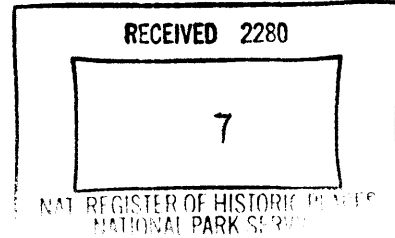


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name George H. & Alice (Spaulding) Cowles Residence

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 229 West Cass Street [N/A] not for publication

city or town Osceola [N/A] vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Clarke code 039 zip code 50213

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. [see continuation sheet for additional comments].

Rosella Sotice, Deputy SHPO, November 16, 2006
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 - determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 - determined not eligible for the National Register.
 - removed from the National Register.
 - other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Jude M. ...

12/20/06

George H. & Alice (Spaulding) Cowles Residence
Name of Property

Clarke County, IA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC/Secondary Structure/Garage

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other METAL

STONE/Limestone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

George H. & Alice (Spaulding) Cowles Residence
Name of Property

Clarke County, IA
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

c. 1875

Significant Dates

c. 1875

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

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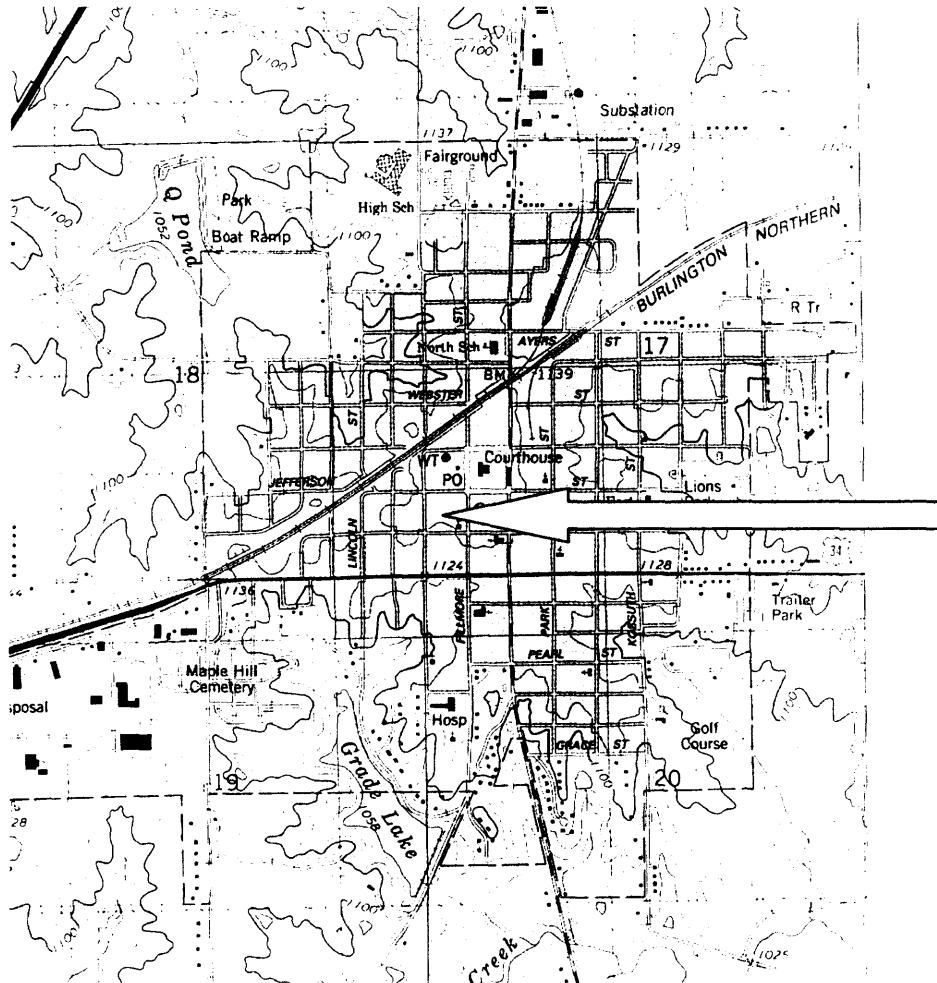
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George H. & Alice (Spaulding) Cowles Residence
Clarke County, IA

Section number 7 Page 1

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:

The George H. & Alice (Spaulding) Cowles Residence (ca. 1875), is located at 229 West Cass Street in Osceola, the Clarke County seat. Clarke County is in south central Iowa, the second county north of the Iowa/Missouri state line. The house rests on a level lot at the northeast corner of the intersection of Cass and Jackson streets, one block south and one block west of the southwest corner of the Osceola Public Square. At the time of construction the land on which the house is located included the entire SW quarter of the city block.



