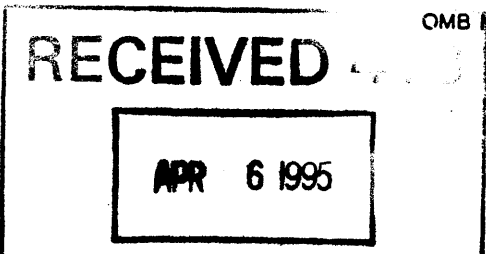


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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 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 Wickham-De Vol House
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 332 Willow Avenue N/A not for publication
city or town Council Bluffs N/A vicinity
state Iowa code IA county Pottawattamie code 155 zip code 51503

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.)
David A. [Signature] 3-17-95
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State of 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): _____

Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper Entered in the National Register Date of Action 5/4/95

Wickham-De Vol House

Pottawattamie, Iowa

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	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

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MIXED

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
BRICK

walls WOOD

roof ASBESTOS

other STONE/limestone
TERRA COTTA

Narrative Description

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

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1878

c. 1913

Significant Dates

1878

c. 1913

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Owen P. Wickham

unknown

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Wickham-De Vol House
Name of Property

Pottawattamie, Iowa
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	5
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2	6	1	3	7	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	5	7	1	1	3	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

3

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jan Nash and Cecilia Rusnak
organization Tallgrass Historians L.C. date December 1, 1994
street & number 931 Maiden Lane telephone 319/354-6722
city or town Iowa City state Iowa zip code 52240

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

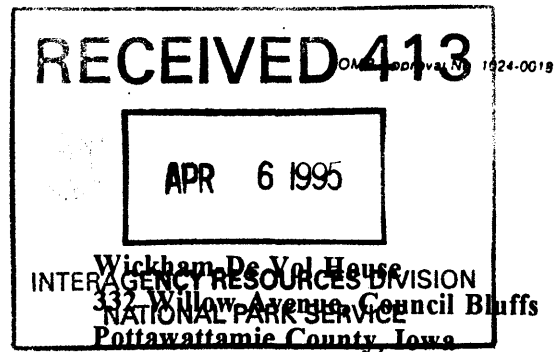
name Debra L. Danielsen
street & number 18208 Sunset Lane telephone 402/895-7897
city or town Omaha state NE zip code 68135

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet



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CFN-259-116

7. DESCRIPTION

The Wickham-De Vol House is a substantial two-story brick dwelling situated in a nineteenth-century neighborhood which occupies the loess bluff overlooking historic downtown Council Bluffs.¹ Constructed in 1878 as a single-family dwelling, the house was converted to multiple-family use at mid-twentieth century and is now being returned to single-family use by its current owner. Its distinct appearance is the result of an historic adaptation of early twentieth-century styles to the original nineteenth century house. Built by O. P. Wickham, a prominent Council Bluffs contractor and brick manufacturer, Wickham-De Vol House was modified while it was owned by the De Vols, a Council Bluffs family prominent in the retail hardware business. The appearance of the house was altered around 1913 when the De Vols restyled the house in a manner reflecting the eclectic approach of early twentieth-century domestic architecture. By changing the roof line and porches, the De Vols transformed what was essentially a romantic Victorian Italianate house, with Eastlake detailing, into a house with a more modern, horizontal and clean-lined twentieth century look. As such, the Wickham-De Vol House illustrates a local variation of a much broader, nationwide trend.

A. Exterior

The footprint of Wickham-De Vol House is irregular (see Figures 1 and 2). From front to rear, the house's two-story square front mass expands in the middle of the building with rectangular projections on both the east and west sides to form a second, wider, two-story block or mass. The footprint narrows again to the rear of this second block so that the width of the two-story house in the rear approximates the width of the front mass. Attached to the rear of the two-story building is a small brick single-story wing which appears to be an early addition. Overall dimensions of the house, including porches, are approximately 70 feet, front to rear, by 39 feet, side to side.

The house's two-story vertical brick mass which extends from foundation to cornice board is broken by a stone water table. This water table is at ground level on the east side, but due to ground slope (from east down toward the west) the foundation becomes exposed, and the water table raised, along

¹ Haymarket Commercial Historic District (NRHP 1985).

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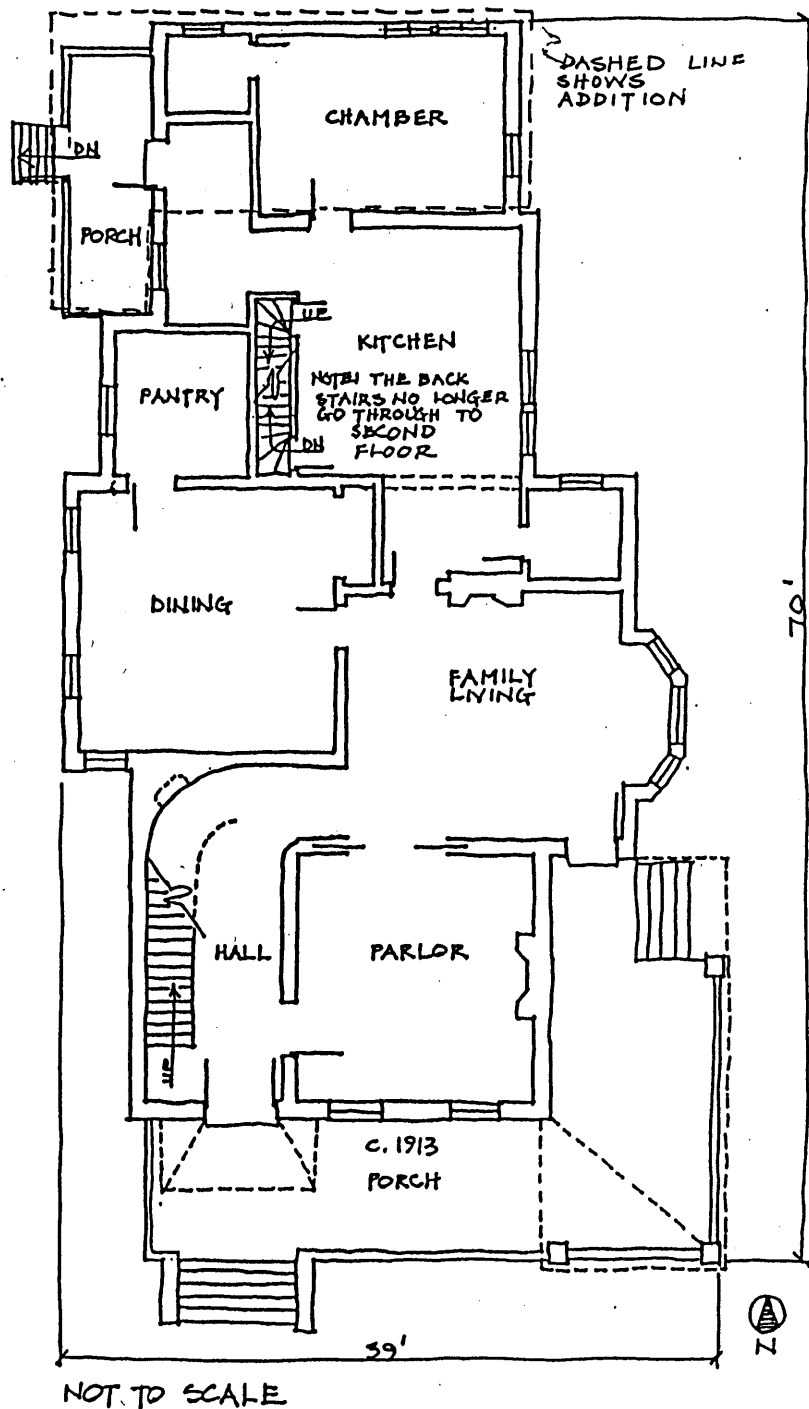
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Wickham-De Vol House
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Pottawattamie County, Iowa

