

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

For NPS use only

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

received MAY 15 1985

date entered 1985 19

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Leander F. Frisby House

and/or common Frisby-Round the Bend-Partners

**2. Location**

street & number 304 South Main Street not for publication

city, town West Bend vicinity of

state Wisconsin code 55 county Washington code 131

**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 checked="" 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"/> N.A. in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" 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 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 Carol Thomas, Frisby-Round the Bend-Partners

street & number 3393 Paradise Drive

city, town West Bend vicinity of state Wisconsin 53095

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Washington County Courthouse

street & number 432 East Washington

city, town West Bend state WI 53095

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1978  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input 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

The Leander Frisby House is a large, two-story brick veneer house built on a rubble-stone foundation. Constructed on the hill at the southwest corner of Poplar and Main streets, the 56'x45' building faces east, overlooking the southern edge of the original business district and the Milwaukee River beyond.

Although reflecting a combination of architectural elements, the house most closely reflects the Italianate style, with its main block-lesser block configuration, full-story windows, bracketed eaves, and gently sloped hip roof that rises to a flat roofed cupola in the main block. A chimney rises from each of the four corners of the main block. A large, two-story bay is attached on the north, Poplar Street, side of the main block and a one-story pent roofed addition running from the middle of the main block to the rear of the house is attached at the south side. Structural evidence suggests that this addition was made in 1891, the same year the building was sold to Herman J. Wagner. It is also likely that Wagner added the cream color brick over the original clapboard siding in the same year.

A glassed-in one-story porch runs across the front of the house and a small enclosed porch is at the north side off the dining room. Until recently, a series of one-story wood frame additions have existed at the back of the lesser block since at least 1884.

The interior of the house has been altered several times over the years. The original interior consisted of a sidehall plan with three large rooms on the first floor and four or five bedrooms on the second floor. A walnut bannistered staircase leads to the second floor from the front of the hall. The original use of the first floor rooms can only be surmised. The front room probably was the living room, with its floor-to-ceiling windows and endwall fireplace. Behind the living room, the original dining room could be entered from the hall or through sliding wood-paneled doors that separate the two rooms. The dining room also has floor-to-ceiling windows in the bay and an interior fireplace. Although found in the basement during the recent renovation, the marble mantels are not original. The backroom probably was the original kitchen. Evidence of a basement kitchen beneath this backroom suggests the possibility of a summer kitchen or that the backroom was in fact the dining room and the two front rooms were used as parlors. (See floorplans.)

A stairway from the back hallway leads to the second floor of the lesser block. Two small bedrooms with low ceilings and plain woodwork suggest that these were servants quarters. A short flight of stairs leads to one of the three larger bedrooms in the main block. A longer flight of stairs originally led from the lesser block to the cupola in the main block.

With the 1891 addition to the southside of the main floor, two rooms were added to the house. Their use is unknown. The addition also altered the floorplan to a central hall plan. From the outside, the addition appears to be part of the original building because the windows closely approximate the originals and because the cream color brick was applied after the completion of the addition. However, the name "H. Wagner" "1891" scratched into the corner of the foundation and an inspection of the basement confirm that this is indeed a later addition.

In the most recent renovation the new owners restored the central hall which had been blocked off in an earlier remodeling. There are now five rooms on the main floor and four on the second. In order to create four separate rooms on the second floor, the

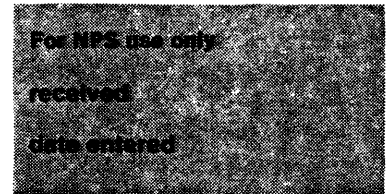
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7. DESCRIPTION (continued)

stairway to the cupola was replaced with a spiral staircase and the hall way extended from the main block to the lesser block. (See floorplan.) The badly deteriorated one-story wooden addition at the rear was removed during this renovation, revealing the original clapboard under the brick. Also removed during the renovation was the retaining wall at the corner of Main and Poplar. This wall was built c. 1920 when the road grade was lowered. Instead of replacing the wall, the land was graded and a new pathway was constructed. The restoration and renovation meets the Standards of the Secretary of the Interior.