U.S.G.S. Map of Osceola (1983)
Note Public Square and Courthouse near center
Arrow indicates location of the Cowles residence

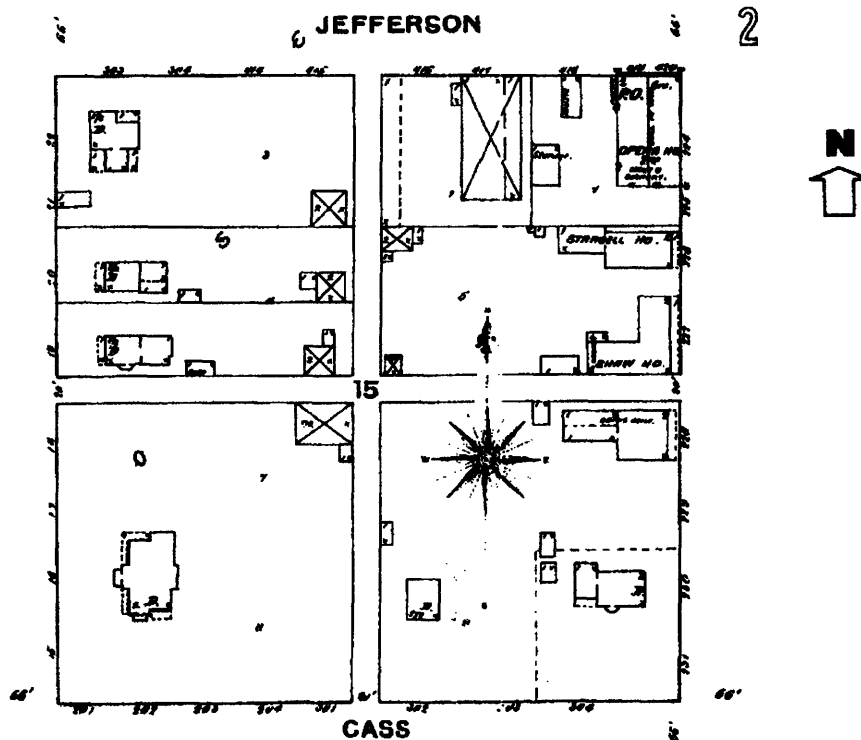
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George H. & Alice (Spaulding) Cowles Residence
Clarke County, IA

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Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (1893)
Cowles House is located in the southwest quarter of the block

Exterior:

The Cowles residence is a high-style Italianate design. The two story brick dwelling is basically rectangular in shape, measuring approximately 46 by 62 feet. The rosy-red brick (eight inches by four inches by two and one-quarter inches) is laid in a common bond with header courses every eight rows. It features a low pitched hip roof with center cupola and gabled dormers on the east, west, and south elevations. There are shallow (5 to 6 feet) projecting wings on the east and west elevations, and on the rear (north). The façade (south elevation) is asymmetrical with the double door entry off-set to the right, and a polygonal single story bay on the left. A single story rectangular bay projects from the west-facing wing. The house rests on a brick foundation with a dressed limestone water table. Window sills throughout are of dressed stone.

Italianate elements include tall, slender two over two double hung windows, massive hoodmolds over doors and windows, a heavy bracketed cornice, and the cupola. Although

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**George H. & Alice (Spaulding) Cowles Residence
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most Italianate houses in Iowa have hoodmolds of stone or cast concrete and a wooden cornice and brackets, on the Cowles house the hoodmolds, cornice and brackets are of ornamental sheet metal. The hoodmolds on the first and second floors differ in both shape and decorative details. Those on the first floor have rounded corners and a small circle divided by an "X" centered under the pediment. Those on the second floor feature a clover-like design in the circle and have angular shoulders or corner blocks. The cornice features paired Italianate brackets with a paneled frieze of what appears to be a miniature saw-tooth brick pattern. A rosette is found in the frieze as the cornice turns each corner. The small dormers feature finials of wood, with Eastlake-style cross-bracing, and a lunette window is located just below the cross-braces.

Fenestration on both floors follows the typical Italianate plan and all exterior doors have transoms. On the façade (south elevation) the first floor features the double door entry on the right, with a three window bay to the left. A basement window can be seen on the south wall of the bay. On the second floor, paired windows (sharing a hoodmold) are located above the entrance, and above the bay. On the west elevation, first floor window openings, from south to north, are: a single window, the projecting wing which contains a rectangular bay with a single window on the north and south sides and two windows sharing a hood on the west, and two single windows near the north end of the wall. The projecting wing has a door on the south wall that originally opened onto a side porch. The first floor pattern is repeated at the second floor except that a pair of windows with shared hood is located above the bay. The north wall contains a single window at the west end, a west-facing transomed door on the projecting wing, and a single window in the north wall of the wing. There are no windows on the second floor of the north elevation. The east elevation, reading from north to south on the first floor, has a transomed door, a single window, a small window, a pair of windows sharing a hood on the projecting wing, and a single blank "window" with hood and sill at the south end. This blank window is repeated directly above on the second floor, which also has paired windows in the wing, and single windows above both the first floor window and door. The blank "windows" are located on the staircase wall and appear to be original to the design. These were used to continue the rhythm of the fenestration and to balance the window to wall ratio in the design.

The front porch with its paired chamfered posts with square bases and capitals is original to the house and is typical of 1870s porch design. It has a frieze of scroll-sawn ornamentation with the same clover-like motif found on the main cornice, delicate brackets, and decorative capitals on the posts. Iron cresting finishes the porch design. This same frieze pattern and iron cresting is found on the polygonal and rectangular bays. Historic photographs show that there were originally two side porches flanking the west-facing rectangular bay, one at the northwest corner and one at the southwest corner of the house. These porches appear to have been removed in the latter half of the twentieth century. The iron cresting is repeated again on the roof deck. There are two extant brick chimneys with decorative brick chimney-pots. The original slate roof was replaced with asphalt shingles at an undetermined date.

