

OMB NO. 1024-0018  
EXP. 10/31/84

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received **JL 29 1985**  
date entered **AUG 29 1985**

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

**1. Name**

historic Robert C. Dunn House

and/or common N/A

**2. Location**

street & number 708 South 4th Street N/A not for publication

city, town Princeton N/A vicinity of congressional district

state Minnesota code 22 county Mille Lacs code 095

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Robert Dunn

street & number 708 South 4th Street

city, town Princeton N/A vicinity of state Minnesota 55371

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Mille Lacs County Courthouse, Register of Deeds

street & number 635 2nd Street Southeast

city, town Milaca state Minnesota 56353

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Minnesota Statewide Historic Sites Survey

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1984  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Minnesota Historical Society  
Ft. Snelling History Center

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota

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## 7. Description

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

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

The Dunn House is a classically-detailed, Colonial Revival house sited facing south on a large, wooded corner lot in the town of Princeton. It contains two stories, a full basement and an attic. The house is constructed of first-quality brick, laid in a butter joint. Walls above the stone footings and foundation walls are brick, twelve inches thick. A ballustrated porch with fluted wood Roman Doric columns placed on brick piers and a dentilled entablature extends the full width of the front facade and along the front one-third of the east facade. The roof is hipped and has three large gables with pedimented ends facing south, east and west. The eaves of the roof are bracketted and extend out past the two symmetrical bays on the front facade and a single, wider bay on the east facade. Windows are both undivided double-hung sash and fixed sash. Etched or colored glass is used extensively throughout the house. A Palladian-motif window is placed in the front-facing gable end. Tall chimneys are placed on the west and east sides of the house.

There are two outbuildings on the site. A carriage house was built ca. 1880 at the time of the first Dunn House, which originally stood closer to the street corner on the same site but was moved to an adjacent lot following the completion of the current house. This pyramidal-roofed carriage house was enlarged and remodeled in 1902. Patterned shingle work, a canted corner entry and an eyebrow dormer in the hipped roof are the main features of this building. A double width garage of a simple contemporary design has been inconspicuously placed behind the carriage house. A wrought iron fence, with entry gates, lines the public sidewalks on the west and south sides of the site and is in good condition. The site is covered with hardwood deciduous trees.

The plan of the house is typical of most large houses built near the turn of the century. The front entry leads into a reception hall, which is flanked by the library on the west side and the parlour on the east. The stair is on the west side, across from the sitting room. The doorway to the library is canted. The parlour and the sitting room are separated by sliding pocket doors. The dining room is on the northeast corner of the house, and can be reached by a doorway in the reception hall or through a trabeated opening from the sitting room. A pantry at the north end of the house connects the dining room with the kitchen on the west. The second floor has a central hallway which leads to two bedrooms at the front of the house, the larger master bedroom on the central part of the east side and another bedroom on the west side. A bathroom with separate marble shower is placed directly above the pantry. The attic, originally containing two servant's rooms, storage space, and a large water cistern is presently divided into several additional rooms.

A number of features on the interior of the house exhibit a remarkably high level of workmanship. Fireplace mantels are designed to form cornices to carved columns which use orders symbolically appropriate to the use of the room. The library has columns with anthemion-patterned necking resembling columns at the Erechtheion in Athens. Corinthian columns are used in the sitting room fireplace, and more slender, superimposed Corinthian columns

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

Specific dates 1902

Builder/Architect Louis Lockwood

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Dunn House is significant for its association with Robert Campbell Dunn, who was the founder and editor of the Princeton Union, was an active and effective advocate for numerous causes through the various positions he held in state and local government, and was one of the primary actors in the Minnesota good roads movement. The house, in an excellent state of preservation, is a very good example of the turn of the century classically-influenced Colonial Revival style.

Robert Campbell Dunn was born February 14, 1855 at Plumb Bridge, County Tyrone in Northern Ireland. After being educated in the Irish National Schools at the age of fourteen he was apprenticed to a dry goods merchant in Londonderry for five years. Uncomfortable in this position, he succeeded in raising enough money to pay for a transatlantic voyage. In 1870, he left to join an uncle in Wisconsin, Samuel Dunn, who had been one of the earliest settlers of Columbia County. After a year of working on his farm he went to St. Louis, where two other uncles were living. He became an apprentice in the office of the Missouri State Atlas and later the St. Louis Journal. Following a severe illness in January, 1876, he moved north and settled in Princeton, which was just beginning to be settled at the time.

An active republican, Dunn secured the financial backing of a group of like-minded men and established the Princeton Union. This paper began publishing on December 30, 1876. Dunn, at the time the youngest newspaper publisher in the state, continued as publisher of this paper until his death October 28, 1918.

