

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received DEC 20 1985

date entered JAN 16 1986

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

1. Name

historic The Dr. Henry Wheeler House

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 420 Franklin (previously 419 South 5th Street) N/A not for publication

city, town Grand Forks N/A vicinity of

state North Dakota code 38 county Grand Forks code 035

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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Robert and Marlene Peterson

street & number 420 Franklin (previously 419 South 5th Street)

city, town Grand Forks N/A vicinity of state North Dakota

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Grand Forks County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Grand Forks state North Dakota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historical Research Report: Summer 1981
title Historical and Architectural Survey of Downtown Grand Forks has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of North Dakota

city, town Bismarck state North Dakota

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Dr. Henry Wheeler house (see photo 1) is located on the southeast corner of the fourth block in the Viet's Addition where it stands out as one of the very few brick residences in a neighborhood bounded on the east by the Red River of the North. The two-story house faces southwest on South 5th Street, a thoroughfare often pictured in illustrated souvenir books of Grand Forks dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The house contributes to the historic significance of the site because it retains architectural features on its interior and exterior. A second building on site, a garage, does not contribute to the historic character of the property because of its more recent construction.

Research indicates that the Wheeler house was constructed sometime after the publication of the 1884 Sanborn Insurance Map and before publication of the 1885 Manual and Directory for the City of Grand Forks. The house was likely designed by Henry's younger brother, George, a New York architect who had designed a house directly across the street from his brother's house. The Wheeler property originally consisted of the main residence and a carriage house which in 1910 was converted to an auto house. Sometime after the death of Henry Wheeler in 1930, this one-story wood-frame structure was extensively remodeled for residential use and rented. In 1949 Dr. Wheeler's widow sold the small residence as well as the northwesternly 40' of lot 10 to her tenants. Thereafter, the Wheeler property consisted of lot 12 and the southeasterly 10' of lot 10 in Block 4 of Viet's Addition.

Rectangular in shape and containing a full basement, the Wheeler house is a fine example of the Italianate style of architecture, a design based on provincial Italian farm houses. Classic Italianate features found in the Wheeler house include: the first-story bay window on the east side of the house; the wrap around porch on the west side with a second-story sleeping porch (photo 2); the multigabled roof; and the segmented arch windows on the west (front) and south sides which originally sported balconies. Photographs of the house taken before the turn of the century show eaves supported with millwork tracery and topped with finials, details which have long since been removed (Plat Book of Grand Forks, p. 31; Grand Forks Illustrated, p. 35).

The first alteration to the exterior of the Wheeler house occurred between 1888 and 1892 when the small brick vestibule on the front or southwest corner of the house was replaced by a one-story wood-frame porch. Between 1892 and 1897 the rear of the house was remodeled and elongated with a two-story red-brick addition with a small wood-frame entry on the back. Because the new brick did not match the original tan sandstone brick, the whole house was painted red upon the completion of the addition.

Earliest photographs of the house show a small brick cupola, characteristic of the Italianate style, directly above the front vestibule which was altered between 1888 and 1892 as already described (Photos 3 & 4). Between 1897 and 1906 this cupola was enclosed and expanded, creating a two-story wood-frame wrap around porch on the southwest corner of the front of the house. The two-story porch was topped with a tin roof which has since been tarred. Sometime after 1916 a one-story wood-frame enclosed porch was added to the northwest side of the house (left, photo 1). Although the exterior of the Wheeler house has been altered as described, it still retains its fundamental architectural feeling and stylistic elements.

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The interior of the Wheeler house features areas such as the main staircase which are quite opulent as well as those, such as the front parlor, which are slightly more modest. That portion of the first floor which is original to the house is comprised of a main hallway, front parlor and adjacent sittingroom, modern kitchen and bathroom, livingroom (formerly the formal diningroom), and pantries. The addition constructed between 1892 and 1897 consists of a sewingroom on the first floor and a servant's bedroom and bathroom on the second floor. A modest staircase connects the two floors. The original part of the second floor is now occupied by two large bedrooms, a modern kitchen and a modern bathroom. The second-story wrap around porch has recently been insulated and floored to make it usable all year around as a bedroom.

