

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

CHARLES L. SHREWSBURY HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: CHARLES L. SHREWSBURY HOUSE

Other Name/Site Number: Shrewsbury-Windle House

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 301 West First Street

Not for publication: ___

City/Town: Madison

Vicinity: ___

State: IN County: Jefferson Code: 077

Zip Code: 47250

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-Local: ___

Public-State: ___

Public-Federal: ___

Category of Property

Building(s): X

District: ___

Site: ___

Structure: ___

Object: ___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

2

1

3

Noncontributing

___ buildings

___ sites

___ structures

___ objects

0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 3

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ Entered in the National Register 1973

___ Determined eligible for the National Register _____

___ Determined not eligible for the National Register _____

___ Removed from the National Register _____

___ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Domestic

Sub: Single Dwelling

Current: Domestic

Sub: Single Dwelling

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:

Greek Revival

MATERIALS:

Foundation: Stone

Walls: Brick

Roof: Shingle

Other:

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The following architectural description was written by John Galvin of Historic Madison, Inc.

Francis Costigan designed one of the finest of his Classic Revival houses in Madison for Capt. Shrewsbury, commission merchant, meatpacker, flour mill owner, and in later years, mayor of the city. Built in 1846-49, the house is located at 301 West First Street, and is today still a private residence.

More conservative and restrained in design than the James F.D. Lanier Mansion, also in Madison, the style of the Shrewsbury house follows closely that of Classic Baltimore houses. Large and cubic in form, it is built of hand-polished pink brick and surmounted by a majestic entablature and cornice that completely surround the house. The entablature is decorated with elaborate moldings and dentils. Designed with two main entrances, the one on the north facing First Street has a recessed portal and a door twelve feet high. The garden entrance on the south side has a portico supported by fluted columns and another door twelve feet high. Both doorways have sidelights. The service wing is placed on the west side of the house, away from Poplar Street.

Costigan made great use of the carpenters handbooks being published during the first half of the nineteenth century, notably the works of Asher Benjamin and Minard Lafever. The design of the iron fence was taken from a handbook by Asher Benjamin. The iron balconies which flank both the street and garden entrances have the pattern of the palmetto and anthemion or honeysuckle, also taken from Benjamin's designs.

The design for the recessed entrance on the street side can be found in Lafever's *Beauties of Modern Architecture* (1835). The designs for the cornice and entablature at the crown of the house can also be found in Lafever. However, Costigan was more apt to adapt than to copy. A striking example of his ingenuity in adapting an old pattern to his own use is seen in the columns supporting the garden portico, where the capitals are derived from the bud of the Egyptian lotus. Since Lafever seems never to have created a capital from the bud of the blossom, Costigan may have designed that bud capital himself.

Exterior window lintels & door lintels are slightly pedimented in smooth stone and are decorated with an acroterion at the peak in the form of the anthemion and again at the extreme corner angles with a half anthemion. Panes in the windows measure 12³/₄ inches by 25⁵/₈ inches.

The stone used in steps, thresholds, foundation courses, and trim is referred to locally as Kentucky Blue and is much tighter grained and much harder than Bedford stone. The stone steps, in use for 145 years, show almost no wear. The bricks used in the outside walls are quite hard and uniformly fired for the period and have been hand-polished before laying. The process of polishing was simple; each brick was rubbed lengthwise in a wood box on a quantity of brick dust. The result was a very smooth face on the brick with very sharp edges. On many bricks, the scratches of the rough brick dust are still evident. The mortar was hard; so hard that although it had been weathered away leaving the sharp edge of the polished brick exposed, the original trowel marks can still be seen in many places.