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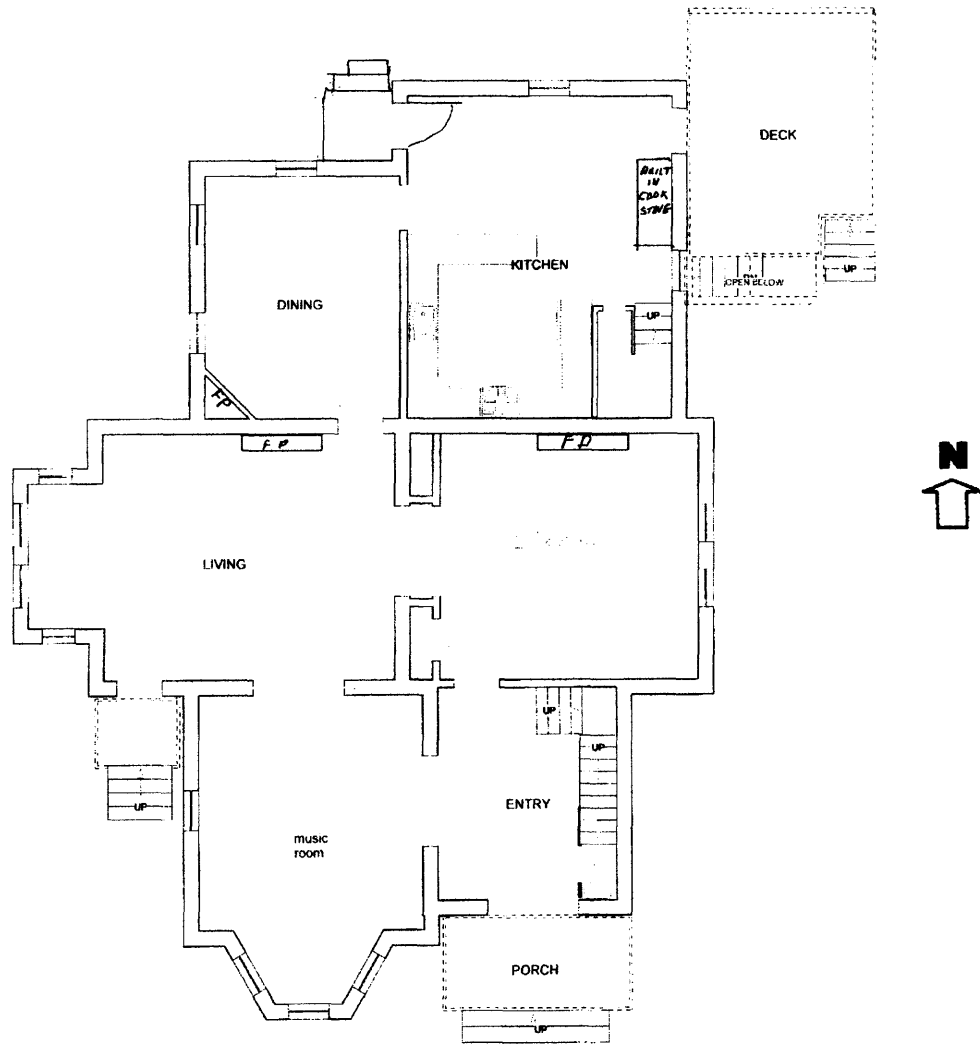
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Interior:

Load-bearing brick walls divide each floor of the house into five rooms plus the southeast corner, which functions as a room in the basement, the front entrance and staircase on the first floor, and the staircase and landing on the second floor. Most attic walls are also of brick.



Plan of Main Floor
(Drawing provided by owner, March 2006)

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Main Floor. The double front doors open into an entry hall (approximately 10 by 12 feet) with the staircase rising up along the north and east walls with a landing in the northeast corner of the room. A small powder room is now located under the stairs. Double doors open into the music room on the west. This room has the polygonal bay on the south wall and measures approximately 14 by 15 feet plus the 4 by 8 foot bay. Double doors open from the music room into the living room/parlor to the north. This room has one of three fireplaces on the first floor. This fireplace is located on the north wall with the flue serving both the parlor and the dining room fireplaces. The living room measures approximately 19 by 16 feet plus the rectangular 4 by 9 foot bay on the west end. A door on the south side of the projecting wing would originally have opened onto the porch at the southwest corner of the house. Double doors on the east wall of the living room open into what is now the library. This room measures approximately 16 feet square and can also be reached by a door opening directly into the front entry hall. A fireplace is centered on the north wall. The dining room (approximately 12 by 16 feet) occupies the northwest corner of the house and is entered through a door leading from the living room. The fireplace here is situated at an angle in the southwest corner of the dining room. A door at the northeast corner of the dining room leads into the kitchen in the northeast corner of the house. The kitchen now measures approximately 16 by 20 feet, but was originally two smaller rooms. The present owners removed a wall creating the present spacious room 20 years ago. There are two exterior doors opening from the kitchen. One at the northwest corner originally would have opened onto a wrap-around porch, while the door at the northeast corner would have opened directly outside. Today there is a deck outside this northeast entrance. The basement is accessed by stairs from the kitchen, and the back stairs leading to the second floor are also accessed here.

