

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
NOV 11 1975
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED MAR 10 1976

**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

Smith, H. Alden, House

AND/OR COMMON

Davies Mortuary

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1405 Harmon Place

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Minneapolis

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

5th

STATE

Minnesota

CODE

27

COUNTY

Hennepin

CODE

053

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. Walter Quist

STREET & NUMBER

4301 Washburn Avenue North

CITY, TOWN

Minneapolis

VICINITY OF

STATE

Minnesota

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Hennepin County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

3rd Avenue and 3rd Street

CITY, TOWN

Minneapolis

STATE

Minnesota

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Statewide Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1973

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Minnesota Historical Society, Building 25, Fort Snelling

CITY, TOWN

St. Paul

STATE
Minnesota

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED (minor)

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The H. Alden Smith House occupies a prominent position on a corner lot at the intersection of Harmon Place and Fourteenth Street South, in Minneapolis. Only one block from Loring Park, the Smith House is the last survivor of a formerly elegant neighborhood and has been virtually engulfed by Metropolitan Junior College, apartment structures, and mixed use commercial warehouses.

The exterior of the Smith House exemplifies many Richardsonian Romanesque design characteristics. Walls are constructed of a closely fitted random corniced ~~rusticated~~ brownstone. It is three stories in height with a massive corner tower, wall and roof dormers, and tall stone chimneys. The sense of massiveness is carried through window and door surrounds in heavy lintels and voussoirs. Front and side porches are also the same type of stone as the walls, however, not rusticated but finely brush-hammered. Columns are rectilinear with carved capitals. A stone balustrade and promenade links both front and side entries. The dissymmetry in both plan and elevation are conducive to display of varying textures in the stone.

A carriage house to the rear is constructed of similar materials, however, the exterior wall facing the alley is of simple unadorned yellow brick. In 1919, when the Smith property was acquired by Davies Mortuary, a two-story, red brick addition was made to link the house and carriage house.

The interior plan of the H. Alden Smith House comprises three major rooms linked by an elegant reception hall. Centrally located is a grand staircase which rises through three landings to a second story balconied hallway. This space is lighted by chandeliers and a stained glass skylight at the base of a light shaft. All woodwork is of highly varnished cherry. Niches, newells, and mouldings boast elaborate, foliate carvings. All rooms retain original woodwork, however, that in the parlor had been painted a pastel green shortly after World War II. Each major room has a gas fireplace, the parlor having two. The parlor is entered through two sets of sliding doors and occupies the entire northwestern quadrant of the main floor.

Occupying the first level in the tower is a circular music room/library also finished in cherry. Book and music cases line the walls between windows and doors; these echo the curvature of the walls. Noteworthy is a tiled fireplace with cherry mantle which incorporates an oil on reed cloth portrait, in place of the traditional mirror. Decorative carvings are in forms of medallions, garlands, and swags, and ionic pilasters.

The dining room boasts a coved, coffered ceiling and six-foot cherry wainscoting. The south wall comprises a central fireplace surmounted by an intricate arched stained glass window and flanked by cabinets and a dumb-waiter. An original built-in cherry sideboard is located on the west wall. A door on this wall leads through a butler's pantry to the kitchen. (the kitchen has been converted into the embalming room for the mortuary; other rooms are reception and viewing rooms).

The second story has retained its modification of opening dividing walls to provide a link between rooms. These rooms have pastel green, painted woodwork and are presently used for casket display. The balconied hall, however, has retained the original varnished cherry.

The third story is unchanged from the original servant's quarters. Within the north gate and tower is a ballroom presently unused except for general storage. No improvements or decorating have been done in this space.

The brick addition between the house and carriage house was constructed when the property was converted to a mortuary and serves as a flower room for deliveries and arrangement. The carriage house still functions as a garage.

In general, no alterations of major consequence have been made to the original historic fabric of the H. Alden Smith property. It has been preserved in excellent condition and continues to serve its adapted function as a mortuary.

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 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 1887

BUILDER/ARCHITECT William Channing Whitney

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The H. Alden Smith House, with its fine stone masonry, round-arched windows, and gabled, hipped roof, is an excellent example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture. The architectural work of Henry Hobson Richardson, who is recognized as one of the three greatest American-born architects, had a significant impact on the architecture of Minneapolis during the 1880s and 1890s; and the H. Alden Smith House is one of the finest examples of domestic architecture of this design in the city.

Designed in 1887 by one of Minneapolis' most prominent architects, William Channing Whitney, this house is a fine example of his work as well as the Richardsonian Romanesque style. For William Channing Whitney gained his architectural reputation from his ability to design buildings which followed popular trends, not from his original talents. Architectural historian Donald Torbert, speaking of Whitney's design for the H. Alden Smith House says the following:

"The design was in no sense a copy, but Richardson's works provided the authority for the individual motifs and for their combination. The Palladian-like openings of the gables and porch are historically out of character with the squatty tower, rock faced walls, and asymmetrical plan, but stem from a similar use of the Palladian motif on the Pain House at Waltham, Massachusetts which the Richardson office designed in 1884-86." ¹

The house bears the name of the man who had it built, H. Alden Smith, a wealthy Minneapolis businessman. Smith earned his wealth as co-owner of the Smith & Wyman Sash and Door Company. He had his home built on Harmon Place, one of Minneapolis' most fashionable addresses around the turn of the century. Today it is the only one of the mansions built there that survives shedding light on the history of residential building patterns in Minneapolis.

The H. Alden Smith House is thus an architecturally significant building in Minneapolis. It is a fine example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. It illustrates well the influence of this style upon local architecture during the late 1800s and William Channing Whitney's ability to adapt Richardson's designs.

1. Donald R. Torbert, Minneapolis Architecture and Architects 1848-1908, Ph.D. Thesis, May 1951.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Minneapolis Architecture and Architects 1848-1908, Ph.D. Thesis 1951, Donald Torbert.
 Minneapolis Journal, 21 Dec. 1906, p.7.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 5	4 7 7 8 6 0	4 9 7 9 ⁷⁴⁰ 7 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Andrea Gilmore (Intern) and Charles W. Nelson

ORGANIZATION

Minnesota Historical Society

DATE

3 September 1975

STREET & NUMBER

Building 25, Fort Snelling

TELEPHONE

612-726-1171

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Russell W. Fridley

TITLE
 Russell W. Fridley
 State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 10/31/75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Acting *Jay F. [Signature]*
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 3/16/76

ATTEST: *Robert B. Ketting*
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 3-15-76

Acting