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1865-1886<sup>1</sup> **Builder/Architect** Leander F. Frisby, builder<sup>2</sup>

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Well-preserved and handsome the Leander F. Frisby House is significant because it is one of the finest examples of Italianate style architecture in the city of West Bend. The large, brick-veneered house also is significant for its association with Leander F. Frisby, an early settler and important state and local political figure. Among his many accomplishments, Frisby was the first District Attorney of Washington County, a founder of the Wisconsin Republican Party, and Wisconsin Attorney General.

ARCHITECTURE - The Leander Frisby House is architecturally significant as one of the finest examples of Italianate-style architecture in the city of West Bend. Built in 1865 by Leander Frisby, a lawyer and politician of state and local significance, the cream brick veneered building exhibits many of the architectural elements typical of the Italianate style, including the main block-lesser block configuration, tall, floor-to-ceiling windows, bracketed eaves, and the low hip roof with cupola. Although West Bend has many cream brick houses and commercial structures, most of them are from a later period. Only one other brick Italianate house appears in the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office's Inventory of Historic Places. This is the Charles M. Mayer House at 402 South 7th Street. A simpler house, it was built about ten years after the Frisby House.

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT - The Leander Frisby House is historically significant because it was the home of the prominent lawyer and politician, Leander F. Frisby. Frisby was an early settler of West Bend and one of its most famous sons. From the time he moved to the area in 1850, Frisby became involved in local and State politics. He also was a founder of the Wisconsin Republican Party and held numerous local and state public offices, including Wisconsin Attorney General.<sup>3</sup>

Leander F. Frisby was born at Mesopotamia, Ohio, on June 19, 1825, the third son of Lucius and Lovina (Gary) Frisby. The Frisbys were farmers of modest means who moved to Ohio from Castleton, Vermont, in 1817. Frisby worked on the farm and sporadically attended school until his eighteenth birthday. On that day in 1843, he apprenticed himself to a wagon-master in Mesopotamia. Fulfilling his apprenticeship two years later, he attended an academy at Farmington, Ohio, for a year, working in a wagon shop in the evenings.<sup>4</sup>

In 1846, Frisby left Ohio for Wisconsin Territory. Landing at Sheboygan, he spent the next several months walking from Sheboygan to Fond du Lac to Beaver Dam and to Janesville in search of work. He ended up teaching school at Spring Prairie, Walworth County, and in Burlington, Racine County. In 1849, he moved to his parents' farm near Port Washington to study law in the office of Blair and Lord. He was admitted to the state bar in 1850 and moved to West Bend that October.<sup>5</sup>

Frisby opened a law office and, as would any young lawyer wishing to publicize himself, he quickly became involved in local politics. In 1851, Frisby lost his first bid for public office when he ran as the Free Soil candidate for Clerk of the Court in Washington County. The next year, the Wisconsin State Legislature divided Ozaukee County off from Washington County. A struggle ensued over whether the original Washington County records would remain at Port Washington, the original Washington (and now Ozaukee) County seat, or be moved to

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Tax Rolls, Village of West Bend, 1860-1890; Charles R. Tuttle, History of Wisconsin (1875); History of Washington and Ozaukee Counties (1881); George C. Brown, "The Genesis of the Wisconsin Republican Party," (M.A. Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1978); West Bend Democrat, April 24, 1889; Wisconsin State Journal, April 20, 1889.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name West Bend, Wisconsin

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	6	4	0	4	3	9	0	4	8	0	8	0	0	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C 

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D 

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E 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 1, 2, and 3, Block 20, Original Plat of Village of West Bend.

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

state N.A. code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title George C. Brown

organization N.A. date November 1984

street & number 153 Dunning Street telephone (608) 244-2515

city or town Madison state Wisconsin 53704

## 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 

title DIRECTOR OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

date APRIL 24, 1985

### For NPS use only

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

Entered in the  
National Register

date 6-19-85

  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

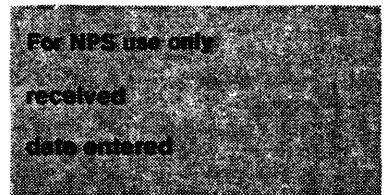
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8. SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

West Bend, the seat of the newly constituted Washington County. Leander Frisby played a leading role in seeing that these records were removed to West Bend. Probably as a reward for this decisive effort, Frisby was elected the first District Attorney of the new Washington County in 1853.<sup>6</sup>

The following year, 1854, proved to be an important one for Frisby and for the State of Wisconsin. That year the rise of the "Nebraska Question" ultimately led to the formation of the Republican Party. This new party forced a realignment of the political party system in the United States and, in the long run, led to the Civil War. Wisconsin was to be one of the leaders in this process, and Leander Frisby was one of a group of Wisconsin citizens who formed the Wisconsin Republican Party.