Woodwork throughout the house has been painted for decades. The only exception is the main staircase at the front entry. Transoms are found above the interior doors, all of which are original. The fireplace mantles and light fixtures are also original. The most interesting decorative element on the main floor is the finely detailed plasterwork which is found on the arched opening of the two bays as well as on the ceiling medallions. All of this is original except for one ceiling medallion that was damaged by a fire in 1939.

Second Floor. The second floor today consists of four bedrooms, two baths, and a laundry room, plus two sets of stairs. Originally there were five bedrooms but the fifth one has been converted into the laundry room and one bath. The second floor rooms are similar to those on the main floor in size, lacking the bays. The load-bearing walls continue through this floor to the attic. A central hall runs north/south from the front stairs to the stairs in back leading both down to the kitchen and up to the attic. The front bedroom is entered through a doorway on the east wall and is approximately 12 by 14 feet plus the closets. Following the hall to the north, the master bedroom is located on the west side, immediately above the living room/parlor. Like the room below, it features a fireplace centered on the north wall. This room is approximately 16 feet square plus closets on the east wall. It has a door leading into the master bath (6 by 12 feet) on the north wall. This bath can also be accessed from the hallway. Across the hall from the master bedroom is the third bedroom. Located on the east side of the house, it is directly above the library, and measures approximately 12 by 16 feet. A bath opens off this room along the south wall. In the northwest corner of the second floor is the 8 by 12 foot laundry

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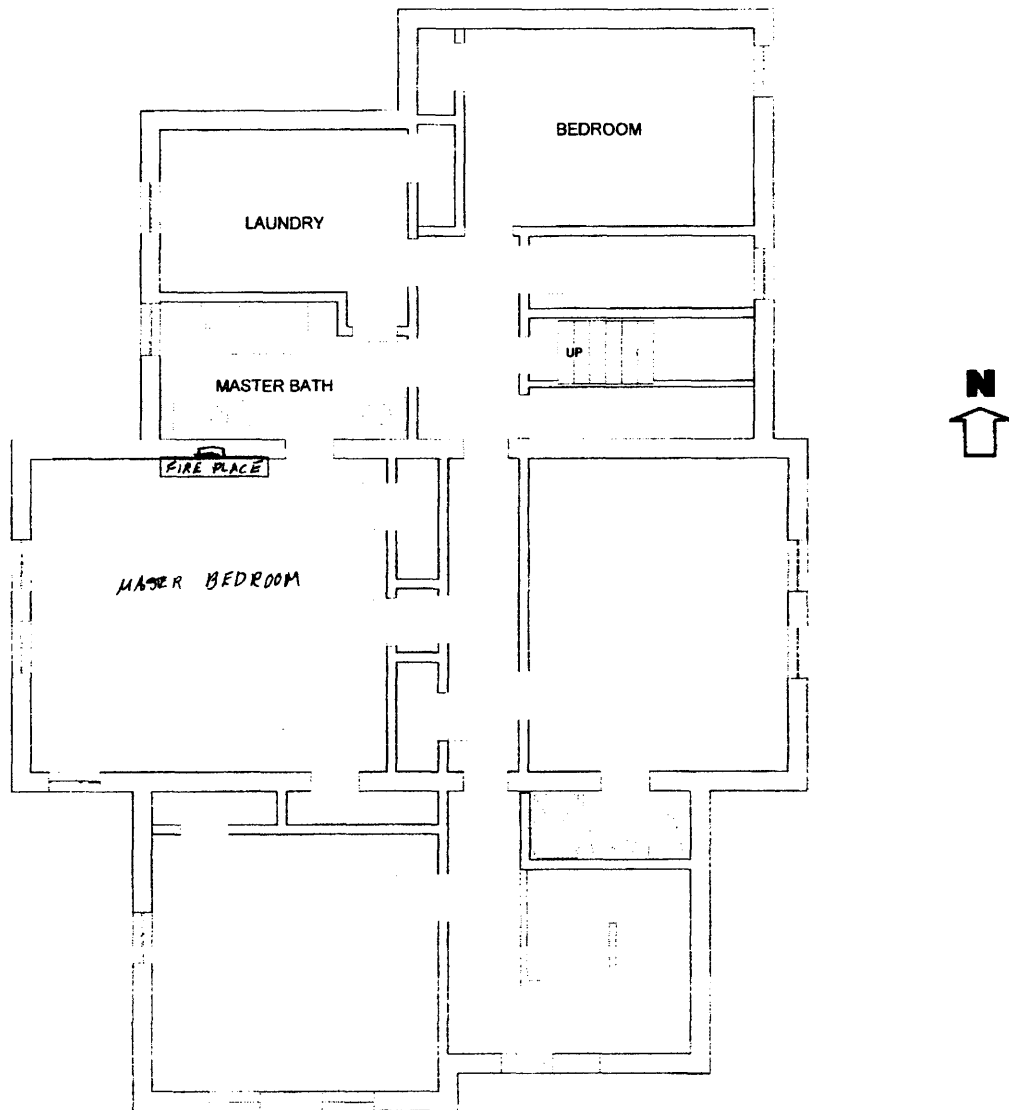
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room, and in the northeast corner is the 10 by 14 foot back bedroom. The stairs leading both up and down are located next to this bedroom.



