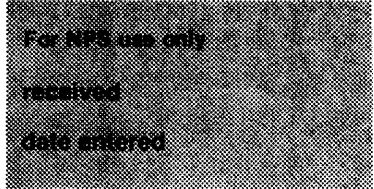
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register of the National Register

J. Melores Byers date 2-21-85
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____
 Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet

Item number

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north of Patterson Addition to Olympia as recorded in Volume 2 of plats, page 7, and of said north line extended, easterly of East Bay Drive, excepting therefrom the portion acquired by Walter E. Anderson and wife by decree entered July 21, 1960, in Thurston County Superior Court, Cause Number 29693.