Although popular lore tells us that the Wisconsin Republican Party was founded in a little white schoolhouse in the village of Ripon, the party actually was founded on July 13, 1854, in the State Capitol at Madison. On that day, approximately 1,000 people from all over the state attended a mass meeting to establish this new party as a protest against the recent passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill in Congress. As part of the organizing process of this convention, temporary officers were chosen and a committee on organization established. Leander Frisby, a delegate from Washington County, was chosen the temporary Secretary. After the convention was organized and permanent officers chosen, Frisby became one of two permanent Secretaries of the convention.

Thus, Leander Frisby played an integral role in the genesis of the Wisconsin Republican Party. As a permanent officer, he helped set the party on a firm footing, and his friendship with the firebrand editor of the Milwaukee Daily Free Democrat, Sherman Miller Booth, placed him near the forefront of radical abolitionism in Wisconsin.<sup>7</sup>

Until his death thirty-five years after the formation of the Republican Party, Frisby remained active in state and local politics. Over the years he was appointed a Washington County judge (1857); elected to the State Assembly (1860); elected a delegate to the Republican National Convention (1860, 1872); ran for the U.S. House of Representatives (1868, 1878); ran for and lost Wisconsin Attorney General (1873); and was elected Attorney General in 1880 and 1882.<sup>8</sup>

During this time, Frisby lived almost entirely in the West Bend house being nominated. Frisby purchased the property in 1863 and completed building his new home in 1865. According to his daughter, Frisby "had built a new and larger house to provide for his growing family -- there were four children and another expected, and for Grandmother. Her room was a goodsized room over the living room, at first heated by a stove and later by a register and pine from the large coal stove in the living room." By 1870, the household consisted of the five children, Grandmother, two servants and a law student, Frank Gilson. Gilson was a neighbor's son of Frisby's parents from near Port Washington. Gilson later became Frisby's law partner and ultimately his executor.<sup>9</sup>

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

When Fisby died on April 19, 1889, he was living in Milwaukee, where he had moved after retiring as Attorney General. Frisby left a small estate and the West Bend home was soon sold at auction. It was bought in 1891 by Herman J. Wagner, the son of another of West Bend's earliest settlers. It appears that Wagner added the one-story addition to the south and facaded the building with brick. After changing hands numerous times and suffering from the effects of neglect and dubious "improvements," the Frisby house was recently purchased by the present owners. It has been restored to the Standards established by the Secretary of the Interior.<sup>10</sup>

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Tax Rolls, Village of West Bend, 1860-1890; Abstract of Title.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Charles R. Tuttle, History of Wisconsin (1875), p. 772; History of Washington and Ozaukee Counties (1881), pp. 399, 557-558; George C. Brown, "The Genesis of the Wisconsin Republican Party, 1854" (University of Wisconsin-Madison, M.A. thesis, 1978), chapter 3.

<sup>4</sup>Tuttle, History, p. 772; Washington and Ozaukee Counties, pp. 557-558.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.; U.S. Census, 1850, Washington County, Wisconsin, p. 394.

<sup>6</sup>The Spirit of West Bend, (1980), pp. 24-25; Tuttle, History, p. 772.