The main alterations to the interior of the house (i.e. the enclosure of a portion of the main staircase and the creation of two modern kitchens) appear to have been made in the 1940s when the house was divided into three apartments. The house, which again serves as a single family residence, was purchased by its present owner from Henry Wheeler, Jr. in 1968. Despite the alterations which have been described, the material integrity of the interior is generally well preserved. Such features as high ceilings, parqueted oak floors, hot water radiators, brass doorknobs, and capped gas jets help to maintain the original character of the interior.

The two most lavishly appointed areas of the house are the formal diningroom, which now serves as a livingroom, and the main staircase. The two-turn stairway, which is accessible only from the front vestibule, retains its original oak balustrade. The focal point of the stairway is the leaded and stained glass window on the second landing. Outstanding elements of the former diningroom include: a gas fireplace featuring an oak mantel and overmantel with beveled mirror; two leaded and beveled glass windows which flank the fireplace; oak flooring and woodwork including wainscotting; and a brass chandelier with tulip-shaped globes. Adjacent to this room is an original enclosed one-story wood-frame porch.

The site contains two buildings: one contributing, one non-contributing.

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

Specific dates 1884-1885

Builder/Architect

Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Dr. Henry Wheeler house is significant for its association with one of Grand Forks' most prominent pioneer surgeons. It is also significant as the best example of a brick Italianate house dating from the mid-1880's on the North Dakota side of the Red River of the North.

Henry Mason Wheeler was born in Newport, New Hampshire, on June 23, 1853, the son of Mason and Huldah (Wheeler) Wheeler. In 1855 the Wheeler family moved to Northfield, Minnesota, where Henry was raised and educated, ultimately attending Carleton College.

Henry began the study of medicine under a preceptor as was the custom of the day. In 1875 he began his formal medical training at the University of Michigan. Graduating in 1877, the young doctor returned to Northfield where he practiced medicine for two years. In 1879 he entered the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New York City and graduated from that institution in 1880. In June, 1881, Henry's wife of two years (Adeline Murray Wheeler) died while giving birth to their infant daughter. One month later Henry moved to Grand Forks, Dakota Territory, where he continued to practice medicine until his retirement in May, 1923, at the age of 70.

Jackson describes Dr. Henry Wheeler as a pioneer in his profession in more than one sense. While one of the few physicians in the Grand Forks area, Dr. Wheeler traveled into the countryside caring for patients. As the city grew and more doctors were needed, he envisioned the benefits of practicing medicine in association with others of the profession. He was one of the first physicians in North Dakota to take on associates and form a group practice. Having lost his first wife to childbirth, Dr. Wheeler conducted research into the problems and methods of the day involving delivery.

When North Dakota became a state, Dr. Wheeler was among the physicians to organize the North Dakota Medical Association. In 1895 he was honored by being elected the seventh president of that organization. From 1894-1911 he was secretary of the state board of medical examiners. He also served on the U. S. pension examining board and was surgeon for the Northern Pacific and Great Northern railroads. A close friend of James J. Hill, Dr. Wheeler enjoyed hunting geese and deer with the railroad magnate in North Dakota and northern Minnesota. Dr. Wheeler, who was widely known for his skill with firearms, helped organize and served as president of the Grand Forks Gun Club.

In the boom years following the turn of the century Dr. Wheeler was among the first to recognize the need for a second hospital in Grand Forks. He initiated the move to bring the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet to staff what was to become St. Michael's Hospital and was one of the key fund raisers for this new construction. The

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Grand Forks, N.Dak.-Minn. 1963

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000 7.5'

UTM References

A

1	4	6	4	7	4	9	5	5	3	0	9	0	9	5
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

The property consists of lot 12 and the southeasterly 10' of lot 10 in Block 4 of Viet's Addition.

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 Ann Rathke, Field Liaison Officer

organization State Historical Society of North Dakota date October 11, 1985

street & number Heritage Center telephone (701)224-2666

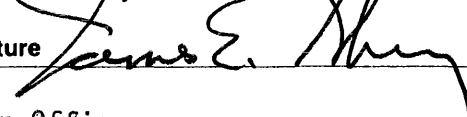
city or town Bismarck state ND 58505

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.

