

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

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

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received JUN 27 1983

date entered JUL 28 1983

## 1. Name

historic Alexander, William D., House

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number 91 West 200 South \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Provo \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district \_\_\_\_\_

state Utah code 049 county Utah code 049

## 3. Classification

| Category  | Ownership                                   | Status  | Present Use   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district               | <input type="checkbox"/> public             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied        | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture                  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied                 | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure              | <input type="checkbox"/> both               | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress           | <input type="checkbox"/> educational                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site                   | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                   | <b>Accessible</b>                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object                 | <input type="checkbox"/> in process         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government                   |
|   | <u>N/A</u> being considered                 | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted          | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial                   |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> no                         | <input type="checkbox"/> military                     |
|   |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> museum                       |
|   |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> park                         |
|   |   |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence |
|   |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> religious                    |
|   |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific                   |
|   |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation               |
|   |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> other:                       |

## 4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. Blanch Conant

street & number c/o Robert Conant  
91 West 200 South

city, town Provo \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Utah

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Utah County Courthouse

street & number 42 N. University Avenue

city, town Provo \_\_\_\_\_ state Utah

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Utah Historic Sites Inventory—Provo has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_\_\_ yes  no

date Summer 1980 \_\_\_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Utah State Historical Society

city, town Salt Lake City \_\_\_\_\_ state Utah

---

## 7. Description

---

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved      date \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Alexander House is a one-and-a-half story frame structure with shingle and clapboard siding on a rubble stone foundation. The house, built about 1891, has a high hip roof with a gabled wing, and is ornamented by projecting wall dormers and corbelled chimneys. It is a rare Utah example of the decorative Stick Style, and also combines Eastlake porches, and Queen Anne shingling. The house is distinguished by this eclectic style, its unusual wall dormers with rounded bottoms, and its unusual orientation with three corner porches. In good original condition, the house is basically unaltered.

The Stick Style was one of the two most purely American styles of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> It developed from a philosophy of "truthful" structural expression which led to the exposure of the frame system. The development of the balloon frame advanced the articulation of the structural skeleton and eventually the style became a conscious multiplication of sticks as decorative elements. The Alexander House demonstrates this decorative (more than structural) application, with horizontal and vertical sticks that frame the ground floor windows and doors, and the dormers of the second story. The geometric pattern of crossing horizontal and vertical sticks on this house is reminiscent of Japanese framing as seen in the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia which influenced the Stick and later Prairie styles, and may have been an influence in this house.

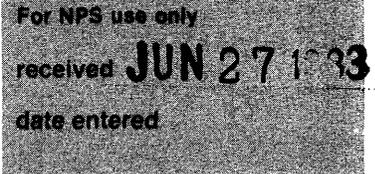
Three one-story Eastlake porches with turned posts on the southeast, northeast, and northwest corners add to the decorative Stick Style. The southeast porch, which has two doors, also has an intricate decorative fascia with fan brackets, turnings, and fleur-de-lis shaped pendants. The other porches originally had similar friezes. The northeast porch now has a simple stick balustrade which replaced an original one with turned spindles, and a rounded porch projection has been straightened.

A molding band which encircles the entire house, sets off the fish-scale shingle, flared upper story from the Stick Style ground floor. The combination of shingling and Stick Style on this house is interesting due to the divergent philosophies of construction behind each: where the stick style professes skeletal articulation that exposes the inner structure, the shingling totally conceals the frame as a skin shaped by the enclosed space. The closed massing of the shingle story appears heavy and solid atop the light and flexible style of the ground story with its spindly stickwork, clipped corners creating a second story overhang, and projecting porches that create dark voids in their deep recesses.

The east elevation of the house is punctuated by projecting gabled wall dormers, two on the main hip roof and one on the gable wing in the crook where it meets the hipped roof. These dormers project past and extend downward into the wall of the house. Each has a double-hung window and a barrel bottom and is articulated by stick trim. The ground floor has paired double-hung windows centered between the dormers.

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

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



Continuation sheet 1

Item number 7

Page 2

The west elevation repeats the domers of the east, but the ground floor windows are located with one below each of the domers rather than centered between them. The gable end has one double-hung window centered on the ground floor, and a round-arched double-hung window with wooden architrave trim at the second floor. Small colored glass lights in the upper sash of this window repeat the round arch shape. The same colored glass is used in windows that pierce the clipped corners of the wing and main block. These clipped corners are emphasized by brackets which meet and form a pendant under the second story overhang. The house has a boxed cornice with a plain frieze. Originally the main roof had cresting and a hip knob punctuated the point of the gable (date of change unknown).