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CFN:253-1116

Figure 1. Plan of first floor. Wickham-De Vol House. (Drawn by Cecilia Rusnak.)



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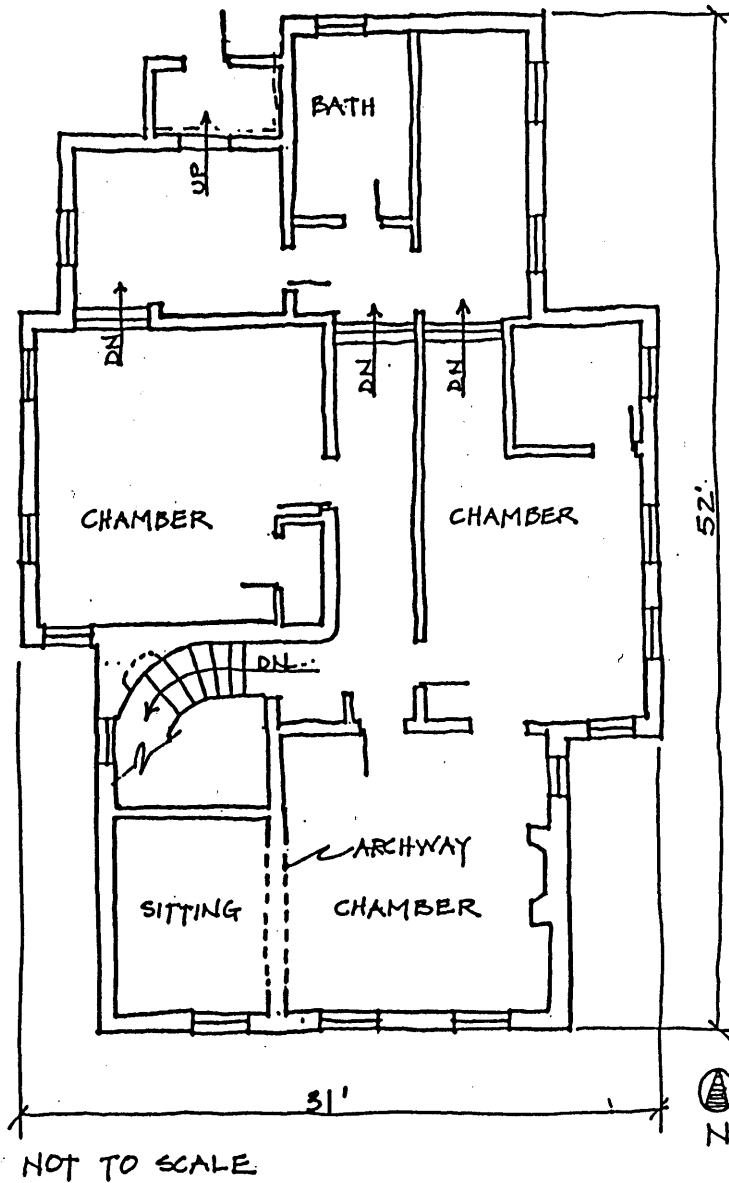
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Figure 2. Plan of second floor. (Drawn by Cecilia Rusnak.)



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the west side and south front.² Currently the brick walls are painted white; underneath the white paint is found a layer of straw or light-drab colored paint.³ Under that coat of paint, the bricks are red and laid in a simple running bond pattern, cemented with remarkably uniform and finely-scaled--almost delicate--mortar joints. Trim color on the house is a deep terra cotta red; no other trim paint color is discernible. Under the trim paint, a cream-colored limestone is found at the water table and window surrounds and sills.⁴

The south front of the house, facing Willow Avenue, has a three-part division marked on the first floor by a double-door entry and two tall windows. Three second-story windows, aligned with the first floor fenestration, duplicate the lower windows in detail but are not as tall. The offset front entry has paired panel doors with glass windows and carved sunburst and corner fan motifs. Large wood brackets support a small hipped-roof porch over the entry. The roof coverings for this entry porch, as well as for the other roof structures of the house, are diamond-shaped cement asbestos shingles with textured terra cotta ridge caps. Soffits and porch ceilings are uniformly of beaded-board lumber. Windows on the front and middle blocks of the building are one-over-one double-hung sashes with limestone surrounds and sills (windows on the rear two-story portion change to single and paired double-hung sashes with segmental-arch lintels; the one-story rear addition has casement and single-pane fixed sash windows). The limestone window surrounds are pedimented and incised with stylized

²The south foundation, however, is obscured by the porch. Evidence of the raised foundation is confirmed by an examination of the south wall of the basement front room where sash windows are extant. It is possible these windows allowed some light into the basement despite the presence of an earlier wooden porch (wood material confirmed by Sanborn fire insurance map, 1891). Certainly, when opened they would have permitted fresh air into the basement.

