

United States Department of the Interior
National Park 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 NPS use only
received APR 28 1982
date entered

1. Name

historic Albert Baird Cummins House

and/or common Terrace Tower

2. Location

street & number 2404 Forest Drive ___ not for publication

city, town Des Moines

___ vicinity of

~~congressional district~~

4

state Iowa

code 19

county Polk

code 153

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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other apartment house

4. Owner of Property

name Bruce W. Gerleman

street & number 3126 Fortieth Place

city, town Des Moines

___ vicinity of

state 50310

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder, Polk County Courthouse

street & number 500 Mulberry Street

city, town Des Moines

state Iowa

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title National Historic Landmark Political and
Military Affairs Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes ___ no

date 1975

federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records American Association for State and Local History

city, town Nashville

state Tennessee

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Built about 1893, this house served as Albert Baird Cummins' residence from about that date until about 1920. In 1921-25 Iowa Governor Nate Kendall resided here, then in later years the residence became an apartment building, which function it continues to serve. A circa 1906 photograph of the north side of the house seems to show wooden siding and trim on the second and dormer stories. Though these floors are currently stucco faced, no other major alterations are apparent. Then as now, trees obscured the front (east) of the building. Today other trees cover the north lawn's steep downhill slope toward Grand Avenue and screen a gas station on the corner from view. Along Forest Drive and other winding streets south of Grand Avenue stand numerous fine old houses, many of which serve currently as apartment houses. Across Forest Drive from the Cummins House, the immense Terrace Hill mansion, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, fronts on Grand Avenue. Cummins' Des Moines house and some Washington apartments--only one of which he occupied for more than 1 year--are the only known extant domiciles associated with him. Because he lived in the house longest, it clearly represents him best.

The 2½-story dwelling stands on a red brick foundation. Coursed, rockfaced rubble, possibly sandstone, makes up most of its first-floor walls, and today reddish-colored stucco covers its upper walls. Displaying what appears to be Queen Anne styling, the Cummins House has various roofs--the main one is hipped--dormers, and a distinctive two-story northeast tower beginning at the second floor. A conical roof and a spire top the tower. West of the tower along the north facade, the house walls curve outward in a projecting circular, two-story bay. A gable dormer sits back over this bay and contains an open semicircular arch within which rectangular lights are recessed. West of the circular bay stands a rectangular projection with a pedimented gable atop it.

Over the rear one-third of the house, two gablets extend westward from the main hip roof and end in the rear as two pedimented gable ends with a recessed bay between them. The one-bay-wide north gable end has no first floor and stands atop two brick posts. The two-bay-wide south gablet end supports a red brick, interior end chimney and abuts a one-story, hip-roofed attached garage, which may be a late addition. The house's recessed central rear bay includes a first-floor rear door and porch with shed roof; a wide, second-level window topped by three arched, stained-glass lights; and a shed dormer. A small gablet with east-west ridge surmounts the house's main roof as does a large, central, red brick chimney.

On its south side, the house has, from west to east, a three-window shed dormer; a one-bay, pedimented gable dormer; a pedimented gablet end; and a second gable dormer. Below each gable dormer, the building walls form shallow, rectangular recesses. A fire escape and concrete driveway are found on the south side. In front, it appears that the original, wide front porch has been enclosed up to its north end where the front door stands. The flat porch roof remains, however, over the filled-in space and the front door. On the south front, a pedimented gable end surmounts the main roof and above the front door, a gable dormer adorns it. In front of the door, wide steps lead up to the railed porch, and a pedimented gablet on the porch roof accents the entranceway. The porch continues as an unroofed, railed terrace around the building underneath the northeast tower, in which respect it appears unaltered. Below the tower are two wide 10-over-10 windows--one on the east and one on the north side--with segmentally arched, stained-glass transoms. Many of the other Cummins House windows are one-over-one sash, trimmed with unaltered, white-painted wood surrounds. Two first-floor triple windows--one on the north and