The main entrance to the house was originally from the northwest corner. The entrance hall has an elaborate wooden staircase emphasized by overhead arches and ornamented from the top baluster to the ceiling with brackets, turnings, and other designs. The hall gave access to the parlor in the gabled side wing and led straight to the living room at the rear. A wall now partitions the hall from the living room which can be entered through the parlor or through the kitchen at the other side of the hall. The rooms still have the original high ceilings, paneled Victorian doors with glass transoms, and mop boards. The woodwork was hand finished by the architect/builder William Alexander himself. In addition, the parlor has plaster cornice moldings and an elaborate plaster design in the center of the room from which a light is suspended. Upstairs there are six rooms. The house is in excellent original condition with only minor alterations that do not detract from the historic integrity of the building.

Two deteriorated frame outbuildings are on the property but not included in the nomination.

Notes

<sup>1</sup>Marcus Whiffen, American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide To The Styles (MIT Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1969).

# 8. Significance

| Period  | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below    |   |   |  |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric          | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric  | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning     | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499            | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic     | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation           | <input type="checkbox"/> law                    | <input type="checkbox"/> science         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599            | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> economics              | <input type="checkbox"/> literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education              | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input type="checkbox"/> social/         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> theater         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900-                | <input type="checkbox"/> communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation  |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> invention              |   | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |

**Specific dates** C. 1891      **Builder/Architect** William Alexander

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The William D. Alexander House, built in Provo about 1891, is significant as the only documented example of Stick Style domestic architecture in Utah. The Stick Style is characterized by decorative horizontal, vertical, and diagonal boards applied to a wooden house to suggest or symbolize the structural frame.<sup>1</sup> The style was popular throughout the United States during the late nineteenth century, being one of the prevailing designs in house pattern books of the 1870s and 80s. Utah examples, however, are rare<sup>2</sup> possibly due to the local predominance of brick and stone as building materials. The Alexander House exhibits at the first story level and on the second story domers the decorative skeletal articulation which is the hallmark of the stick style aesthetic. The overall design of the house integrates Eastlake porch details and Queen Anne wall shingling on the upper story with the dominant ground level Stick Style to form a complete, cohesive, architectural composition. Constructed by a local architect/builder, William Denton Alexander, the Alexander House has an irregular plan punctuated by corner entrances with porches on each principal facade. The visual complexity of the house is further accentuated by the mixing of hip and gable roof forms, the use of projecting wall domers, and the presence of clipped corners on the house body and wing. Identified as a significant Provo site in a 1980 Statewide Inventory Survey, the Alexander House is a unique contribution to Utah's architectural landscape as the only major example of this style in the state.

American architecture in the mid-nineteenth century witnessed a move away from the imitation and interpretation of English and European architectural styles and ideas. From the midst of revivalism, romanticism, and the picturesque, emerged one of the first truly American architectural styles, the Stick Style. The term, coined by Vincent Scully, was defined by him as "an architecture of sticks, expressing the structural fact of the members of its frame."<sup>3</sup> The expression of this style was characterized by the use of applied decorative horizontal, vertical, and often diagonal, boards or "sticks" on a wooden house to symbolize or suggest the structural, skeletal frame. This new style provided the basis for an original and non-eclectic growth in American architecture that was based more upon functionalism than tradition or vogue.

The development of the Stick Style, which was a reaction against the formal symmetry of Classical designs, the closed Renaissance cube, and the heavy massiveness of masonry buildings, was influenced by several factors. In his popular book, Cottage Residences, Alexander Jackson Downing suggested that the grand styles were not suited for domestic architecture. According to Downing, domestic architecture should not copy Gothic cathedrals or Grecian temples,

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Scully, Vincent Jr. The Shingle Style and the Stick Style. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977.

Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1969, reprint 1981.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Provo

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | 2 |
|---|---|---|

 Zone 

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

 Easting 

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

 Northing

B 

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

 Zone 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

 Easting 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

 Northing

C 

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

 Zone 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

 Easting 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

 Northing

D 

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

 Zone 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

 Easting 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

 Northing

E 

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

 Zone 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

 Easting 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

 Northing

F 

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

 Zone 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

 Easting 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

 Northing

G 

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

 Zone 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

 Easting 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

 Northing

H 

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

 Zone 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

 Easting 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

 Northing

### Verbal boundary description and justification Provo City Survey

Commencing NW corner Block 44, Plat A, thence E 99.8 feet, S 133.5 feet, W 99.8 feet, N 133.5 feet to point of beginning.