³Paint color names are taken from a 1904 Montgomery Ward and Co. paint sample card (author's collection), though the paint on the brick walls does not necessary date to that time period.

⁴Wickham often combined red brick with light-colored stone (or concrete) trim incised with Eastlake motifs. He was not alone in this practice. While no exhaustive inventory exists of Wickham-built residences, known examples of brick combined with incised stone (or concrete) trim include the 1877 Col. L. W. Tulleys House, a brick-veneered and stone house designed by Chicago architect P.E. Hale and built by Wickham in the Italian villa style (NRHP, 1978); and a second house Wickham built for himself in 1882 (O.P. Wickham House, NRHP, 1979).

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scroll and floral patterns. Short stone drops on either side of the pediment have two vertical channels.

On the east Bluff Street side--the second public side of this corner lot house--principal features include the front porch (see *Twentieth Century Alterations*) and the two-story projection containing a large one-story, three-sided canted bay window. A side door, located just in front or south of the bay window, provides entry from the front porch into the second parlor or family living area. Just to the rear of the bay window is a set of paired windows under a brick segmental arch. These windows fill an opening likely originally used as an east side service entrance since the 1891 fire insurance map indicates a small wood porch (nonextant) at this location. This entrance was probably abandoned and filled in with the paired windows after the rear addition, with its west side porch, was added.

The north rear of the house has a one-story brick addition covered by a shallow, hipped roof with painted wood cornice and decorative eave brackets. A band of rectangular windows inset under a segmental brick arch is located on the north wall. In quality of craftsmanship, there is a striking contrast between the brickwork of the original house and the brickwork of the addition, with the latter clearly exhibiting poorer masonry skills (or concern). Because of its proximity to the kitchen and service area of the house, the rear addition likely represents chamber quarters for domestic help employed by the De Vol family.

The west side of the house is marked by a raised foundation created by the slope of the loess bluff, and by a similar but smaller two-story projection as on the east side. The north end of this side has a wooden side porch, which likely dates to the construction of the rear addition. It also has brackets at the eaves. A set of wood steps connects the porch to ground level. A sidewalk runs from the porch to the northwest corner of the lot and a small detached garage located on the alley which runs along the western property line.

i. Twentieth Century Alterations

The extant c. 1913 front porch⁵ is one of the features that significantly altered the house's original

⁵For the sake of brevity, the porch is referred to throughout as the "front porch" though admittedly it wraps around to the east side also.

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appearance. The porch is constructed of a brick foundation, short brick walls with concrete caps, brick columns and a poured concrete floor. The porch deck extends across the front and wraps around the southeast corner to the east side projection. Only the east side of the porch is covered by a hipped roof, leaving an open terrace between it and the front door. Confirmation that the existing porch and terrace configuration is not original is found in an historic photograph contained in an 1887 publication.⁶ Also, based on an 1891 fire insurance map, the earlier porch was wood, completely covered by a roof, and wrapped around the front and east sides. Though difficult to determine because of the great distance from the camera, the porch in the 1887 photograph nonetheless appears to be open underneath, perhaps to accommodate the basement windows. The 1891 fire insurance map indicates the front porch roofing material was "non-combustible" while the main body of the house had wood shingles on the roof.

Along with the front porch, the building's hipped roof is the other principal architectural feature reshaped during the De Vol ownership period. The 1887 photograph reveals a hipped roof terminating in a small flat surface ringed with decorative cresting, rather the existing hipped roof which terminates in a ridge peak. Inspection of the interior of the roof confirms that the main roof is the still original roof, but the ridge peak is a later alteration. The existing peak is made of lumber which is finer cut, cleaner and clearly added later to extend the original rafters. Square nails used in the original roof are replaced by round wire cut nails in the newer ridge peak construction.

Eave lines on the roof in the 1887 photograph *appear* to be narrower than the existing eaves, indicating a second way in which the roof was modernized, although the photograph is not definitive on this point. Unfortunately, this question is not resolved by interior inspection either. Rafters in the attic terminate at the brick wall of the house where a horizontal board along the top of the wall blocks the view beyond. The theory that the eaves were extended in the twentieth century to reflect current architectural styles is supported more by an accumulation of evidence visible from the outside of the house than either the historic photograph or the attic inspection. The eaves of the roof match in width the eaves of the newer front porch. Further, the soffit materials and its method of construction also match the materials and methods used in the ceilings of both the small entry porch and the larger front

⁶J.P. Craig, et al., *Council Bluffs Iowa Illustrated*, (Des Moines: Miller & Watters, 1887), n.p.

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porch. Specifically, all these surfaces are covered by beaded-board lumber with blunt-cut ends (rather than mitered) which are staggered at the corners. The weight of evidence, therefore, supports the idea that the roof of the house was modified in two ways--but not replaced--during the De Viols' ownership to match the new profile created by the new porch. Eliminated was the clipped roof top with its decorative cresting, and the wooden porch supports, brackets and railing. All these details are associating with Victorian architecture of the nineteenth century which, nationwide, gave way in the early twentieth century to the growing fashion of cleaner, simpler--less decorated--lines of architecture.

In addition to the house, there is a single-car wooden garage located at the northwest corner of the property. The garage is in a deteriorated condition and is to be removed soon. It is treated as a noncontributing building for purposes of this nomination.

B. Interior

In spite of the fact that the house was converted to multiple-family use,⁷ the interior arrangements of the formal living areas and primary bedrooms remain substantially the same as they were in the nineteenth century, while the areas considered service areas, such as the kitchen, have undergone the greatest changes. In addition, a number of significant interior architectural details remain. The foyer features a winding staircase with a twisting banister and flat decorative brackets on the open riser. At

⁷The house appears to have been converted after the De Vol ownership period ended in 1941.