In the interior of the Shrewsbury house, the spiral staircase is undoubtedly Costigan's most spectacular achievement. The original design came from Lafever's *The Modern Practice of Staircase and Handrail Construction*. The staircase rises from the center of the front hall to the top of the house and is freestanding and self-supporting. The weight is concentrated on the bottom step and is carried by the end of the steps. The curved drum is made up of four layers of laminated wood, each about a quarter of an inch thick. The steps are pine, painted white to resemble marble, and the railing is cherry. Where the curved railing becomes tangent to the wall, there is a saucer or depression in the plaster that follows the curve of the

handrail so that knuckles do not hit the wall. Today, as then, the staircase serves as the air conditioner for the house—the hot air rising to the top and escaping out the attic windows.

The drawing room is a double cube, partially divided by two pairs of fluted columns.¹ The capitals are modified Corinthian, and the Egyptian lotus blossom, half open, is taken from Lefever. This capital was introduced into the area by Costigan in the tetrastyle portico of the Lanier house (1840-44), and repeated in the design in the Shrewsbury drawing room (1846-49). This "new" Corinthian Order is from Lefever's *Beauties of Modern Architecture*.

The design of the drawing room typifies Costigan's growth and maturity as an architect. Here the many vertical lines which occur in the columns and in the pilasters at the sides of the windows, in the corners, and opposite the columns in the side walls are integrated with the elaborate plaster cornice at the top and with the panels in the ceiling. The room becomes a single unit in its decoration. This is the first time that Costigan achieved a design in which he treated an entire room as a whole.

In the Shrewsbury house interior, Costigan made use of the newest developments in dimensions and proportions. He used greater verticals, taller doors, and higher ceilings. Full-length windows have thirteen feet of glass. On the first floor, wide and heavy door and window casings taper to a dogleg which extends the lintel the width of the taper. The taper in the door casing gives the appearance of verticality, actually an optical illusion. On the second floor, door and window casings are similar but lack the projecting cap.

Floors are random-width hard pine, said to have been Appalachian and to have been floated down the river in rafts. The ends of the floor boards are splined with metal splines. Doors, windows, casings, and frames are of native yellow poplar, no longer available. Twelve-foot doors have not warped even a fraction of an inch. Doors swing easily and windows slide perfectly. Muntins in the windows are extremely light and delicate. Lower sash slide up into the wall to permit walk-out space onto the iron balconies below.

Another special design evident in the Shrewsbury house is the traffic pattern. The front hall extends the entire depth of the house, with the drawing room on the east side and two rooms, a reception room and a library, on the west side. Beyond these two west rooms is a wing with two additional rooms, the dining room and a bedroom, each having two exits or entrances, thus allowing for a smooth traffic pattern. To the west of the bedroom is the kitchen. This same traffic pattern is repeated on the second floor, which contains four bedrooms and two servant's rooms. The third floor is an attic without walls, except for those around the perimeter and encircling the staircase.

Fireplaces are extremely well designed. One of the important design features is a simple device called a check draft. At the back of the hearth at floor level, an aperture about four and a half inches square opens into a channel leading back into the chimney some eighteen inches. This channel then turns at right angles and continues vertically until it opens into the main chimney at the height of the mantel shelf. When the check drafts are closed, the fire burns like a blowtorch, and the heat goes up the chimney. When the check drafts are open, the fire simmers along at a good pace and takes the cold air off the floor through the channel. As the cold air is expelled from the room, the heat comes forward and can be felt on the wall at the opposite side of the room. Thirteen fireplaces supplied the heat for the house. All but those in the two kitchens burned coal. Wood was preferred for cooking because of the flavor it imparted, hickory or beech for meats, fruit wood for baking.

¹ The first known pairs of disengaged columns without doors to partially divide a long room were made by Alexander Jackson Davis in a house designed for John C. Stevens, College Place and Murray Street, New York City. The original drawing is held by the New York Historical Society.

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In addition to his use of the fireplaces, Costigan employed the principle of solar heat. The original dining room, with its south window, was designed so that the sunlight, even on the shortest day of the year, extends the full length of the room giving the greatest amount of heat. All other south windows with their great height admit equal amounts of sunlight.