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cheryl Hartman, Research Analyst

organization Utah State Historical Society

date February 1983

street & number 300 Rio Grande

telephone (801) 533-6017

city or town Salt Lake City

state Utah

## 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*A. Kent Powell*

title A. Kent Powell/Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date 6-16-83

For HCRS use only

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

*John Pelton Byers*  
Keeper of the National Register

*Entered in the  
National Register*

date 7/28/83

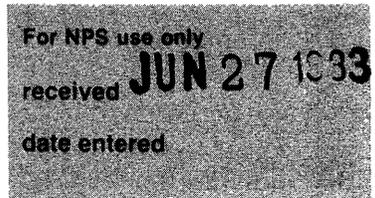
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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



Continuation sheet 2

Item number 8

Page 2

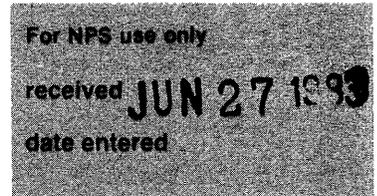
but be a subdued expression of that style "adjusted to the humbler requirements of the building and the more quiet purposes of domestic life."<sup>4</sup> It was Downing who advocated a picturesque asymmetry and visual variety for house design, as well as the use of an architectural style in keeping with the building materials. Thus, for Downing, when building in wood a lighter more delicate style should be chosen than when building with masonry, and he stated that a building should truthfully express its materials and purpose. Gervase Wheeler, another influential architect, extended Downing's expression of "truthfulness" by suggesting that a building should be framed in such a manner that the construction shows on the exterior and gives additional richness and character to the composition.<sup>5</sup> Such architectural thinking led to a structural and visual emphasis on the external articulation of the elements of the frame. By the mid-1870s the dominant element of Stick Style design had become the presence of an interwoven basketry of sticks as the symbol of the unseen house frame. The interweaving of building elements also influenced the development of free-flowing interior space, creating a sense of interwoven spatial area, an important achievement of the early 1880s and characteristic of new developments in American architecture.

Another factor important to the development of the Stick Style was the creation of the balloon frame, a timber framing system quickly assembled and easy to build. At the same time that Downing and other architects were beginning to recognize the aesthetic merits of wood as a building material, the balloon frame was gaining popularity and increased the sensitivity toward visual sticks and their multiple relationships. Various other architectural styles also inspired and influenced the Stick Style, but none dominated or destroyed the originality of the new American style. Among those which influenced the skeletal articulation were the Tudor style with its exposed frames and trusswork, Japanese wooden styles (seen in the 1876 Centennial Philadelphia Exposition), and the Swiss chalet.

The Stick Style was promoted throughout the United States in house pattern books of the period, but the style was apparently never popular in Utah as few examples have been documented in the state. The Alexander House is a rare example that uses the pure Stick Style and this is manifest mainly on the ground floor level. Clapboard siding, common to the style, is ornamented with horizontal and vertical sticks in a geometric pattern reminiscent of Japanese framing. Sticks articulate the first story frame and window openings, and resurface on the second story domers, thereby creating a unity in the overall design. The second story, however, is shingled as in the Queen Anne style and creates a solid visual mass which contrasts with the lighter more decorative Stick Style ground floor. It is interesting to note that although the Stick Style was one of the first non-eclectic American styles, in its practical application on the Alexander House it was combined with decorative Queen Anne wall shingling and spindled Eastlake porches.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet 3

Item number 8

Page 3

The Alexander House consists of a main hip block with clipped corners on the east side, and a gable wing on the north also with clipped corners. The house features three one-story Eastlake porches on the northwest, northeast, and southeast corners that have flat roofs supported by turned posts. The southeast porch, which has two doors, has a decorative fascia with turnings and intricate saw work. Curved brackets and pendants ornament the clipped corners of the building. These elements add to the visual complexity of the building.

William Denton Alexander, the builder of the house, was born December 4, 1851 in Salt Lake City. His parents were Horace Martin Alexander and Catharine Houston. In the 1860s William came to Provo and in 1878 married Helena Coray. After her death he married Prudella Allman in 1906. They lived in the family home in Provo until his death in 1931. Alexander was a well known contractor and builder and was locally active as a city councilman, justice of the peace, and member of the Provo City School Board. He was also active in the LDS Church and served as a missionary in the Hawaiian Islands from 1878-81.

The house is still owned and lived in by relatives of the Alexander family.

Notes

<sup>1</sup>Marcus Whiffen, American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1969; reprint 1981), pp. 109-111.

<sup>2</sup>The other major example of the Stick Style in Utah is visible on the porch of the principally Gothic Revival Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd in Ogden (National Register April 3, 1973). Other buildings are found which incorporate, or at least suggest, articulated stick framing as a subordinate part of a Queen Anne or other Victorian style. The William Myrick House in Summit County (National Register March 9, 1982) is one example where an exposed frame is infilled with shingled siding.

<sup>3</sup>Vincent Scully, Jr., The Shingle Style and the Stick Style (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), p. xlvii.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. xxxv.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. xlvi.