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the turn of the staircase, a Roman-arch niche is present, a feature often found in Italianate and French Second Empire houses of the 1870s-1880s period.⁸ The heavy ornate newel is of walnut with a very dark stain. This newel, along with the rest of the staircase, likely were stock products ordered from millwork catalogues. In fact, the newel in the Wickham-De Vol House is nearly identical to one salvaged from the Moore-Delamar house in Boise, Idaho. That house was constructed in 1879, one year after Wickham built his Council Bluffs house. The Moore-Delamar newel was manufactured by the M.A. Disbrow & Co. millwork company in Lyon, Iowa. The Disbrow company also opened a factory in Omaha, Nebraska, across the river from Council Bluffs, in 1886. Disbrow millwork has been discovered in houses literally from coast to coast.⁹

Interior doorways are topped with glass transoms. Four-paneled doors have delicately incised brass hinges and porcelain knobs. Most of the woodwork is painted white. The front parlor, family living room and upstairs front bedroom each feature distinctive fireplaces with slate mantels and surrounds, painted to resemble marble. Stylized details, reminiscent of ancient Roman decorations, have also been painted on the fireplaces. Flooring is of thin oak strips. Six-panel pocket doors with decorative brass keyhole plates and latches separate the front and rear parlors. A bold round-arched doorway connects the upstairs front bedroom with its small sitting room.

⁸The 1875 B.J. Palmer House on Brady Street in Davenport, Iowa, for example.

⁹A photograph of the Moore-Delamar house newel and its matching Disbrow company catalogue image are found in Arthur A. Hart, "M.A. Disbrow & Company: Catalogue Architecture," in *The Palimpsest*, 56 (July/August 1975): 114.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

Wickham-De Vol House is significant under Criterion C because it represents the historic adaptation¹⁰ of a substantial nineteenth-century Italianate house to the changing architectural trends of the early twentieth century.¹¹ As a local variation of broader patterns in American architecture, Wickham-De Vol House is viewed within its community as an important historic resource which illustrates Council Bluffs' participation in changing nationwide attitudes towards domestic architecture.¹²

A. Historic Context--Council Bluffs

In the early nineteenth century, the Council Bluffs-Omaha area already was established as a frontier trading location. Located at a point where east-west routes crossed the Missouri River, the site became important in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries as a center of commerce and transportation. The first influx of European-American settlers occurred in 1846 with the arrival of the

¹⁰Historic adaptations of an original property (discussed on page 19 of *National Register Bulletin #15*) are understood within the framework of eligibility under Criterion C, wherein a property must meet at least one of that Criterion's requirements, for example, as in the Wickham-De Vol House, because it "embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction."

¹¹The analytical framework used to evaluate the significance of a Prairie School "update" to an earlier Italianate building should be no different than that used to evaluate a Colonial house that was remodeled just after the Revolution, or a Gothic Revival cottage to which Italianate details have been added. All may be seen within the rubric of "historic adaptations," each assessed on its own merits regardless of how long ago or how recently the adaptation was worked. While one may question whether the De Vols' restyling of Wickham's house was an aesthetic success or failure, one also can clearly read the Prairie School layer on the existing house. As one professor of architecture noted, it's hard to know for certain without a city-wide survey, but the Wickham-De Vol house may well reflect the tentative "beginnings of the Prairie School in Council Bluffs" (Wesley Shank to the State Nominations Review Committee, 10 February 1995).

¹²The community's perception of the importance of Wickham-De Vol House was explained by a member of the City of Council Bluffs' Community Development Department and by the Chair of the Council Bluffs Heritage Preservation Commission who stated: "...among the citizens of Council Bluffs, this house is widely recognized as a very important local resource. The owner...had enjoyed much local support for her plans to bring this building back..." Letter dated November 23, 1994 to Jan Nash from David Loschen, Urban Planner, and Ruth Olson, Chair of the Commission. Council Bluffs passed its Historic Preservation Ordinance in 1980 and has been a Certified Local Government since 1986.

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Mormons, who had been forced out of Nauvoo, Illinois. They settled temporarily in the Council Bluffs area. Once a permanent settlement site was chosen in Utah, the majority of the Mormons elected to leave Council Bluffs; most were gone by the year 1852. However, a substantial number, over 2,000,¹³ chose to stay, persuaded that Council Bluffs offered opportunities worth pursuing. One important stimulus for the community's growth during the late-1840s and 1850s was the flood of prospectors travelling through, first to the California gold country, then to the Colorado mining territory. Another stimulus was the wagon trains full of settlers who had their eyes on Oregon and points west. Many of these stopped in Council Bluffs to outfit for the journey ahead, a task which sometimes took several months.

In this climate of travel and commerce, business establishments flourished, among them the hardware enterprise started by Paul C. De Vol. Arriving as part of the Nauvoo Mormon contingent with his parents and siblings, De Vol began his entrepreneurial activities by selling a variety of commodities to the emigrants passing through the community. Having received training as a tinsmith, he opened a tinware and hardware establishment in 1861. Eventually, De Vol and his sons owned and operated businesses in both Omaha and Council Bluffs.¹⁴

Other enterprises flourished as well in this growing community, among them the building trades. It was to this activity that Owen P. Wickham was drawn, especially to brickmaking and building contracting. Wickham arrived in Council Bluffs in 1857 as a young boy. His family had made the long journey west, coming via New Orleans from Ireland. He and several brothers began their careers as laborers, starting "at the bottom with the hod" as one publication noted, before embarking on their prosperous enterprises.¹⁵

Brickmaking began in the area with the opening of the first kiln in 1853, perhaps prompted by a devastating fire that same year which had swept away a number of businesses housed in frame

¹³*The Palimpsest* 9 (1961): 398.

¹⁴Homer Field and Joseph Reed, *History of Pottawattamie County*, (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1907), 359.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 70. A "hod" was a device for carrying bricks and mortar.