Plan of Second Floor
(Drawing provided by owner, March 2006)

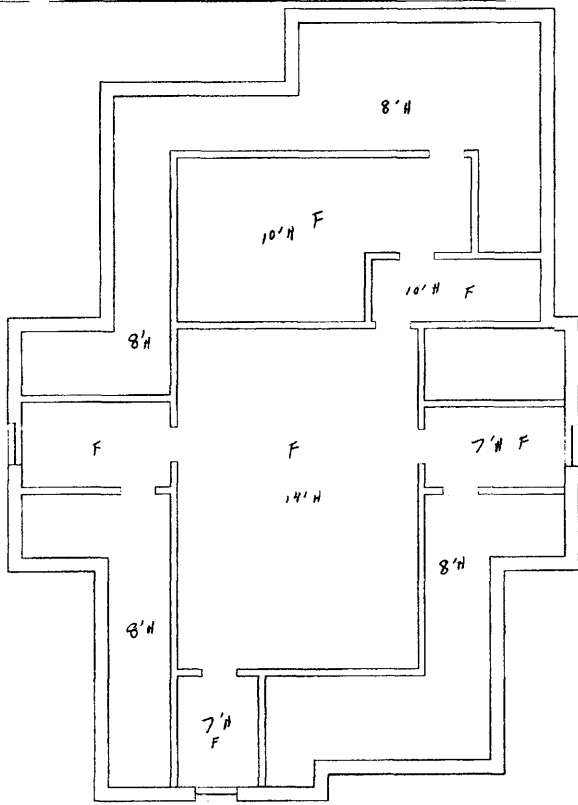
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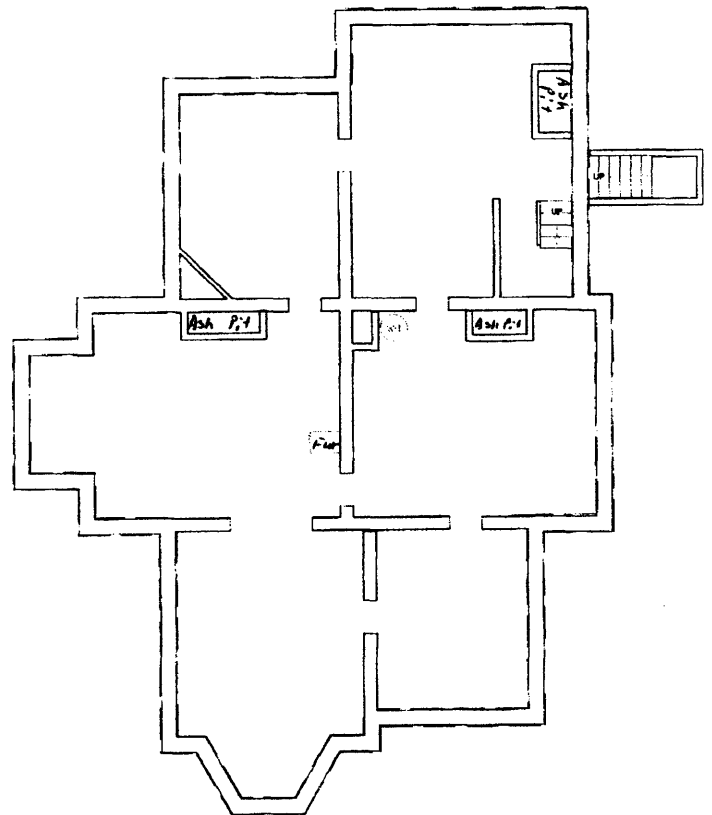
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Left: Plan of Attic

(Both plans provided by owner,
March 2006)

Below: Plan of Basement. All walls shown
are load-bearing brick.



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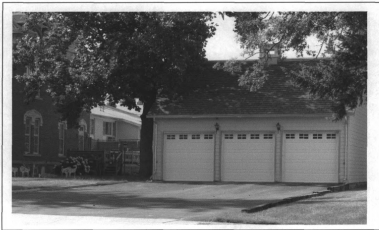
Attic. Due to the low pitched hip roof, the edges of the attic are functional only for storage purposes. The central part of the floor area rises to full height and can be used for storage of larger items. The cupola in the center provides natural light into this area.

Basement. The basement follows the same floor plan as the main floor. Ash pits are located along the north wall of the two center rooms under the main floor fireplaces, and on the east wall under the kitchen fireplace that has been replaced by a built-in stove. Although ceilings are lower in the basement, it can function as usable space, not just as a cellar.

Integrity:

The George W. and Alice (Spaulding) Cowles residence retains a high degree of all seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. This is somewhat unusual as the interior was remodeled in the mid-twentieth century, creating several apartment units. The present owners have removed the added walls, kitchens, etc. and restored the elegance of the original design.

The integrity of both the location and setting has been maintained, even though narrow portions of the lot on the north and east have been sold for later development. The carriage house at the far northeast corner of the original lot was removed by 1936, and the present owners constructed a 32 by 33 foot three-car detached garage and workshop on the east side of the lot in recent years.