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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates ca. 1893-ca. 1920 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

As coauthor of the Esch-Cummins or Transportation Act of 1920, Senator Albert B. Cummins assumed a prominent role in writing and securing passage of what distinguished historian Arthur S. Link, has called "the most significant measure of the immediate postwar era because it marked the complete fulfillment of the movement for thoroughgoing federal control of railroads."¹ Ostensibly designed to return the Nation's railroads to private ownership, this law stopped just short of nationalization in that it gave the Interstate Commerce Commission complete control over rates and railroad finance; allowed the Commission to consolidate existing lines into systems; permitted pooling in the interest of economy; limited railroad profits to a 6 percent return on their investment; and provided for compulsory arbitration of labor disputes. Already, in 1910, Cummins had been largely responsible for a series of amendments to the Mann-Elkins Act, which gave the Interstate Commerce Commission greater regulatory powers over railroads than had originally been intended.

Cummins was nationally recognized as a leader in the progressive movement as early as about 1903. As Governor of Iowa from 1901 to 1908, Cummins, according to historian Kenneth W. Hechler, "transformed that state in much the same manner that LaFollette had reconstructed Wisconsin," sponsoring legislation to bring railroads and other corporations under closer public supervision and election reforms with measures like the direct primary and corrupt practices acts.² He gained widest notice, however, for his espousal of the "Iowa Idea"-- a proposal to destroy trusts by removing tariff duties from trust made products.

In 1908 Cummins won election to the U.S. Senate, where he joined Robert M. LaFollette and Albert J. Beveridge in trying to make the Republican Party more progressive. According to historian Kenneth W. Hechler, Cummins gave this "Insurgent movement substance, backbone, and dignity."³

Cummins apparently lived in this 2½-story house from 1893, about the year that it was built, until about 1920. Certainly the structure was his residence for many years in the period of his national significance, and it is the only known extant domicile closely associated with him over a long span. Somewhat altered, the house has been divided into about a dozen apartments, and its upper walls have apparently been refaced with stucco. Rockfaced stone first-floor walls are unchanged, though, and exterior appears structurally sound and unaltered except for addition of the stucco.

(continued)

¹ Arthur S. Link, American Epoch: A History of the United States Since the 1890's, Third edition (New York, 1967), 233.

² Kenneth W. Hechler, Insurgency: Personalities and Politics of the Taft Era, (New York, 1940), 86.

³ Ibid., 87.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(see continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Des Moines Southwest

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>8</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u> <u>3</u> <u>5</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	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

(see continuation sheet)

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

state	<u>N.A.</u>	code	county	code
-------	-------------	------	--------	------

state		code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cathy A. Alexander and Ralph Christian, Assistant Editors, and George R. Adams, Managing Editor

organization American Association for State and Local History date March 1976

street & number 708 Berry Road telephone 383-5991

city or town Nashville state Tennessee 37203

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Alvin S. Fubler

title Director date April 16, 1982

For NPS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u>Alvin Byers</u>	Kept in the National Register
Keeper of the National Register	date <u>6/30/82</u>
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

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

**National Register of Historic Places
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Continuation sheet

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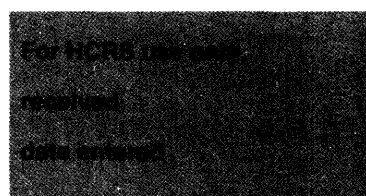
one on the south facade--consist of a rectangular window topped by a stained-glass transom and flanked by one-over-one semicircularly arched windows.