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structures.¹⁶ By 1892, there were at least seven brick manufacturers, although the Wickham firm at that time was advertising itself as a building contractor specializing in masonry.¹⁷ Council Bluffs took pride in its masonry structures, boasting in 1899 of its six brick hotels.¹⁸

The stream of emigrants passing through Council Bluffs to the west would diminish, but not before the city received another economic boost in the form of expanded transportation links. As a result of a campaign visit to the community in 1859, Abraham Lincoln, after assuming the Presidency, declared that Council Bluffs would become the easternmost terminus for the Union Pacific Railroad. The consequences for the city's development were tremendous. Its first rail line completed in 1867, Council Bluffs eventually became a prominent railway hub with eleven railroads converging upon it. Such growth in commercial trafficking resulted in increased opportunities for individuals and enterprises, as well as an increased population. In the decade from 1870 to 1880, Council Bluff's population rose from 10,000 to 18,000. Demands for goods and services during this period additionally contributed to the success of businesses such as Wickham's and De Vol's.

The agricultural prosperity that the midwest experienced around the turn of the century also made its mark on the local economy. Council Bluffs, with its position as a transportation center and proximity to agricultural markets, once boasted of being the nation's second largest distribution center for agricultural implements.¹⁹ Growth and development continued at a healthy rate into the first few decades of the twentieth century. Soon automobile highways joined the railroads to converge at this city on the Missouri River,²⁰ further expanding the city's role as a transportation link. From 1910 to 1920 Council Bluffs saw another jump in population from 29,000 to 37,000. City expansion brought

¹⁶*The Palimpsest*, op. cit., 403.

¹⁷The Wickham firm, known under a variety of names throughout its history, i.e. The Wickham Brothers, J.E. and O.P. Wickham, at one time was the largest building contractor in the area, employing over 200 people in the construction season.

¹⁸*The Palimpsest*, op. cit., p. 435

¹⁹Craig, *Council Bluffs Iowa Illustrated*, n. p.

²⁰By the early 1920s fifteen highways were noted. Craig, *Council Bluffs Iowa Illustrated*, n.p.

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a new set of concerns including a need for upgrading the quality and image of old facilities.

"Modernizing" was a term often used to describe street repavings and building remodeling.

Discussion surrounding the City Beautiful movement found its way into the local press, emphasizing the creation of civic amenities such as parks and boulevards, and neighborhood beautification with each home serving as a building block for the objectives. Such dialogue and subsequent building and improvement projects continued in Council Bluffs until America's involvement in World War I appeared to dominate peoples' concerns.²¹

Owen P. Wickham chose the prosperous time of the late 1870s to build a brick house on Willow Avenue for his family, moving into the residence with his wife, Jennie Fenlan, and children in 1878. The family lived there only a short time, though, moving to a larger and more elaborate Wickham-built home on South Seventh.²² Subsequent occupants, the Fords, also lived just a short time in the house. The next residents, the De Vol family, kept the dwelling in its name for many decades. Wickham's impact on the physical environment of Council Bluffs, as a builder and supplier of building materials, is understudied. Several of his buildings already have been listed in the National Register and there are indications that more residential and commercial buildings may be eligible. His buildings also have been chosen for inclusion in a published survey of Iowa architecture, part of a nationwide project undertaken by the Society of Architectural Historians called the "Buildings of the United States."²³

Paul C. De Vol, Katherine Swobe De Vol, a former schoolteacher, and their children moved into the Willow Avenue home they had purchased in 1883. After the death of Paul De Vol in December of 1903, Katherine and her unmarried daughter, Mary, remained there. Katherine stayed socially active

²¹*Council Bluffs Daily Nonpareil*, 1910-1918, various issues.

²²A Queen Anne house with Eastlake details, the O.P. Wickham House was listed in National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

²³Though flawed with technical errors, *Buildings of Iowa* has been called "the most complete architectural guidebook for the whole state we have" and its lead author, David Gebhard, described as "an architectural historian specializing in American architecture...well qualified to analyze it and evaluate it." Wesley Ivan Shank, review of *Buildings of Iowa*, by David Gebhard and Gerald Mansheim, *The Annals of Iowa* 53 (Winter 1994): 59,60.

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and was considered a prominent member of the community.²⁴ The house did not pass out of the De Vol family until 1941 when Mary sold it after her mother's death. In all likelihood, Katherine, Mary, or both women, influenced their house's restyling in c. 1913, possibly responding to popular exhortations to "modernize."²⁵

B. Architectural Significance

The Wickham-De Vol House reflects popular trends in residential architecture of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries. Built by O. P. Wickham in the Italianate style with Eastlake details,²⁶ a

²⁴Field, op. cit., 361.

²⁵There is no specific evidence to place the remodelling of the De Vol house at 1913. Its design features put it within the first two decades of the century, most likely between 1905-1915. The 1913 date was arrived at because during that year the De Vol hardware store underwent a facade remodeling. *Council Bluffs Daily Nonpareil*, 27 April 1913.

²⁶The practice of applying Eastlake details to a house of a romantic style was as common in Council Bluffs as it was nationwide. David Gebhard, professor of architectural history at the University of California, Santa Barbara, describes two of Wickham's houses in *Buildings of Iowa* (1993) which use this combination. The Tulleys House, he says, has the form of an "Italian villa," but with "Eastlake window patterns" (467). Also, the second house built for himself, the O.P. Wickham house on South 7th Street, is described as a "Queen Anne dwelling" with Eastlake style elements seen in the "patterns of the wood detailing, posts and capitals" (466). Immediately across the street from the Wickham-De Vol house on Willow Avenue is another brick house described by Gebhard as "Italianate" (467). It also has incised stone window surrounds. Gebhard's definition of Eastlake is, in part, "A decorative arts and interior design term of the 1860s and 1880s sometimes applied to architecture" (531) and points out that Eastlake embellishments include chamfered, turned and incised details. While the evidence indicates Eastlake decoration often was applied to house forms of predominately another style, such as Queen Anne or Italianate, architectural historians are in hearty disagreement as to what exactly a singularly "Eastlake" house might be. Carole Rifkind in *A Field Guide to American Architecture* (1980) fails to give Eastlake a category of its own, but describes the "Eastlake taste" within the Italianate and Second Empire descriptions (64). Likewise, Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings in *American Vernacular Design: 1870-1940* (1985) describe an "Italianate hipped cottage" and an "organic cottage in the Queen Anne or shingle style" (198, 212 respectively), but only mention Eastlake within the latter category as an "Eastlake style of ornamentation" (212). The index to Virginia and Lee McAlester's book, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (1986) under Eastlake simply says "see spindlework" where the reader finds only "Folk Victorian, Neo-Victorian and Queen Anne." The Preservation Press publication *What Style is it?* (John C. Poppeliers, et al., 1983) seems not to

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combination fashionable in the 1870s, the dwelling was modestly redesigned around 1913, while under the De Vol ownership, to remove the exterior ornamentation which Charles Eastlake, himself, ultimately had come to find "bizarre" in its exuberance. By eliminating removable features associated with Victorian architecture, the Wickham-De Vol House was made to look more "modern."