Garage with the residence to the left (west)
(July 2006 photograph)

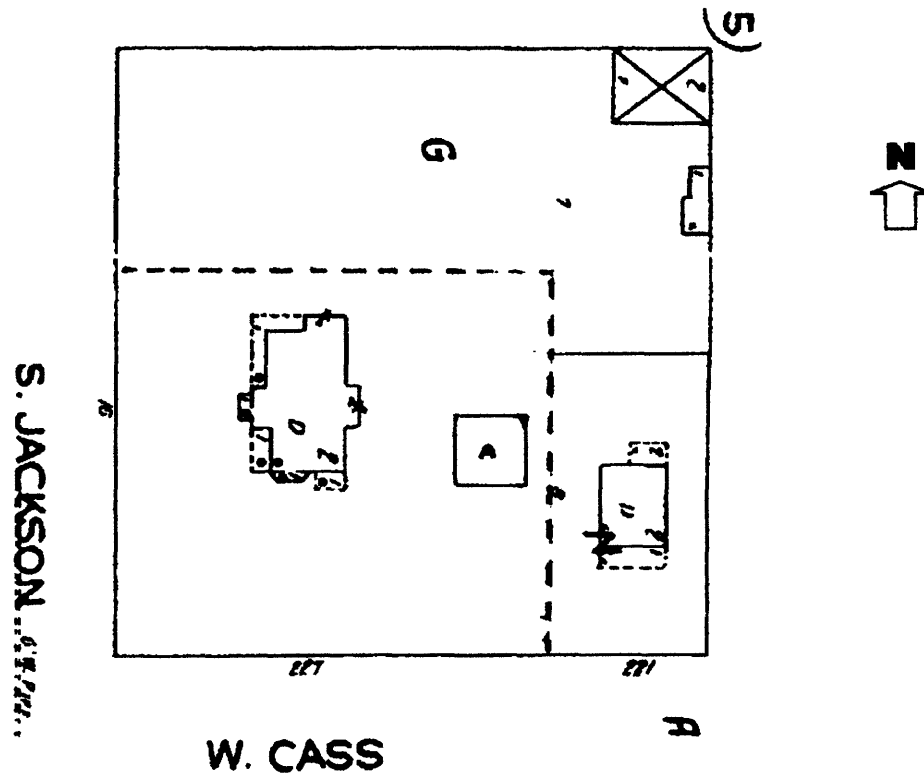
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Neither of these actions has had a negative impact on the residence proper. The neighborhood around the dwelling continues to be residential in nature, and the broad lawns around the house have been maintained, complete with the pine trees seen in early photos. The present owners removed the large foundation plantings and now have bushes and flowers more appropriate to the period of construction. The integrity of design, materials and workmanship of this brick residence has also been maintained. The only exterior design changes are the loss of the two porches on the west side, the replacement of the slate roof with modern materials, and the recent addition of a deck at the northeast corner of the house. The original front porch, sheet-metal hoodmolds and bracketed cornice, and iron cresting remain as major decorative elements. The interior retains the original floor plan with the exception of the kitchen and bedroom at the northwest corner of the second floor. The woodwork and decorative plasterwork are intact. Installation of modern wiring and plumbing has not had a negative impact. There is no doubt that the architect (unfortunately still unidentified) and George and Alice Cowles would recognize this house immediately, both inside and out.



Site Plan for 229 West Cass Street
(Based on 1926 Sanborn map)

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**George H. & Alice (Spaulding) Cowles Residence
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The George H. and Alice (Spaulding) Cowles Residence (ca.1875) has local significance under Criterion C. It is a fine, unaltered, architect designed high style Italianate residence, and the use of sheet-metal for the exterior decorative elements is uncommon in Osceola. It is of local historical interest as the residence of an early banker, and later a prominent physician. No case for Criterion A or B is being made at this time.

Criterion C:

Stylistically the Cowles Residence appears to have been constructed around 1875. Although the Italianate style was very popular in the state of Iowa from ca.1860 to 1885, most examples are simple vernacular adaptations of the style. These appear to have been constructed by local contractors, possibly using ideas from pattern books, with decorative details applied to the surface to create an Italianate feeling. Usually these were two story hip roof rectangles with the entrance off-set to one side. These entrances were often surrounded by transom and sidelights, and the broad eaves were supported by decorative wood scroll brackets. Brick and wood were the common building materials but in areas with large deposits of limestone, stone often became the material of choice. There is a good brick example of this vernacular Italianate type located in the same square block with the Cowles house, just around the corner on Filmore Street.

The Cowles Residence differs from these simple Italianate designs by the use of elaborate decorative details and rich materials. The basic shape of the house is a two story hip roof rectangle, but it is enhanced by shallow side wings, single story bays, porches on the front and sides, and a roof line that is broken by small gabled dormers on the front and side elevations, a cupola in the center, and two majestic brick chimneys with decorative brick chimney pots. This is an elegant design that was not constructed by a local contractor using pictures from pattern books. This shows the hand of an architect. Unfortunately, all attempts to identify the architect have proven fruitless. Since Osceola is only 35 miles south of Des Moines, it is very possible that Cowles hired a Des Moines architect to design this house. A search through the Architects Files in the State Historical Society, Shank's Dictionary of Iowa Architects, and Schroeder's Directory of 19th Century Iowa Architects, provides a partial listing of architects working in Des Moines at that time as well as several working across the southern part of the state:

Benjamin Bartlett, who is known for both residential and commercial designs, some as far away as Ottumwa
Joseph S. Blake, who appears to have done primarily commercial work
William Foster, who is known for both residential and commercial/public designs
Henry F. Liebbe, also known for residences as well as commercial/public designs
Charles Dunham of Burlington
A.G. Bassatt, Charles E. Bell, and William Ward, all from Council Bluffs
William K. Ball of Creston

While this list is not comprehensive, it provides a starting point for additional research.