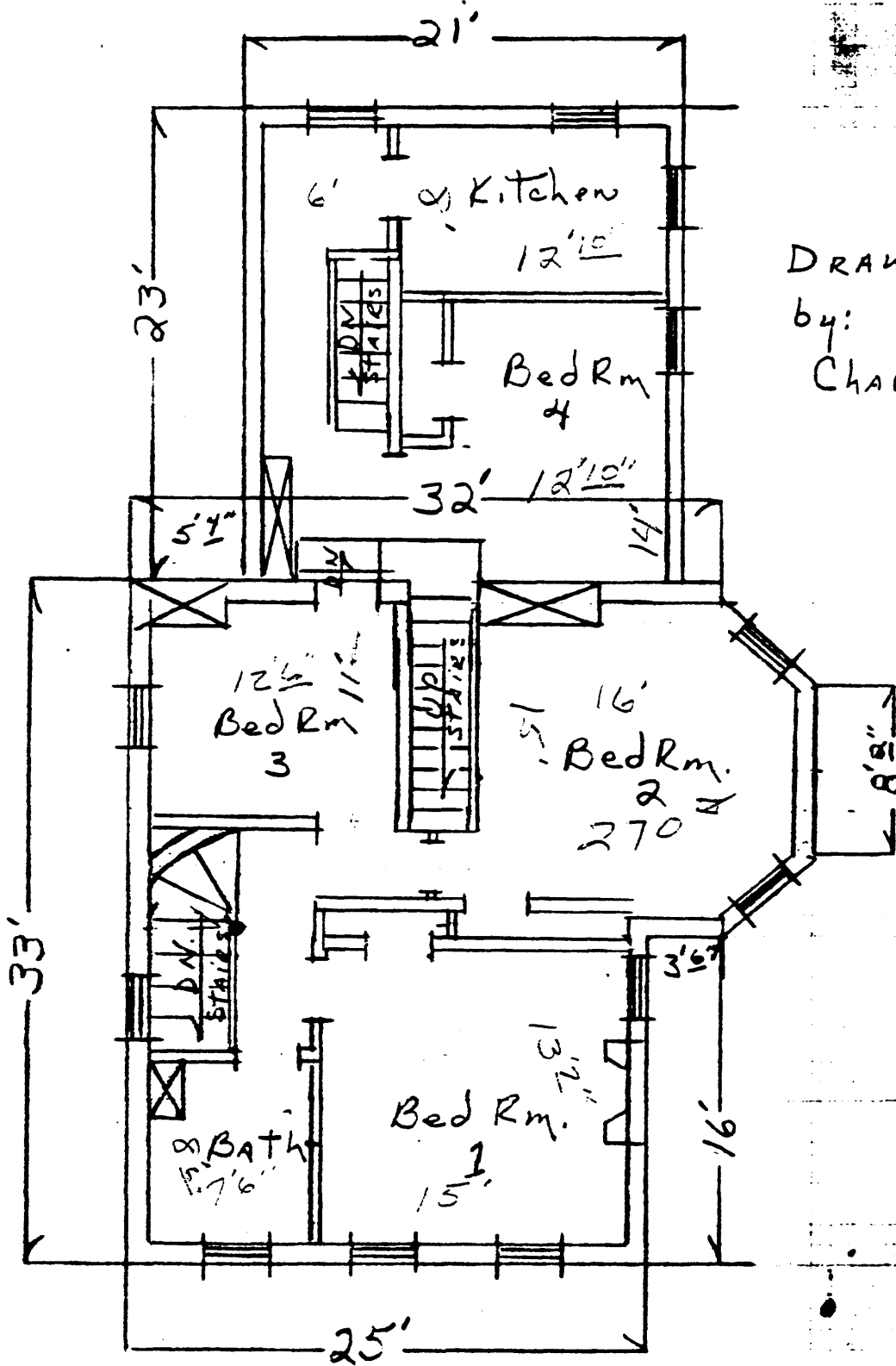
<sup>7</sup>Brown, "Genesis," chapter 3; (Juneau) Burr Oak, August 4, 1854.

<sup>8</sup>Tuttle, History, p. 772; Washington and Ozaukee Counties, pp. 557-558; (Madison) Wisconsin State Journal, April 20, 1889.

<sup>9</sup>Tax Rolls, Village of West Bend, 1860-1890; West Bend Democrat, April 24, 1889; Almah J. Frisby, "Lovina Gary Frisby," (no date), in the (Dr.) Almah J. Frisby Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; U.S. Census, 1870, Washington County, Wisconsin, p. 614.