Generally, the redesign of the roof and front porch emphasized a shift from a more vertical orientation and the elaborate detailing of Italianate buildings to the horizontal lines and simpler detailing of the modern architecture after the turn-of-the-century, especially seen in Prairie style which was spreading in influence beyond its Chicago origins.

i. Nineteenth-Century Italianate Architecture

The romantic ideals which inspired the Italianate, as well as other picturesque styles of the time, were first brought to popular attention by late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century English landscape writers, architects and landscape architects. J. C. Loudon, an English writer, promoted variations on his ideas of this romantic style through widely read publications such as design encyclopedias and compendia which provided patterns for creating homes and their backdrops. An American writer and designer, Andrew Jackson Downing, was inspired in the 1840s by Loudon's publications to create his own series of pattern books and style guides for domestic architecture, among them *Cottage Residences* and *The Architecture of Country Houses*. Architectural designs and renderings by architect

mention Eastlake at all, either as a style or as a decoration, but rather limits itself to the familiar categories of Italianate, Stick Style, and Queen Anne, among others (Contents page). Finally, one architectural historian who *does* recognize Eastlake as a style in its own right, Marcus Whiffen in *American Architecture since 1780: A Guide to Styles* (1969) admits that "most Eastlake buildings would be classifiable as Stick Style or Queen Anne if they were not transmogrified by a distinctive type of ornament. This ornament is largely the product of the chisel, the gouge, and the lathe" (123). Whiffen, who uses images of wooden houses with steep-pitched gable roofs as examples of the Eastlake style, indicates it was in California and the West in general that the style persisted, culminating in the "Eastlake-Second Empire amalgam of so many San Francisco row houses"(124). According to Whiffen, Charles Lock Eastlake, the English architect whose name was borrowed for the style, was greatly embarrassed by the so-called Eastlake furniture and interior ornament attributed to him. Further, he regretted that his "name should be associated with a phase of taste in architecture and industrial art with which I can have no real sympathy, and which by all accounts seems to be extravagant and *bizarre*" [emphasis original](124). A synthesis of these authorities (and the images used to illustrate their discussions) leads to the conclusion that "Eastlake" most properly refers to a type of detail or ornament, generally executed in wood through specific building technologies, rather than the totality of mass, fenestration, profile, ornament, materials, and influences that combine to define a "style" of architecture.

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Alexander Jackson Davis often were used in Downing's books. These books proved to be enormously successful and were reissued repeatedly after Downing's death in 1852. Downing's ideas were read throughout the country by consumers and builders who readily adapted and applied his ideas.

One of several styles promoted by Downing, the Italian-inspired house was cited for its practicality because its simple, rectangular form could be added to as a family's circumstances changed. Moreover, its flexibility was noted in that it could be adapted to both rural and suburban locations. It was also lauded for its conservative use of ornament, not overly embellished, but with enough detailing to give it character. Downing generally cautioned against the extreme use of ornament, advice which was ignored especially during the last decades of the 1800's.

Figures 3 and 4, taken from Downing's *Landscape Gardening and Rural Architecture* (1849) and *The Architecture of Country Houses* (1850), respectively, reveal mid-century models for what became the Italianate style seen in the Wickham-De Vol House. Architectural historians differ on what they call this particular line of Italian-inspired architecture. Marcus Whiffen calls it the "Romano-Tuscan Mode" (see Figure 5) though he points out that in its academic form, it was not supposed to be "picturesque" and admits in the context of Victorian proclivity toward excessive decoration, few precise academic examples of this variation were created.²⁷ Scholars of vernacular architecture²⁸ define Italianate characteristics to include houses with two stories, three-bay facade fenestration, brick cladding, and a flat or low pitched hipped roof (see Figure 6).²⁹ They agree with Whiffen that "the vernacular Italianate is an ornamented style: it uses brackets or modillions, pronounced lintels, and

²⁷Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780*, (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1969), 77.

²⁸"Vernacular" architecture encompasses both traditional building, passed down from generation to generation largely by oral direction, and popular building which is promoted by literature read by many. Vernacular building influenced by such publications as pattern books and magazines may be more widespread in its coverage but of shorter temporal duration than traditional building. Vernacular architecture is contrasted with "academic" architecture which is, in the main, architect-designed and draws on theory as well as form and function. Academic architecture is often altered and "vernacularized" as it becomes more popular with the general public.

²⁹Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940*, (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988), 198.

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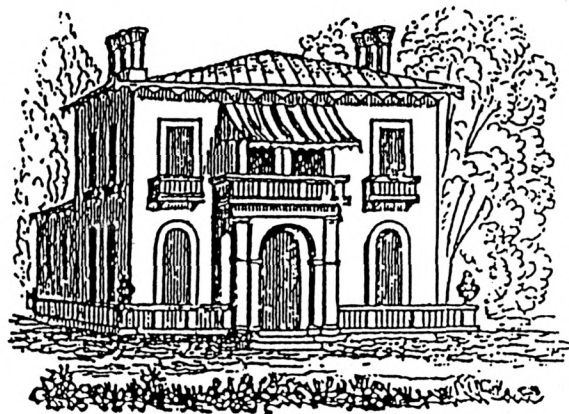
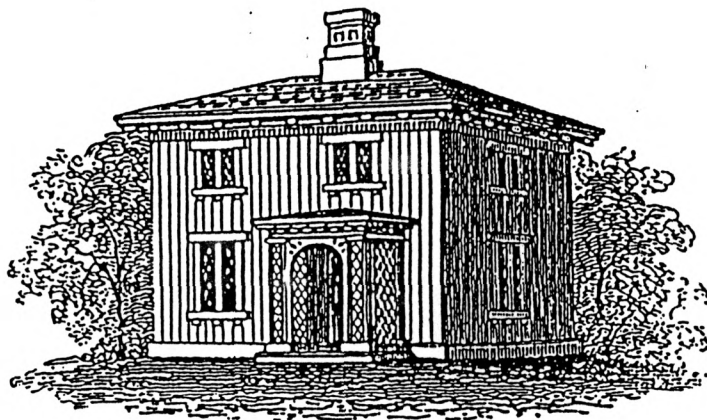
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Figure 3. Illustration and original caption from A.J. Downing's *Landscape Gardening and Rural Architecture* [1849](right) and Figure 4. Illustration from *The Architecture of Country Houses* [1850](left).