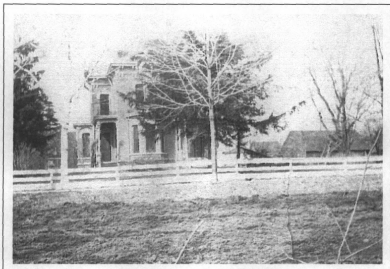
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Undated historic photo of the Cowles Residence
Note pine trees, carriage house, and fence

Construction of a house of this size, style, and quality could not have gone un-noticed in a small Iowa county seat town. Few newspapers from Osceola during the period of the 1870s and 1880s remain, and a search through newspapers from neighboring county seat towns did not uncover any mention of the Cowles house. It appears that if and when the architect for this house is identified, it will probably be by accident.

It is known that Osceola had at least one brickyard, but the quality of the brick was marginal. (*History of Clarke County, Iowa*, 1886, p 265) Given the design of this house, it is probable that the brick needed for construction was brought in from another location. The use of sheet-metal for the hoodmolds and bracketed cornice is also of note. While these were widely used for commercial construction, and for residences in cities, in communities the size of Osceola it was much more common to find hoodmolds of stone, cast stone or concrete, and bracketed cornices of wood. This appears to be another reason to believe that an established architect was responsible for this design. The richness of the interior, with its highly detailed plasterwork, further encourages this premise.

There are four National Register sites in Osceola, but none can be compared to this house stylistically. These four resources are:

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J.V. Banta House	222 McLane	George Barber Queen Anne
Brady-Bolibaugh House	217 W. Washington	Late Italian Villa
Marcellus Luther Temple and Julia Protzman House	502 S. Main	Free Classic Queen Anne
Dickinson Webster House	609 W. Jefferson	Gothic Revival Cottage

There are, however, several Italianate houses around the state that might be considered as comparable, though none are identical. These houses (all listed on the National Register) include:

Flynn Mansion	1867	135/80 @ Hickman, Clive (Polk County)
Thomas Naylor House (Attributed to William Foster)	1873	644 9 th St, Des Moines (Polk County)
F.H. Miller House	ca.1871	1527 Brady, Davenport (Scott County)
William Larrabee House (Montauk)	1874	Clermont (Buchanan County)

The presence of this elegant Italianate residence in a community of less than 5,000 people is noteworthy. It certainly meets the criterion of "the biggest and the best" that was prevalent during the early years of the National Register.

Local Historical Interest:

The initial owners of this house were George H. and Alice (Spaulding) Cowles. George was a banker in Osceola who had been born and raised in the Van Buren County community of Bentonsport. His first job was working in the Grief Store in Bentonsport (key structure in the Bentonsport Historic District, NRHP). In 1869 (at age 21) he arrived in Osceola and soon became associated with A.H. Burrows in a private banking business. He married Miss Alice Spaulding in 1871 and purchased Lots 7 and 8 in Block 15. Two years later he bought out his partner's share in the bank and continued the business by himself for thirteen years. (History of Clarke County, Iowa, 1886, pp 248-9) He was the only Osceola banker listed in the Business Directory included in the 1875 Andreas Atlas. In February 1886 Cowles was one of the organizers of the Osceola Bank, of which he was vice president and a director. This bank closed suddenly on November 21, 1888. Although rumors were rampant, there was little information provided in the local newspapers. The *Osceola Democrat* reported on November 29, 1888:

Osceola people were very greatly surprised and shocked on last Wednesday evening to learn that a receiver had been placed in charge of the Osceola Bank. Attorney General Baker arrived at that time, accompanied by B.F. Nix, of Afton, in whose hands the bank was placed. It was incorporated in its present form two years ago, with a capital of \$20,000. It had deposits of \$90,000. It is claimed by those interested that its assets amount to \$125,000. Rumors are rife as to the cause of the failure, but little is definitely known, and investigation is awaited. The settlement of its affairs cannot begin before the last of this week, when the

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**George H. & Alice (Spaulding) Cowles Residence
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receiver, who is county clerk of Union County, is released from his duties in court. Many prominent farmers of the county, as well as Osceola men, are involved, and the business outlook seems gloomy just now. The other banks, and all the business houses have come through, without failure, but a season of depression seems inevitable.

Locally it is said that the good citizens of Osceola believed that Cowles had used the bank's money to pay for his house. During March and April 1886 the Cowles had borrowed a total of \$9,000 from an old Van Buren County friend, Seth Richards, using the house as collateral. Seth Richards was an early Bentonsport settler and served as the first postmaster. He and George's father, Dr. C.W. Cowles, were major backers of the Bentonsport Academy. Richards was a friend of Keosauqua banker Edwin Manning, and between the two of them they owned thousands of acres of farm land and had their fingers in the business of almost every commercial enterprise in Van Buren County. As settlement continued up the Des Moines River Valley toward the new town of Des Moines, Richards followed, investing in businesses along the way. It appears that he settled in Des Moines and became a powerful influence in the development of downtown. In January 1889, just two months following the bank closure, the Cowleses sold their house to George Eastman of Douglas County, Nebraska for \$8,000. Douglas County is where the senior Dr. Cowles had moved. Over the next nine months the house changed hands three more times, all to residents of Douglas County, until the sale to Dr. Jason Roberts of Osceola in October 1890.