<sup>10</sup>Wisconsin State Journal, April 20, 1889; West Bend Democrat, September 23, 1891; Washington and Ozaukee Counties, p. 400.

Before RENOVATION



DRAWING  
by:  
Charles F. Amsl

304 South MAIN St.

2nd Floor

North

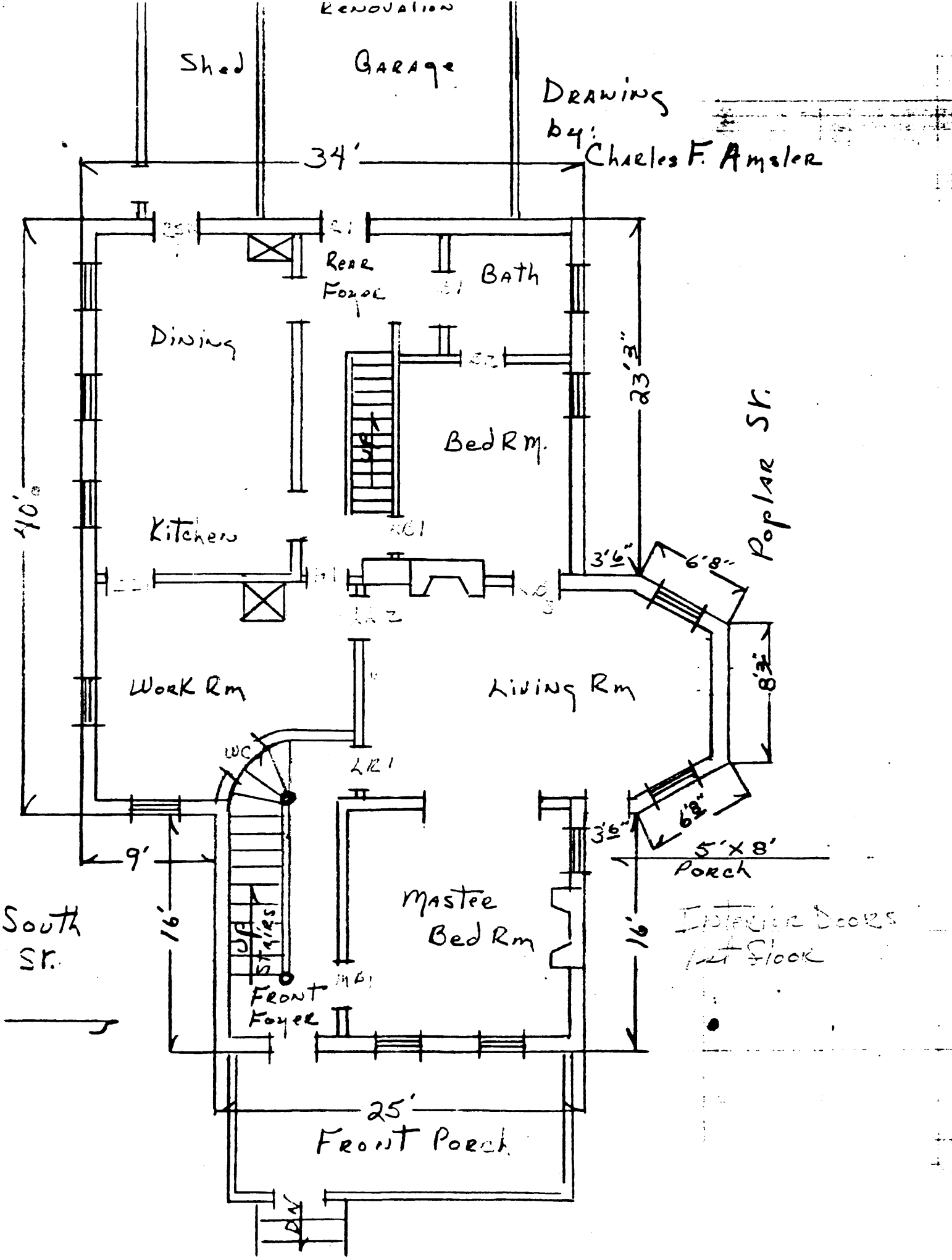


RENOVATION

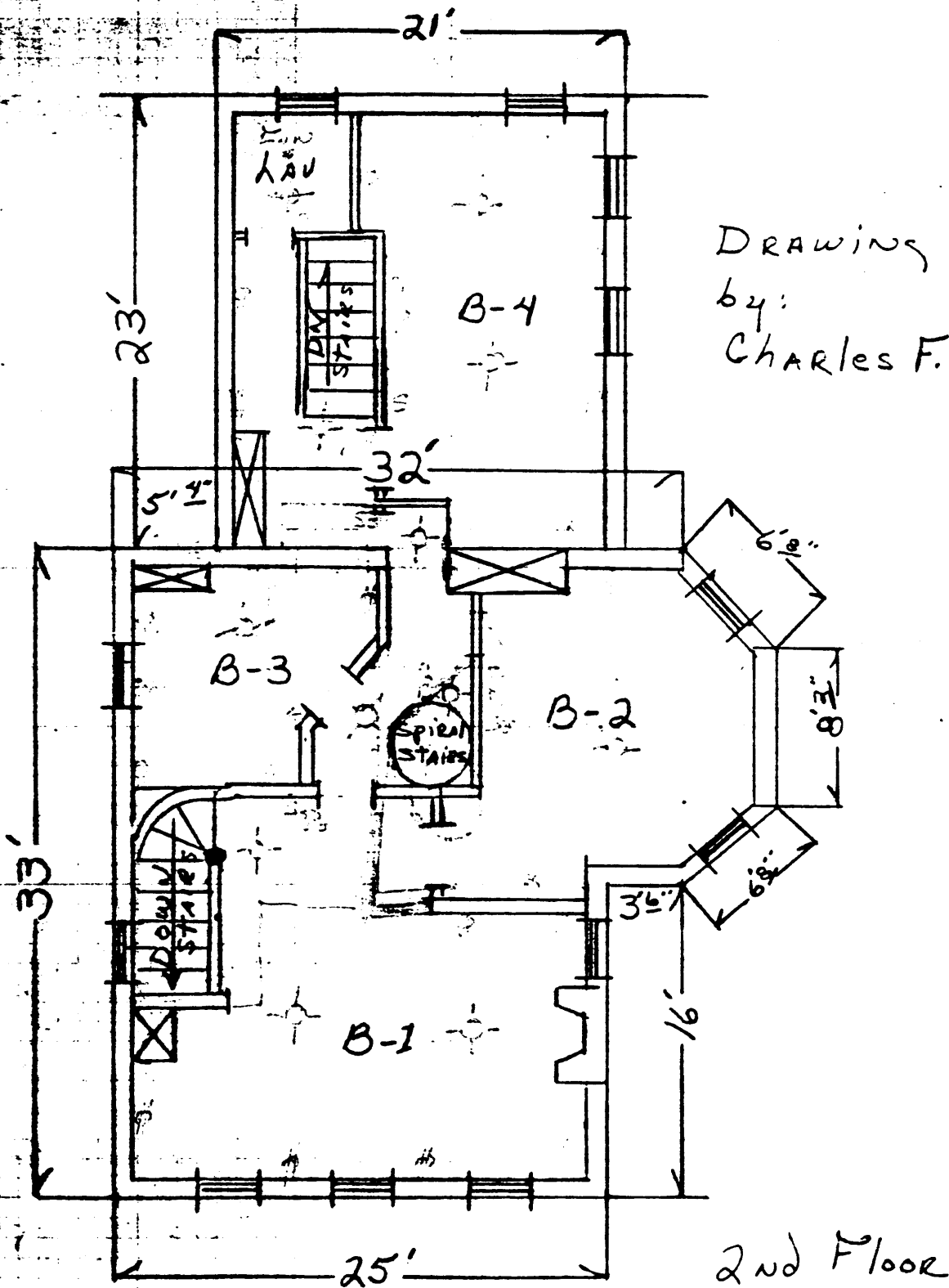
Shed

GARAGE

DRAWING  
by  
Charles F. Amster



After RENOVATION



DRAWING  
by:  
Charles F. Amsler

304 South MAIN ST.  
NORTH