Inside, the first-floor hallway, flanked by apartments, runs from the front to the rear door. An open, two-flight main staircase with paneled wainscot, turned-post balusters, and paneled, rectangular newel stands in the hallway. On the stair landing, which is lit by the wide rear window previously described, a doorway reveals an enclosed rear stairway that continues both upward and downward with some apartments along it. Three apartments open into the main second-floor hall too. The stairs and main halls are carpet covered, and the backstairs area is linoleum tiled. The walls and ceiling of the first-and second-floor main halls and stairs are painted white, but ornately carved, light-colored wooden trim, possibly original, remains for door frames with ornate corner blocks, simple baseboards, and ceiling beams supported on carved cornice brackets. The old-fashioned radiators in the halls may be original too. The AASLH representative did not have access to apartments. There are no outbuildings other than the attached garage.

In Washington, between 1923 and 1925, Cummins occupied apartment number three in 1509 16th Street, NW. This seven-story building measures three wide bays across its front (west) facade and approximately 12 bays along the side. Now a hostel called the Christian Inn, it has a restaurant on the first floor, and consequently signs over the door and in the windows interfere somewhat with the first-floor, stone-face facade that includes a marquis-sheltered stoop in the northernmost bay and two sets of windows topped by segmentally arched transoms. The inn's red brick-faced second through sixth floors each have three rectangular, front-facing triple windows with stone decorations. In addition, wrought iron balcony railings and stone panels decorate second-floor windows; a stone belt course divides the second from the third floor; and stone quoins edge the walls. An ornate, rounded stone course divides the stone-sheathed seventh from the sixth floor. Unusual stone projections appear between seventh-story windows, and a full entablature underlines the roof with a bracketed cornice and a wide overhang. The roof appears to be flat. It should be noted that in 1911-13 Texas Albert Sidney Burleson, then a Congressman and later Postmaster General, resided in this building. The structure is located on a major Washington thoroughfare, and it appears to be in good condition.

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Continuation sheet

Item number 8

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Biography

Albert Baird Cummins was born February 15, 1850, in Carmichaels, Pa., to Thomas and Sarah Cummins. In his youth he learned the carpenter's trade at the hands of his father but soon decided he preferred a professional career instead. After attending public schools, in 1867 Albert entered Waynesburgh College where he supported himself by tutoring other students and teaching country schools during vacation periods. Graduating 2 years ahead of his class in 1869, he worked at several occupations including clerk, express messenger, surveyor, and railroad builder. Finally, in 1873 while residing in Chicago, Ill., he began to study law, and 2 years later he was admitted to the bar.

In 1878 Cummins moved to Des Moines, Iowa, where he soon became recognized as one of that State's leading attorneys. His legal reputation was enhanced when, as attorney for the Farmers' Protective Association from 1881 to 1886, he led the ultimately successful fight against the barbed wire trust. Active in Republican politics, Cummins in 1888 won election as an Iowa State Representative. One of reform Governor William Larrabee's principal supporters, Cummins became a leading spokesman for greater regulation of railroads. Because of this stance, he "became a political pariah," according to historian Kenneth W. Hechler, and railroads and other corporations used every means at their disposal to defeat him in bids for the J.S. Senate in 1894, 1896, and 1899.⁴

In 1901, despite strong corporate opposition, Cummins won the first of his three terms as Governor of Iowa and soon demonstrated, says historian Robert H. Wiebe, that he was one of the "kings of state progressivism."⁵ Under his leadership the State Railroad Commission was strengthened; discrimination in intrastate freight rates was prohibited; the direct primary was instituted; and a corrupt practices act put on the statute books. Cummins equalized the State's tax burden by imposing heavier taxes on railroads and other corporations. Because of his own expertise in the field of railroad finance, he dominated the State Executive Council which determined tax rates, and by 1906 it had increased assessments on railroads some \$15 million. Cummins gained his national reputation, however, largely for his espousal of the "Iowa Idea"--a proposal to destroy trusts by removing tariff duties from trust made products. He "did not abandon the protective principle," according to historians Theodore Saloutos and John D. Hicks, but "his first and foremost objective...was the prevention of monopoly."⁶