Dunn's political career began shortly after his arrival in Princeton. In 1878 he was elected town clerk of Princeton, a position that he held until 1889. Although law was not his formal background, he was elected to be Mille Lacs County attorney in 1884 and served until 1888. In that year he was elected to the Legislature for a two year term. Leaving his seat in 1890 he was again elected in 1892. During the legislative session of 1893 he established his reputation within the state political arena by his outspoken criticism of the manner in which timber lands in northern Minnesota were being sold to the large timber companies. In 1894 he was elected state auditor, and supervised the sale of timberlands, among other activities. After being reelected in 1898, he successfully used his influence to create the State Tax Commission and the State Board of Control.

In 1904, following a bitter factional dispute within the Republican party, in which some were alienated by his reformist tendencies, Dunn was nominated to be their candidate for governor. Running against the popular John Johnson he was defeated by a narrow margin of 7,000 votes.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Princeton, Minn.

Quadrangle scale 7.5' Series

UMT References

A 

1	5	4	5	4	1	5	5	0	4	5	7	7	0
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

Lots 4,5, and 6; Block 1; Murray's Addition to the city of Princeton.

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Thomas Jenkinson and Norene Roberts

organization Historical Research, Inc.

date January 15, 1985

street & number 5535 Richmond Curve

telephone (612) 929-2921

city or town Minneapolis

state Minnesota 55410

# 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

*Russell W. Fridley*

title Russell W. Fridley  
State Historic Preservation Officer

date 7/5/85

For NPS use only

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

*Alboree Byers*  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 8/29/85

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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Continuation sheet

Description (cont'd) Item number 7

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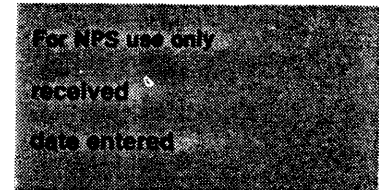
are used in the second floor main bedroom. Ceiling coves, baseboards, doors and door mouldings, stair newels and rails, and all cabinet work are all specially designed for the house. Doorways in the main first floor rooms are a taller than standard seven foot eight inch height. Naturally-finished oak is used for mouldings in all the principal rooms of the house. The remainder of the rooms have birch woodwork that has been stained a cherry color.

Leaded or etched glass is used in the cabinets and doors found in the dining room, pantry and kitchen. Colored glass is used in the upper lights of the windows in the center portion of the bay windows and in the arched window above the west stair landing. Interior walls are separated into two parts by a narrow band of beaded oak. The base portion is burlap, of various colors, and the upper portion is finished with wallpaper.

Several minor changes, which do not affect the integrity of the house, have occurred. Interior walls, originally having a burlap-covered base and wallpaper above were painted during the 1950s. The roof and gable ends were asphalt-shingled. Recently the kitchen has been remodeled and updated, with a design that incorporates the bevelled-edge tongue-and-groove patterned paneling found on the pantry cabinets and kitchen and pantry wainscot. The northeast bedroom upstairs was also converted to an additional bathroom and dressing area and connected to the master bedroom. The asphalt shingles have been removed from the gable ends, exposing the original wood shingles. The original interior wall fabric has also been restored to its original appearance by matching fragments of the original fabric found beneath the moldings.

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Continuation sheet

Significance (cont'd.) Item number 8

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Dunn reentered state politics in 1910, in order to advocate a statewide system of good roads. Elected to the legislature in 1910, during the 1911 session Dunn controled the highway-related legislation in the House. In this session he authored a bill which would allow the state to participate in the construction and maintenance of highways, previously a local or military concern. Partially through his efforts, the legislature submitted a constitutional ammendment to the voters which would increase the state mill levy for the purpose of constructing bridges and roads. This ammendment was approved in the 1912 election. In the next session of the legislature, Dunn was able to draft a new Minnesota Road Law.

Elected to the state Senate in 1914, Dunn continued his advocacy of good roads. In the 1917 session, he introduced a bill which would concentrate the authority of the former State Highway Commission in a single State Commissioner of Highways. Charles Babcock was appointed to this position. Working with Babcock, Dunn assisted in developing a plan for a statewide system of good highways. This measure, known as the Babcock Plan, was approved as a constitutional ammendment in 1920, two years after Dunn's death.

The Dunn house was built in 1902 following his return from St. Paul. A prominent two story brick structure, it was designed by Louis Lockwood (1854-1907), whom Dunn may have known in St. Paul. Lockwood had been born in London, England and educated formally at Kings College, Cambridge. In the short period between his arrival in St. Paul in 1892 and his death Lockwood designed numerous St. Paul houses and commercial buildings including the First National Bank (built 1908), Lindeke, Warer and Sons Wholesale Building and the Fire and Marine Building.

Both the interior and the exterior of the house are outstandingly well-preserved. Several of the minor alterations that had been made over the years have recently been reversed following generally accepted preservation practices. The house has remained in the Dunn family, and is currently owned by the grandson of Robert Campbell Dunn.

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Continuation sheet      Bibliography      Item number      9      Page      3

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