George H. Cowles died in Toronto, Canada on January 24, 1890. His obituary read

...On February 8, 1886 he was one of the organizers of the Osceola Bank, of which he was vice president and a director up to the time of its closing, November 21, 1888, a discussion of which will not be entered into here....In his friendships Mr. Cowles was strong and true, and until the failure of his bank no man in Clarke County had more friends than he... (Unidentified photocopy of obituary)

Dr. Jason and Mary F.Q. Roberts occupied this property until their deaths in 1913 and 1914. In April 1894 they celebrated their twenty-fifth anniversary with a lavish party at the residence.

Without disparagement to other social occasions, we may truthfully say there had never been so great an event of the kind before in Osceola, as Dr. and Mrs. Roberts' twenty-fifth anniversary party last Thursday Evening, June 7th. Three hundred and fifty silver printed invitations had been issued, embracing about seven hundred persons, and at least five hundred of these responded in person, and were present on the lawn and in the house. The weather was all that could be desired, and the lawn was arranged nicely, with many tables, well lighted with lamps and rows of bright Japanese lanterns, also two railroad head lights set up sent out great streams of light. The portico was all lighted up too, and on the left of the door was an evergreen tablet with 1869 on it in silver, and on the right side one with 1894. An evergreen covered umbrella with roses in it hung from the center of the portico ceiling.

The house itself, was in its best holiday attire, too. A professional house

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decorator from Des Moines had been employed and the house had been fitted with draperies in its doorways, arches, bay window, mantel and windows. Three hundred and forty dollars had been expended for these alone, and they were fine. A rope drapery in the hall entrance to the parlor, a Japanese to the library, a silk damask over the mantel we specially notice, and others as fine that we can't name. An Axminster carpet in the parlor was like moss for depth. (*Osceola Democrat*, November 29, 1894)

One historic photograph of Dr. and Mrs. Roberts seated in their parlor has been located. Although it doesn't show the grand decorations for the anniversary celebration, it gives us an idea of how the house looked during their occupancy. They are seated in what is now the library. Note the ceiling medallion and light fixture.



Undated photograph of Dr. and Mrs. Roberts
(Photo courtesy of owner)

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In January 1939 fire struck the Cowles house. The *Osceola Tribune* carried the story on page one.

**Old Landmark Damaged
Mrs. Earl Gregg Injured In Fire Here Saturday**

Mrs. Earl Gregg was quite seriously injured and several hundred dollars damage was done to the Nancy Bishop residence Saturday morning when fire swept from the basement to the attic and for a time threatened to destroy the huge brick structure that for generations has been a landmark in Osceola

...

No estimate of the cost of repairs have (sic) been made as yet, but Mrs. Bishop this morning indicated she would have the home repaired. For a time after the fire it was feared the building was so badly damaged that it would have to be torn down. Built more than fifty years ago, the structure is still a magnificent dwelling and at one time was a show place of Southern Iowa. Built of brick with a slate roof, it is much like originally constructed inside and out. There are about 20 rooms in the house.

...

There was no insurance on the house. (*Osceola Tribune*, January 31, 1939)

As noted in Section 7, the house was divided into apartments in the mid-twentieth century for approximately 20 years. The present owners purchased the house in 1986 and removed the added walls, etc. to return the residence to the single family dwelling it had been.

Conclusion:

The George H. and Alice (Spaulding) Cowles Residence has local Criterion C significance as a fine, relatively unaltered example of a high style architect-designed Italianate residence from ca.1875. The use of sheet metal for the exterior decorative details is an unusual element in a small county seat town. The integrity of the site is as strong as the integrity of the dwelling, and the resource would be instantly recognized by George and Alice Cowles and the architect.

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GEOGRAPHIC DATA:

Boundary Description:

The West three-fourths ($W \frac{3}{4}$) of Lot Eight (8) and the South Thirty-two (32) feet and one (1) inch of the West three-fourths ($W \frac{3}{4}$) of Lot Seven (7) (the North line of which is established by an auto axel buried in the ground, on said line six (6) inches East of the side-walk running along the West side of said Lot), all in Block Fifteen (15) in the Original Town of Osceola, Clarke County, Iowa.

Boundary Justification:

This is the area historically associated with this resource.

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The photographs submitted with this nomination were all taken by Molly Myers Naumann during the summer of 2005 and spring 2006. The negatives are in possession of the owners.

1. Façade, general view to NW
2. Façade and west elevation to NE (note garage in far right background)
3. North (rear) and west elevations to SE
4. East elevation to SW
5. Detail: Front entrance to N
6. Detail: First floor window to S
7. Detail: Second floor windows and cornice
8. Main staircase in entry hall
9. Fireplace in parlor/living room
10. Detail: Ceiling medallion with original light fixture, note bay window in background
11. Detail: Ornamental plasterwork on arch of bay window