In 1908 Cummins won election to the U.S. Senate, where he soon proved powerful, says biographer Fred E. Haynes, in "giving voice and definiteness to the new progressive wing of the Republican party."⁷ Known as Insurgents, Cummins and men like Robert M. LaFollette and Albert J. Beveridge struggled to turn their party in new directions. In 1909 Cummins was unsuccessful in an effort to make the Payne-Aldrich Tariff conform to the "Iowa Idea," but 1 year later was largely responsible for a
(continued)

4. Ibid., 86.

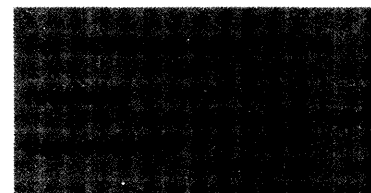
5. Robert H. Wiebe, The Search for Order, 1877-1920, (New York, 1967), 179.

6. Theodore Saloutos and John D. Hicks, Agricultural Discontent in the Middle West, 1900-1939, (Madison, 1951), 46.

7. Fred E. Haynes, "Albert Baird Cummins," Dictionary of American Biography, II (New York, 1929), 598.

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Continuation sheet Cummins House

Item number 8

Page two

series of amendments to the Mann-Elkins Act, which gave the Interstate Commerce Commission greater regulatory powers over railroads than had originally been intended. In the 1912 Presidential campaign Cummins supported Progressive Party candidate Theodore Roosevelt, but refused to leave the Republican Party. During the administration of Woodrow Wilson, Cummins became one of his most bitter critics, partially out of a desire to win the 1916 Republican nomination. Sharply critical of preparedness measures, Cummins nevertheless supported was measures in April 1917. He opposed American entry into the League of Nations, however.

After Republicans regained control of the Senate in the 1918 elections, Cummins became chairman of the Interstate Commerce Committee and President pro tempore. In 1920 he assumed a prominent role in writing and securing passage of the Transportation Act of 1920, which, according to historian Arthur S. Link, was "the most significant measure of the immediate postwar era because it marked the complete fulfillment of the movement for thoroughgoing federal control of railroads."⁸ Ostensibly designed to return the Nation's railroads to private ownership, this law stopped just short of nationalization in that it gave the Interstate Commerce Commission complete control over railroad rates and finance; allowed the Commission to consolidate existing lines into systems; permitted pooling in the interest of economy; limited railroad profits to a 6 percent return on their investment; and provided for compulsory arbitration of labor disputes. Many of Cummins' progressive allies like LaFollette, however, favored nationalization and accused him of turning reactionary. As a result, Cummins almost lost his Senate seat in the 1920 Iowa primary.

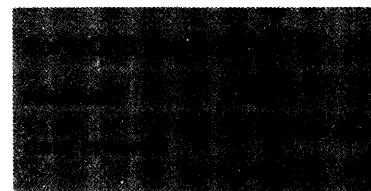
In 1923 Senators Burton K. Wheeler and Robert M. LaFollette fought Cummins' reelection as chairman of the Interstate Commerce Committee, says historical Donald R. McCoy, "on the ground that the 1922 elections had constituted the voters' rejection of the allegedly pro-business Transportation Act of 1920."⁹ As a result of the tireless efforts of Wheeler and the votes of progressive Republicans on the committee, Cummins was unseated and a Democrat elected in his place--one of the few times in American political history when a major chairmanship has been held by a member of the minority party. In 1926, because of the continuing controversy over the Transportation Act, Cummins was defeated in the Iowa Republican primary. A few months later, on July 30, 1926, he died in Des Moines at the age of 76. Despite the views of Cummins more progressive colleagues, however, the Transportation Act of 1920 stood as a landmark statute.

8. Link, American Epoch, 233.

9. Donald R. McCoy, Calvin Coolidge: The Quiet President, (New York, 1967), 204.

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Continuation sheet Bibliography

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE one

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lot 1, except the north 75 feet, and Lot 2, except the west 15 feet, and Lot 6, except the west 73 feet, of Cummins Replat, an official plat now included in and forming a part of the City of Des Moines, Polk County, Iowa.