The Shrewsbury garden, on the south side of the house, offered a magnificent view of the Ohio River and the Kentucky hills beyond. Less formal and more intimate than that of the Lanier garden, the Shrewsbury garden nevertheless had an architectural design. Laid out in quadrangles with a path running down the middle, the garden resembled the first floor plan of the house with its central hall and rooms on either side. It was used as were the rooms within the house. In the morning when the sun was in the east, the family and guests could sit in one area and then move to more comfortable areas as the day progressed. It was a flower garden, and many of the old plants and shrubs still bloom each spring and summer. There was also space for tennis or croquet. The area below the garden, separated by a hedge and a thirty-inch concealed wall or ha-ha, was pasture land that stretched to the river. The Carriage House stands at the south end of the garden. This brick structure also historically contained the wash house and privy. There is a handsome, original wrought iron fence surrounding the entire property.

Writing of the Lanier and Shrewsbury houses, Rexford Newcomb paid a tribute to Francis Costigan: "These two residences, had he designed nothing else, would secure his name to posterity."

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: X Statewide: ___ Locally: ___

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A ___ B ___ C X D ___

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):

A ___ B ___ C ___ D ___ E ___ F ___ G ___

NHL Criteria:

4

NHL Theme(s):

XVI. Architecture
D. Greek Revival

Areas of Significance:

Architecture

Period(s) of Significance:

1846-1849

Significant Dates:

Significant Person(s):

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Francis Costigan (1810-1865)

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form **Page 8****State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**

Madison, Indiana, once a flourishing rivertown, today is a virtual architectural museum of Greek Revival and later building styles. As a young America pushed westward, it sought a new architecture that expressed pride in a country as cultural as it was busy and rich. Frances Costigan's house for Charles Shrewsbury is a wonderful example of this Classical style restrained, in high style, and with beautiful detailing.

In the early years of the 19th century, the new Republic adapted the styles of ancient Greece and Rome. It seemed logical to associate their hard-earned freedom with the Democratic ideals of those ancient states, creating a style often called "middle American." Towns were established named Athens, Troy, and Ithaca, and a Mississippi hamlet became Herculaneum. The Greek Revival reached its zenith in the 1840s and Charles Dickens wrote in 1842, during his American tour:

Every little colony of houses has its church and schoolhouse peeping from among the white roofs and shady trees; every house is the whitest of the white; every Venetian blind the greenest of the green; every fine day's sky the bluest of the blue. All the buildings looked as if they had been built and painted that morning, and could be taken down on Monday with very little trouble. In the keen evening air, every sharp outline looked a hundred times sharper than ever.¹

America indeed was prospering in an optimistic and confident age, full of buoyancy. As it went ahead, it exclaimed, "there are two great truths in the world, the Bible, and Grecian architecture."²

The Shrewsbury House was designed and built by the young architect, Francis Costigan, who had come from Baltimore to Madison because of the vast opportunities in this booming river town along the Ohio River. Construction started in 1846 and was completed three years later, just in time for a rather spectacular housewarming party on April 1, 1849. During the three years, nearly one hundred men were kept busy on the house with Costigan laying out the work each day for the supervisors. For his double task of designing and supervising, Costigan received \$1.25 per day, the highest price on the job.

The house is an example of Regency, a fashion which evolved toward the end of the period of Classic Revival, which pushed vertical line and measurements higher and higher until the proportions of the original Greek and Roman prototypes had been exaggerated, although classic details survived. Columns with Egyptian Lotus and modified Corinthian capitals are prominent, along with pilasters and elaborate plaster cornices ornamented with classic moldings and other traditional classic details.

¹ Charles Dickens, *American Notes for Circulation*. 2 vols. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1842).

² Nicholas Biddle, *Journal of Travels in Greece*, 1806.

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An example of this is the spiral stairs, in which encasing drums made up of four layers of laminated wood carry the weight of the structure to the bottom step. The resulting free standing spiral does come in contact with the brick dividing walls at two points in each ascending flight, a contact said by engineers to be important in controlling the lateral thrust of such a weight bearing structure.