The New Haven Suburban Villa.*

* New Haven abounds with tasteful residences. "Hillhouse Avenue," in particular, is remarkable for a neat display of Tuscan or Italian Suburban Villas. Moderate in dimension and economical in construction, these exceedingly neat edifices may be considered as models for this kind of dwelling. *Fig. 44*, without being a precise copy of any one of these buildings, may be taken as a pretty accurate representation of their general appearance.

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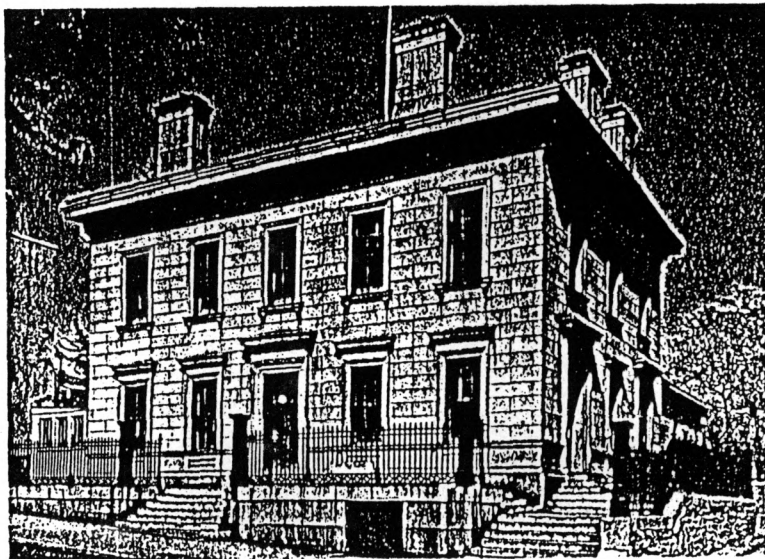
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Figure 5. Example of a "Renaissance Revival: The Romano-Tuscan Mode." From Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780*, page 77.



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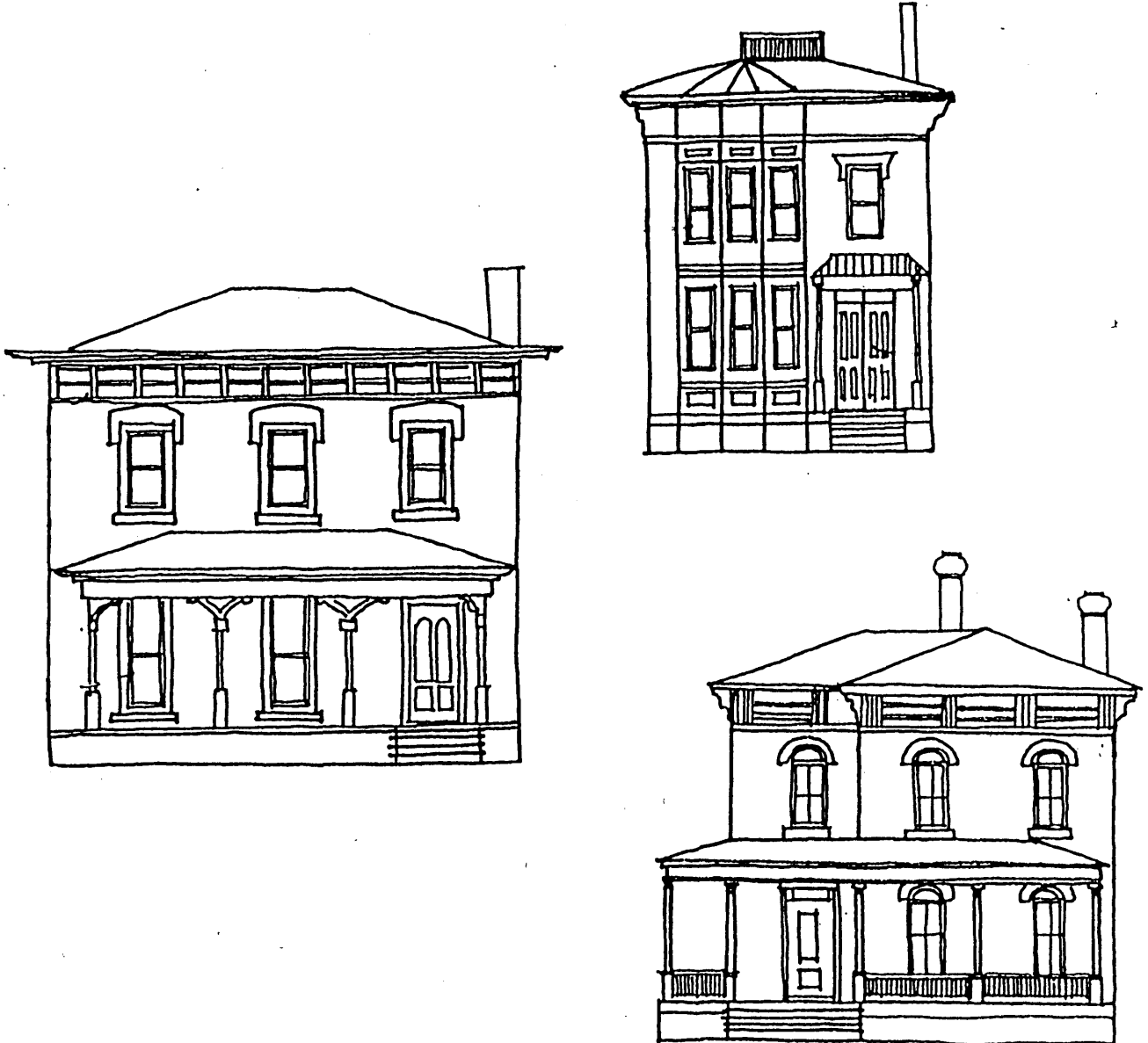
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Figure 6. Three variations of a vernacular "Italianate Hipped Cottage." From Gottfried and Jennings, *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940*, pages 198-199.