James E. Sperry
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer date December 5, 1985

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

 date 1-16-86
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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65-bed hospital was completed in 1907 at a cost of approximately \$100,000. Dr. Wheeler's legacy to the medical community in Grand Forks was recognized in 1952 when the library in the new St. Michael's Hospital was named for Wheeler and his partner, Dr. Robert Campbell.

Dr. Wheeler's sphere of influence included the University of North Dakota at Grand Forks. In 1886, just three years after the founding of the University, the Board of Regents elected him the first dean of the newly-authorized Medical School. For several years, Dr. Wheeler served as a lecturer in the Medical School.

According to the Grand Forks Illustrated published in April 1891, "No history of Grand Forks would be complete without the incorporation of a biography of Dr. Wheeler, one of the founders of its government and an original contributor to its general good and advancement." In 1917, at the age of 64, Dr. Wheeler was elected mayor of Grand Forks, serving two terms. He had previously served one term (1913-14) as city alderman.

After his retirement in 1923, Dr. Wheeler continued to act as consulting surgeon for the Northern Pacific and Grand Northern railroad companies. He also remained active in the Masons, having served as Grand Master for the local lodge (1883-85) and Worshipful Master for the lodge of Dakota Territory (1888). He was also a member of the Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, and Elks Lodges.

On April 14, 1930, Dr. Wheeler died suddenly in his home at the age of 77. The cause of death was heart failure. He was survived by his third wife (May McCulloch Wheeler) and their son, Henry Jr.

Before beginning his successful medical and political career in North Dakota, Henry Wheeler made a place for himself in the history of the Old West for his involvement in what has come to be known as the "Great Northfield Bank Robbery." On the afternoon of September 7, 1876, young Henry Wheeler, home on leave from medical school in Michigan, assisted in repelling the attack of the Jesse James Gang on the First National Bank. One of two local townspeople to offer active resistance, Wheeler shot and killed outlaw Clel Miller.

In a community which before the turn of the century boasted about itself as a "city of homes," the Henry Wheeler house represents the achievements of one of North Dakota's most influential pioneer surgeons. The Wheeler house sits within a neighborhood which contains the largest concentration of historic buildings in the city. The neighborhood lies immediately south and east of the present-day central business district. Development of this neighborhood coincided with the period of overall growth in Grand Forks in response to initiation of rail service (Roberts, p. 57). Wheeler's house lies two blocks southeast from the original Grand Forks townsite boundary, which suggests that it may have been further from the core of the (smaller) 1880's business area than it is today.

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A 1891 historic structures survey of Grand Forks inventoried the historic significance of 1700 city properties, concentrating on the business district out of which came a nomination, but also surveying older residential properties and neighborhoods. Concerning the nominated property the survey reported, "The Dr. Henry A. Wheeler residence at 419 South Fifth Street (now 420 Franklin) is the city's outstanding example of Picturesque Gothic executed in red brick...with brick hoodmolds, tracery at the gable and window balconies, irregular plan, and paired arched windows" (Roberts, p. 57).

This residential dwelling style had some representation among early settlers who brought financial resources to North Dakota or acquired rapid wealth requisite to building grand houses. Such homes are generally confined to the Red River Valley because the style had passed by the time that financial and commercial resources had migrated westward. Eclectic styles from the later nineteenth century, however, particularly Queen Anne and eventually neoclassical revivals, endure in greater numbers today throughout the state because their popularity occurred at a time of greater general prosperity and more dispersed settlement. The contrastingly lower number of Gothic-Italianate residences ever built and their advanced age has made their presence in the state quite unusual. Dr. Henry Wheeler's former home, then, is significant for illustrating a disappearing house style which had a popularity in the state's building history.

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Grassick, J.

1926 North Dakota Medicine Sketches and Abstracts, Bismarck, North Dakota
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Interview with Marilyn Peterson by Ann Rathke, October 15, 1984.

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1974 "Centennial Profile: Dr. Henry M. Wheeler." in They Came to Stay, Eldon
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slightly altered pagination.

Site inspection and interview with owner Marilyn Peterson, August 13, 1985 by
L. Martin Perry.