Lanier's circular staircase is tucked demurely into a wall. Shrewsbury's stands free, its hands on its hips, in the middle of the hallway. The ornament of Lanier's drawing room is restrained; Shrewsbury's is as rich as that of any other surviving house in America of the Greek Revival style except Stanton Hall in Natchez. Francis Costigan gave Lanier and Shrewsbury designs up to the ambitions of any Baltimore or Philadelphia merchant. For Shrewsbury he added the kind of Lefeverish ornament that was favored by the cotton nabobs of the upland South.³

Two of the most important mansions in the series of studies on the *Neo-Classical Mode* are

the Shrewsbury house in Madison and the James F.D. Lanier house in the same city. Both are the work of Francis Costigan, Architect; the former was built in 1849, and the latter five years earlier. Although the Lanier House is the older of the two, its richer and more plastic design would lead one to place it late in the 1840s with the rise of romanticism, while the Shrewsbury house, retaining none of the chaste spirit of the antique, appears to be an earlier design.

The Shrewsbury house, almost cubical in shape, has a stark and noble beauty unmatched by any other house in this category. Taste and sensitivity on the part of the Architect have produced a design of pleasing proportions, and one which needs no enrichment beyond the pattern of cornice, pilasters, windows, and doors. Inside, the treatment is richer; handsomely carved moldings, a columnar screen dividing the parlor, and one of the most beautiful spiral staircases in the country.⁴

Of Francis Costigan himself, little is known. There is no known picture of him and examples of his writing are non-existent except for his signature on legal documents and a construction bid of 1858.

What is known about Costigan is that he was born in Washington, D.C., on March 4, 1810, and died at the age of fifty-five in Indianapolis, Indiana on April 18, 1865, apparently of tuberculosis. He was married to one Elizabeth Taylor of Baltimore, Maryland, and they had three children, Francis, Sarah, and Theodore. At the age of twenty-five he was listed in *The Baltimore (Md.) City Directory of 1835*, as a "Carpenter and Builder" with a shop on Frederick Street. However, within three years he had moved to Madison, Indiana, for records show he purchased property there in November 1838. During his almost fifteen years of residence in Madison he enjoyed considerable success, building many of the city's finest homes, a hotel and a number of other buildings. The financial advantages of his success enabled him to invest in a considerable amount of property, much of which seems to have been vacant lots on which he built houses for speculative purposes. In addition he built a

³ Kennedy, Roger G., *Architecture, Men, Women and Money*, p. 435. Random House, New York 1985.

⁴ Peat, Wilber D. *Indiana Houses of the Nineteenth Century*, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1962, p. 50.

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fine home for himself in 1850.⁵

Charles Lewis Shrewsbury was born January 12, 1804, in Kanawha, Virginia, elected Mayor of Madison in 1870, and died in Madison, April 23, 1872, while in office. His family moved from Bedford County, Virginia, to Bath County, Virginia, and from there to Kanawha in 1798. At this time the salt business was dominated by "Associations," which controlled the production and pricing of Western Virginia salt. The first of these brought 35 local producers of salt together. Their products were shipped down the Kanawha River to the Ohio River for sale. In his teens, it is believed that Shrewsbury may have accompanied such shipments as far west as Madison where they were sold to Madison hog packing plants.

Sometime in the 1830s, Charles moved to Madison, apparently at the urging of steamboat shipper John Woodburn, to manage the company's affairs. The company name changed to Charles Shrewsbury & Company. On November 13, 1839, he married John Woodburn's daughter, Ellen, in Madison. John Woodburn deeded to Ellen the west half of the block on West First Street, on which his Costigan-designed house stood; Costigan then began work on the construction of the Shrewsbury house in 1846.

Shrewsbury's daughter married Andrew Jackson Wyatt, a moderately successful businessman, and they apparently first lived in the house as a young couple, then inherited the property and lived there until 1920. The house has since had a succession of private owners.