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sills to add texture and articulate the fenestration; and brackets, pendants and cut or turned pieces to ornament porches and other entrances."³⁰

Vernacular Italianate buildings, such as the Wickham-De Vol House, were popular in Council Bluffs architecture where the style was used for both residential and commercial purposes. An 1887 publication³¹ bearing photographs of Council Bluffs houses contains a number of Italianate houses. Especially nice versions are identified as the "Residence of Mr. A.B. Walker" and the "Residence of Mr. E. L. Shugart." The Walker residence has the same raised foundation and porch similar to the Wickham-De Vol foundation and original front porch. The Shugart residence has the same incised window surrounds and flat-topped hip roof as the Wickham-De Vol House.

ii. *Twentieth Century Modernism in American Architecture*

While the roots of Italianate architecture are fairly straightforward, tracking the origins of modern architecture after the turn-of-the-century can be more difficult. Paralleling the rise of modernism was another architectural fashion which evoked earlier periods and used historic precedents as its inspiration. Period styles, also called Revival styles, grew in popularity after the influential 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition. However, also germinating in Chicago were the roots of American modernism in the form of the Prairie School. "The heartland of the [Prairie School] movement was the American Midwest, with the focus on suburban Chicago during the formative years and the vast reaches of rural Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin during the school's epic period; it was a regional manifestation of the international revolt and reform then occurring in the visual arts."³² Some have termed this period from the 1890s to World War I, during which time historical architecture vied with modern architecture, the Eclectic movement.³³

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹*Council Bluffs Illustrated*, n. p.

³²H. Allen Brooks, *The Prairie School: Frank Lloyd Wright and his Midwest Contemporaries*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976), 3.

³³Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Architecture*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 319. Though the Prairie style was not derived from earlier precedents, architects within the Prairie School where, nonetheless, at times influenced by historic architecture. The best known Prairie School architect,

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Modernism, whether it be in American art or architecture was a reaction to the excesses of the long Victorian period. Unlike Downing's time, when there were far fewer published works and pattern books to influence the public's taste, by the turn of the century there was a multitude of journals, magazines, books and other publications providing forums for the discussion of residential architecture. Architects, domestic engineers, amateur tastemakers, builders and others sporadically voiced opinions in an array of professional and popular publications, among them *American Architect and Building News*, *Harper's*, *House and Garden* and *Ladies' Home Journal*. Within this array, there was a range of interpretations of what constituted "modern." However, nearly all of the literature concerned with house design took the stance that a radical simplification was called for; but precisely what this meant varied.³⁴

Visual simplicity was often expressed through the absence or minimal use of ornamentation; rather, a properly aesthetic approach would be based primarily on a skillful massing of form, use of simple, subtly textured materials and a careful arrangement of openings. To simplify was not considered a return to basics but a sophisticated turn toward progress. Flat surfaces, clean lines and sharp angles contributed to a visual order. Richly applied dark colors of the Victorians were suppressed in favor of whites, buff, pale yellow and grey, often set off with contrasting woodwork and trim. The trend toward a lighter palette found its impulse in the white buildings of the Chicago (1893), Omaha (1898), and St. Louis (1903) expositions. The light palette, though not necessarily the white, was reinforced by proponents of the Prairie style who advocated the pale neutrals found in nature as more organic and pleasing.

Influenced by the new palette and by the imagery presented by the Prairie School, many homeowners

Frank Lloyd Wright, acknowledged a fascination for the Italian Renaissance and many of his designs make references to classical detailing. The horizontal tripartite facade division, used for many centuries and brought to prominence during the Renaissance, was evident in Prairie designs (Brooks, 342). George W. Maher, another Prairie School architect, often designed houses with classical revival form and details. Even a cursory inspection of house styles from 1900 to 1915 shows an affinity in form between Prairie architecture and the revival styles which were unabashedly drawing from historic sources.

³⁴Several scholars have addressed the early twentieth-century diffusion of style sources. See e.g., Handlin, *The American Home* and Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home*.

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gave their nineteenth-century residences a completely new look after the turn of the century.³⁵ While there is no specific evidence that the Wickham-De Vol house was painted first during its c. 1913 redesign, such a change would be consistent with the new image that the house assumed. The straw color under the present white surface, combined with the painted terra-cotta red trim is a color combination fashionable during this period. A solid painted surface also suggests the more monolithic appearance of stucco, also popular during this period. And, short of tearing down the Wickham-De Vol house and rebuilding, certainly the removal of ornament from the roof and the replacement of its Victorian frame porch with the clean lines of the existing porch gave this house a thoroughly modern look. The extended eave lines of the new porch and the likely extension of eaves on the main roof pay homage specifically to the Prairie style, which by c. 1913 had become familiar nationally, disseminated by journals and popular magazines such as *House Beautiful* and *Ladies' Home Journal*.

While there are no city-wide architectural surveys of Council Bluffs to confirm the extent to which the Wickham-De Vol House represents a local phenomenon, as an individual structure it clearly represents a local variation of the broader movement towards modern architecture. Its restyled horizontal profile and streamlined appearance reflect the adaptation of the original Victorian house to changing architectural styles and patterns of the twentieth century. Influenced by the Prairie style, which was popular throughout the Middle West and beyond, in both architect-designed and vernacular versions, the Wickham-De Vol House remains an important local reminder of Council Bluffs' participation in the greater architectural trends of both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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³⁵Thomas Schlereth, *Victorian America: Transformations in Everyday Life 1876-1915*, (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992), 133.

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 7 and 8 of Block 2 of Jackson's Addition to Council Bluffs

Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the property are the original lot lines associated with the Wickham-De Vol House since its construction.