

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

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

For HCERS use only

received **AUG 20 1982**
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Ott, John George, House

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 754 Jenifer Street not for publication

city, town Madison vicinity of congressional district Second

state WI code 55 county Dane code 025

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 <u>N/A</u>	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
			<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name R. Richard Wagner

street & number 754 Jenifer Street

city, town Madison vicinity of state WI 53703

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dane County Register of Deeds

street & number 210 Monona Avenue

city, town Madison state WI 53709

6. Representation in Existing Surveys (cont.)

title City of Madison Landmark has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date October 1, 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records Madison Landmarks Commission

city, town Madison state WI 53710

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" 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

The Ott house consists of a 2½ story main section with two story wings to the west and north of the main section. The construction is frame with brick veneer on a sandstone foundation. The main section has decorative brickwork including corner pilasters and corbels under the roof. Brackets and panels decorate the exterior cornice of the main section, all of which are wood. The cornice includes a built-in gutter. Two oculi or round windows pierce the southern corner on the second story. Window trim includes stone sills for most windows, arched, carved sandstone lintels on the first floor of the main section and incised stone lintels on the second floor of the same section. The fenestration is balanced throughout and totals 37 windows (excluding three basement windows but including two attic tombstone-shaped windows). There are 9 doors to the outside. On the east and west sides of the house are two-story wooden bay windows. The roof is square-hipped on the main section, gable ended on the north wing and hipped over the bay and wing on the west side. Two small stoop porches are on the front of the house, an open porch on the east side near the kitchen and a glassed enclosed porch on the northwest corner. This same corner has a small two-story frame section that may have contained an indoor privy.

Alterations over the years have included several changes that have not affected the basic character of the house. The house had a probably original, rectangular cupola on the main section, as one is shown in a photo taken not too many years after the house was built. A flat roof replaced the cupola and more recently a slightly sloped skylight covers the old roof trap opening. An additional flat skylight has been added on the north side of the west wing, tucked under the eaves of the main section. The second story on the east bay was added later in the 19th Century. A full porch rather than the existing stoop used to run along the south side of the west wing. Recently, steps have been added to the porch on the east side of the house. It is also possible the second story on the west wing was added later in the century after 1885.¹

The interior has been converted into two residential units. This was done with very few alterations to the historic fabric of the building. Interior woodwork is painted pine. The floors are of medium-width painted boards. In one room the original imitation wood graining remains on the floorboards. Partitions have been moved in the two wings to accommodate new bathrooms and kitchens.

The original parcel included the land all along Livingston Street to Williamson. Though now separate parcels, a brick out-building, possibly a carriage shed or shop building still stands in the middle of the block on Livingston Street. Only the Ott house is being nominated at this time.

¹The 1885 Sanborn-Perris map shows the wing as one story.

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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> association with locally significant individual

Specific dates 1873-1874¹ **Builder/Architect** unknown significant individual
 1874-1914; period of significance

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Ott house is significant for its association with an historic personage, John George Ott, who was among the first of the non-Yankee settlers in Madison. Ott settled in the Third Lake Ridge, an area which would quickly become the heart of the City's largest Germanic settlement. His life story reflects the story of many non-Yankee settlers who, although they began their life in Madison almost penniless, rose to prominence in the community. Ott's house represents his success. It is architecturally significant as one of the finest High Victorian Italianate residences in Madison.

History

John George Ott was one of the early German-Swiss immigrants to Madison, coming directly at the age of 13 from his native Schaffhausen, Switzerland in 1850. He was a successful businessman and entrepreneur, seizing his chances where the turns of the local economy seemed to dictate. He began his career in Madison as a store clerk. In three years he had saved \$850, and in his words "was so much encouraged by my phenomenal success, that I undertook to purchase a homestead and built a store in a location which at that time was known as 'in the woods.'"² For 14 years he operated his grocery business on the Williamson Street frontage of his property, offering such items as whiskey by the barrel. From 1868 and 1872 he operated a brickyard. It is probable that he made the bricks for 754 Jenifer at his own brickyard. From 1872 until his death, he made a living selling accident and fire insurance and real estate. He died in 1914.

Ott was active in civic affairs and ethnic organizations as a member of the Old Settlers Club, a founder of the German Masonic Lodge, a founder of the Turnverein and a member of the Madison Maennerchor. He was elected to represent his neighborhood on both the City council for 4½ years and the County Board for one term. He also served as a Justice of the Peace.

A concern for his neighborhood and the near east side occupied much of his attention. He organized Sixth Ward residents in the campaign to turn the old village cemetery into the City's first public park (Orton Park, NRHP). He platted Ott's subdivision on Dewey Court and Schley Pass, providing small inexpensive lots for area workers.

The house that Ott built in 1873-1874 represents his successful establishment in the New World. He remained on the east side at 754 Jenifer for the rest of his life. His descendants continued to reside in the home until 1973, one hundred years of continuous attachment to the neighborhood.

Architecture

The Ott house is one of the finest Italianate houses outside of Mansion Hill, the predominantly Yankee settlement on the ridge overlooking the Fourth Lake, which contains many of the finest nineteenth century houses remaining in Madison. In addition, it is the finest High Victorian Italianate house remaining in Madison. Most of the finest Italianate houses in Madison are of the earlier Italian Villa mode or the simple,

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .111 acre

Quadrangle name Madison East, Wis.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	<u>16</u>	<u>306970</u>	<u>4771940</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 Lot 7, Block 128, Original Plat, City of Madison, Wis.

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title R. Richard Wagner, owner; and Katherine H. Rankin, Secretary

organization Madison Landmarks Commission date February, 1981

street & number 215 Monona Avenue telephone 608-266-6552

city or town Madison, state WI 53710

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 Richard Kenney

title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin date 8/11/82

For HCRS use only

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

Entered in the National Register date 9/23/82

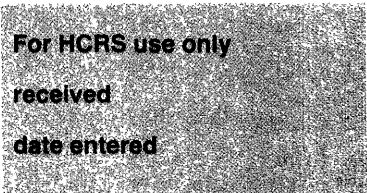
John A. Brown
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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John George Ott House, Madison, Dane Co., WI

Continuation sheet

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Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places

1973

State

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

Madison

Wisconsin 53706

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Significance

square-massed, bracketed style. The fancifully carved stonework on the Ott house was no doubt the work of Madison's German or Swiss masons, who specialized in such High Victorian details.

The Ott house has been described as "the grandest of the remaining 19th century mansions in the [Third Lake Ridge historic] district."³ As an example of the High Victorian mode in an immigrant neighborhood, it shows the patterns of taste whereby successful immigrants copied the styles of the locally dominant Yankee upper class.

¹Tax records for the City of Madison, in the possession of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

²"John George Ott's Fifty Years," reprint from the Wisconsin State Journal in booklet form (1900).

³"Third Lake Ridge Historic District Plan," Madison: City Planning Department, 1978.

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Major Bibliographical References cont'd

Butterfield, C. W., ed., History of Dane County, Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1880.

"John George Ott's Fifty Years," reprint from the Wisconsin State Journal, (1900).

Madison City Directories, 1858 to present.

Madison Past and Present - 1852-1902, Madison: Wisconsin State Journal, 1902.

Sanborn-Perris Maps, 1885 to the present, in the collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Tax Records for the City of Madison, 1858-1900, in the collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Division of Archives.

"Third Lake Ridge Historic District Plan," Madison: City Planning Department, 1978.