Behind their similar facades were quite different men, but neither lived so steadily, so safely as their domiciles implied. Shrewsbury was a river man; Lanier a railroad man. Both were playing for high stakes. Sometimes they played against each other. Shrewsbury was a Confederate sympathizer; Lanier personally financed Indiana's adherence to the Union. Shrewsbury was the tough product of the Kanawha salt mines, and prospered while he and his numerous relatives provided the cohesion to assemble a series of "Associations," primitive trusts that held back production and held up prices from the late 1830s to the early 1850s. Lanier was the proud child of improvident Tidewater aristocrats; he rode back to respectability with the railroad. The railroad brought prices down; it opened the region to sources of salt outside western Virginia, it diverted the livestock and grain products of the Ohio Valley from the river system of the South toward the East. For Shrewsbury the metropolis was New Orleans, for Lanier it was New York. Shrewsbury grew old and bitter in an Age of Steam and Steel. J.F.D. Lanier became its first important financier, the forerunner of the great Pierpont Morgan.

⁵ Todd Mazingo. Unpublished Masters Thesis. University of Virginia, 1975.
Quote from: Jefferson County, Indiana, Public Records of Deed. Deed Book P,
p. 179, November 13, 1838.

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By 1850 the differences between Lanier and Shrewsbury were becoming clear, differences having to do with the contest between river and railroad, between North and South, and these two citizens of Madison grew apart. But they had established their wealth in a perfect symbiosis of their talents. Shrewsbury had supplied the salt and Lanier financed the ham on the hoof which had made Madison, during their youth, a close competitor to Cincinnati as chief supplier of pork products to the ravenous plantations of the South.⁶

The earlier Lanier House (1844) has the strength, and four-square feeling of the East Coast while the nearby Shrewsbury House is the work of a mature artist, unified and elegant. There are references to Minard Lafever in the double parlor, and the great spiral stair is now free standing, not partially encased as in the Lanier House. Perhaps most impressive is Costigan's rich decorative system derived from Lafever's *Beauties of Modern Architecture*, but embellished with the architect's own proportional relationships. This house earned Costigan his place in architectural history.

⁶ Roger G. Kennedy, *Architecture, Men, Women and Money in America, 1600-1860*. Random House 1985. New York, pp. 432-435.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

 Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. Previously Listed in the National Register: Madison Historic District Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register. Designated a National Historic Landmark. Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #1971-In8 Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #_____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

 State Historic Preservation Office Other State Agency Federal Agency Local Government: Jefferson County Courthouse University Other (Specify Repository):

1. Historic Madison, Inc., 500 West Street, Madison, Indiana 47250

2. Indiana Historical Society, 315 West Ohio Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202-3299

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: one quarter (1/4) acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing

A 16 640550 4288380

Verbal Boundary Description:

Being part of River Block 7 in the City of Madison, Indiana, to-wit: Beginning at the northeast corner of said Block formed by the intersectino of the south line of First Street and the west line of Poplar Street, thence south with the west line of Poplar Street 138 feet, thence west parallel with First Street 129 feet, thence north parallel with Poplar Street 138 feet to the south line of First Street 129 feet to the place of beginning.

ALSO, Beginning at the north-east corner of Robert Jamison's (once Susan Blaylock's) lot on the west side of Poplar Street, in the City of madison; thence north with the west line of said Poplar lane Street fifty (50) feet; thence west one hundred twenty nine (129) feet, more or less, to (once) Burke's line; thence south with said (once) Burke's line fifty (50) feet to Robert Jamison's (once Blaylock's) line; thence east with said Jamison's north line one hundred twenty nine (129) feet, more or less, to the place of beginning.

Being and intended to be the same real estate conveyed to above Grantors by Charles C. Koepfer, unmarried, by deed dated February 24, 1936, and recorded in Deed Book 101, page 455 of the Deed Records of Jefferson County, Indiana.

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Boundary Justification:

The nomination property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Charles L. Shrewsbury House.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: John Galvin of Historic Madison, Inc.

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Telephone: 202/343-8166

Date: September 30, 1993

National Park Service/WASO/History Division (418): August 5, 1994